

## Commentary on 1st Samuel Chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 6.30.21

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**May memory verse, Galatians 6:7 (NKJV) Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.**

### **Commentary on 1st Samuel Chapter 1 by Chuck Smith 6.30.21 With overview of 1st Samuel by Chuck Swindoll**

This book presents the history, the personal history of Samuel who was the last of the Judges. It ushers in the beginning of the period of the kings in the children of Israel, or among the children of Israel.

There's a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah. He had two wives; one was Hannah, the other Peninnah: Peninnah had children, Hannah had no children. This man went out of the city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. [Which at that time was the religious center of the nation.] And the two sons of Eli, [Who was the high priest at that time] Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And it came when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah, and her children portions: But unto Hannah he gave a goodly [or an extra] portion; because he loved Hannah very much: but God had shut up her womb [and that she was barren] ([1Sa 1:1-5](#)).

So the scene is set the man living in polygamy, two wives. One he loved more than the other. One had many children, but the one he really loved could not have any children.

And so her adversary ([1Sa 1:6](#)),

That is Hannah's adversary, or the other wife. So there was friction in the house between the two wives as they bide for the attention and the love of the one man. As I said this morning, any man's a fool who thinks that he can satisfy all of the needs of two women. You're bound to have problems. So they did.

The inner strife within the house as

Peninnah provoked Hannah, made her fret, because that she was barren ([1Sa 1:6](#)).

Really pressed the issue, really taunted her over her inability to have children. So Elkanah was heading for Shiloh, vacation time, feast time. Time of celebration, it's to be a time of merriment and rejoicing as you go up to the house of God to worship. It's

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interesting to me that God wants the worship of Him to be a rejoicing, happy experience. They called them the "feasts" and they were just feasts. People would go up and just have a great feast. It was a holiday, a time in which they worshiped God and gathered before Him, a time of rejoicing and happiness. So Elkanah was heading up for this time and taking his wife Hannah with him. She was weeping all the time and wouldn't eat.

So Elkanah said to her, Why do you weep? why aren't you eating? why is your heart so grieved? am I not better to you than ten sons? ["Can't you be happy with me?"] So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. And Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord. And she was in bitterness of soul, and she prayed unto the Lord, and she wept sore. And during this period she vowed a vow unto the Lord, and she said, Lord if you will indeed look upon the affliction of your handmaid, and remember me, and not forget me, but if you will give unto me a man child, ["Give me a boy"] I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head ([1Sa 1:8-11](#)).

"Lord if you'll just give me a son, I'll give him back to You, but I want a son, I'll give him back to You all the days of his life."

Now there are many times when we pray and we wonder why our prayers are not answered immediately. There are some times in which God delays the answer to our prayers. Here's the case now Hannah no doubt had been praying about a son for a long time. Cursed with barrenness she had no doubt brought it before the Lord many times in prayer. "Oh God give me a son. Lord I want a son. God why haven't You given me a son?" Yet there seemingly was no answer to her prayer. God delayed the answer.

Now with Hannah there was a reason why God delayed the answer, and with us. If God delays the answer of our prayers there's a reason for His delay. Often times, with Hannah, the reason being that God is seeking to bring us around to His purposes. The Bible says, "The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the entire earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are completely towards Him" ([2 Chronicles 16:9](#)). So God was waiting, bringing Hannah around to where her heart was completely towards God, and the things of God, and that which God wanted.

God was needing a man to lead Israel during these desperate days of transition. He needed a man that He could speak to, and that would speak to the people for Him. For during this period of their history, they had not really heard from God. It says, "The word of the Lord was precious", it means it was scarce. God wasn't speaking to men. There were no men whose ears were really open to God.

So Hannah finally out of the desperation of her soul said, "Lord, if You will just give to me a son, I will give him back to You all the days of his life." This is what God was desiring, this is what God was looking for, and so when God brought her around to this place of that commitment to God. "Lord, if You'll just give me a son, I'll give him back to You." Then the Lord answered her prayer.

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When God now gives, He many times delays giving, in order that He might give more, or in order that what is given is used for His purposes. I feel that many times when we are praying, the Bible says, "We don't always know how to pray as we ought" ([Romans 8:26](#)), and this is very true. We oftentimes pray for things that in our initial prayer, we're thinking about ourselves. James says, "You haven't received naught because you asked amiss that you might consume it upon your own lusts" ([James 4:3](#)). Much of our prayer is that of personal kind of requests to God, as we almost look at God as a Santa Claus kind of "I want this. I want that. I want this." We're thinking not really of God, but we are thinking of ourselves. What I want, rather than what does God want.

Now the Bible says, "If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us, and if He hears us, then we have received the petitions that we have asked of Him." Much of what we ask is not really according to God's will, it's according to my own desires. I'm thinking of myself, how I can use it for me.

