

The Royal Kingdom: Part 1A: Samuel

Suggested Reading: 1 Samuel Chapters 1-7

Corresponds with Workbook pp 79-81

Summary and Overview:

With the death of the successful military leader Joshua, Israel enters into a 350- year period of social and moral decline, with intermarriage among their pagan neighbors and the worship of foreign gods. The last and greatest of the judges, Samuel, arrives on the scene in the midst of this decline, and born of the prayers of his mother, he leads Israel to a spiritual revival and renewal of covenant faithfulness, through his own persistent, intercessory prayer.

Samuel bridges the era of the Judges to the establishment of the monarchy, by anointing the two first kings of Israel: Saul and then the youth David. Reluctant to do so, Samuel acquiesces to the people's demands, who are not content to have God as their King. With the establishment of the Davidic Covenant, the last Covenant of the Old Testament, however, the promise of a future, eternal King will form the hope of the future major and minor prophets and form the backdrop to the Messianic expectation of Jesus' time. Jesus will come to fulfill God's promise of a King who will both redeem and save His people from bondage and sin.

The four key leaders following the growth from a nation (with Moses) to a kingdom (with David) are: Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. We will pause to look at each of these major figures in depth for both life application and to fully understand this pivotal period in Jewish history.

1 Samuel Chapter 1

Like the original disciples, you may have wondered, "Lord, teach us to pray."¹ We first meet barren Hannah in the opening verses of 1 Samuel and gain a precious insight into her interior life. Let's join "Hannah's School of Prayer," whose lessons would include:

(1:9)- Be aware you are in the Lord's presence, and present yourself 'as is' to God.

(1:10)- Be emotionally honest.

Hannah wept bitterly and copiously, expressing raw emotion.

Have you ever been angry at God or hesitant to express real and raw emotion to God? How might this be inhibiting your healing or progression in your spiritual growth? _____

(1:13, 15)- Pour out your undiluted concerns and petitions clearly.

Hannah prayed silently but earnestly, defending herself against the priest Eli's false accusations that she was drunk, with the words: "I was only pouring out my troubles to the Lord." (See Philippians 4:6-7). Like Eli, we may frequently misinterpret the motives or conduct of others