Hannah no doubt was for a long time just thinking, "Lord, I want a son so that other wife will shut her mouth", tired of this business of being chided all the time. "Lord, I want a son that I can nurse. I want a son that I can take care of." She was thinking of herself. Now through the processes of God's working in her life, she was a godly woman, it is expressed as we get into the next chapter and we read of her rejoicing when God answered her prayer. We see that in the praise of Hannah, there are earmarks of a depth of spirituality. Now she's brought into harmony with the purposes of God. "God just give me a son, and I will give him back to You all the days of his life."

Now it came to pass, as she was continuing to pray before the Lord, that Eli the priest sitting there on the post was watching her. [He saw the grimaces on her face, and] he saw her mouth moving [and he listened], but he couldn't hear any words: and so he just concluded that she was drunk. And he said unto her, Hey woman why are you so drunk? put away your wine. And she answered, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord ([1Sa 1:12-15](#)).

Denied the accusations of the priest and just said, "I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit. I poured out my soul to the Lord."

Don't count your handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken unto the Lord. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that you have asked of him. And she said, Let your handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, did eat, her countenance was no more sad ([1Sa 1:16-18](#)).

She believed the word of the Lord. Change of attitude. She didn't go around looking sad anymore. She didn't go around not eating. Her husband probably wondered the change in her whole attitude. But it was faith, believing the word of God through the priest. Believing that God was now gonna give her a son. It would be actually contrary to fact

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for her to go on with sadness and grieving, not eating. God has promised. He's going to answer.

Herein is of course one of the marks of faith, acting as though you have it, before you actually have it. It's an attitude. If God has promised to give it to me, why should I go around just moping, and sad, and sorrowful? Why should I go around worried and concerned if God has promised to give it to me? If I really believe the promises of God, I'm gonna start rejoicing. I'm gonna start, actually, my attitude, and my actions are gonna be in harmony with what I actually believe. So because she believed the promise of God, her countenance would change.

She started eating.

And so they rose up in the morning early, and after worship they headed back to their house at Ramah: [Which is just north of Jerusalem, the modern city of Ram Allah.] and Hannah became pregnant; the Lord remembered her. Therefore it came to pass, when the time was come after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, [Which means "asked of God".] Because I asked him of the Lord. [So Samuel means "asked of God".] And the man Elkanah, and all of his house, went up to offer to the Lord yearly the sacrifice, and to make his vow. But Hannah did not go up; for she said to her husband, I will not go up until I have weaned the child, and then I will take him to the house of God that he may abide there. So Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seems good; wait until you've weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave, and nursed her son [actually] until she had weaned him. And after Samuel had been weaned, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, a bushel of flour, a bottle of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that was here, [I'm the woman if you'll remember that was lying there, and you thought I was drunk.] and I told you I was asking God for a son. And this is the son for whom I prayed ([1Sa 1:19-27](#)).

"Here he is, here's the proof, here's my little boy."

There have been many occasions here at Calvary Chapel where young couples have come up and have expressed their desire to have a child. Maybe they've been married four, or five, six years, some of them married ten, twelve years, and they come up and they express their desire for a child. "We've been married this long, and we've never been able to have a child. Oh, we're thinking about adopting, but we'd love to have a child." We have laid hands on them, and prayed for them, and a year or two later, they come up and say, "This is the baby that we prayed for. This is the child." We have these same kinds of experiences. A lot of little miracle babies around here. Where God has answered the prayer and has blessed the home with children.

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She was excited, she said, "Oh my lord, I'm the woman. I'm the one that was here. It was for this child that I prayed. The Lord has given me my petition that I've asked of Him."

Therefore I am giving him back to the Lord; as long as he lives he shall be the Lord's. And he worshiped the Lord there ([1Sa 1:28](#)).

Now this is where we get the dedication of babies on Sunday morning. It is more or less following this same pattern of Hannah. We've asked God to bless, to give us children, recognizing that these children are gifts from God, we bring them back to God and say "God, you have given us this child, but we want to give this child to You, for Your purposes that the child might serve You all the days of their life. That Your purposes and Your will might be accomplished within the child." So the dedication of our babies unto the Lord.

Now in the New Testament when Jesus was born, they came and offered the sacrifices for the firstborn child and they presented Him unto the Lord. The priests lifted Him up in his hands and blessed Him, and said, "Now Lord let thy servant die in peace for You've allowed me to see Your salvation." But again the idea of, "Here's my child Lord. I present it to You that You might use this life for whatever purposes, that Your influences might come upon this child and lead and guide him as he grows, and develops. And Lord, I give him back to You all the days of his life." I think that it's a marvelous gesture on the part of a parent. We dedicated all of our children to the Lord, actually between us dedicated them to the Lord before they were ever born.

Now it is true that when they're old enough they've got to make their own commitments, and their own decisions. The fact that we dedicated them to the Lord doesn't follow that they are going to consent to that dedication when they get old enough to do what they want. But hopefully by that time we will have given enough spiritual input and all that when they are older, they will not depart from that faith that they have gained while growing up under our tutorage. So it is more than just dedicating; there is a responsibility as parents to train up the child, or to catechize the child in the ways of the Lord. To teach them, to instruct them in the ways of the Lord, so that as they grow older these will be things that have been planted in their hearts and minds deeply, become a very part of their very thinking processes

## Overview of 1st Samuel Chapter 1 by Chuck Swindoll

### Who wrote the book?

Together, 1 and 2 Samuel form one book in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint, was the first version to divide the material into two parts. Though named after its main character, the prophet Samuel, the book does not claim an author. However, Samuel may have written, and he certainly supplied, the information for [1 Samuel 1:1–24:22](#), which is a biography of his life and career up to his death. [First](#)

[Chronicles 29:29](#) notes that Samuel, along with Nathan and Gad, recorded the “acts of King David.” Evidence in the writing suggests that the books of 1 and 2 Samuel were compiled by someone from the prophetic school who used documents from Samuel, Nathan, and Gad.<sup>1</sup>

## **Where are we?**

[First Samuel 27:6](#) refers to the divided monarchy, when the ten tribes of Israel rebelled against the two tribes of Judah, which occurred after Solomon’s reign. From this we can conclude that the book came together sometime after the death of David (971 BC) and perhaps even after the death of Solomon (931 BC). Because the book contains no reference to the Assyrian invasion in 722 BC, it likely originated before the period of the exile.

The events that happen in 1 Samuel took place over a period of about 110 years, stretching from the closing days of the judges, when Samuel was born (ca. 1120 BC) through the death of Saul (1011 BC). We see the birth of Samuel, his call from God and subsequent prophetic ministry, the rise and fall of King Saul, and the anointing and maturity of young David.

First Samuel is set in the land of Israel, where the Hebrews invaded and settled (see Joshua). Numerous other peoples continued to dwell alongside Israel, often disrupting the peace and encouraging the Israelites to stray from their faith.

## **Why is First Samuel so important?**

In this critical period of Israel’s history, the people of God transformed from a loosely affiliated group of tribes into a unified nation under a form of government headed by a king. They traded the turmoil of life under the judges for the stability of a strong central monarchy.

First Samuel focuses on the establishment of that monarchy. The people demanded a king, similar to the kings of the surrounding nations ([1 Samuel 8:5](#)). Saul, the first king, though “head and shoulders above the rest” did not have a righteous heart, and his line was destined never to inherit the crown (9:1–15:35). God instructed Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem, as the next king (16:1–13).

Much of 1 Samuel follows David’s exploits as a young musician, shepherd, and warrior. We witness his underdog victory over Goliath (17:1–58), his deep friendship with Jonathan (18:1–4), and his growing military prowess (18:5–30). He waited patiently for the throne, often pursued and driven into hiding by Saul. The book concludes with Saul’s death (31:1–13), which serves as a natural dividing marker between 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel.

## What's the big idea?

First Samuel chronicles the beginning of Israel's monarchy, following the lives of the prophet Samuel, the ill-fated King Saul, and God's ultimate choice of David as king. Several themes feature prominently.

*Providence:* God repeatedly made everyday events work for His purposes. He used Hannah's contentious relationship with Peninnah ([1 Samuel 1:1–28](#)), led Saul to Samuel during Saul's search for lost donkeys (9:1–27), and caused David to learn of Goliath while taking food to his brothers (17:1–58). These are but a few examples.

*Kingship:* As the divine King, God designated a human vice-regent, David, to rule over His people. This history validates David's house as the legitimate rulers of Israel. It also fulfills Jacob's promise that the scepter will never depart from Judah, David's tribe ([Genesis 49:10](#)).

*Reversal of human fortune:* Hannah's barrenness gave way to children ([1 Samuel 1:1–28](#); [2:21](#)); Samuel became prophet instead of Eli's sons (2:12; 3:13); Saul rose to prominence though he was from a lowly tribe; and David was anointed king though he was the youngest son (16:1–13). Normal human patterns were reversed by God so that His plan could be furthered, showing His sovereignty over all.

## How do I apply this?

God is still sovereign in the twenty-first century. He will accomplish His purposes with or without our cooperation. But as was true in the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David, our response to God's call affects our outcome. Will we obey Him as Samuel and David did and live lives marked by blessing? Or will we, like Saul, try to live on our own terms? "To obey is better than sacrifice," Samuel told Saul ([1 Samuel 15:22](#)). That truth still speaks to us today.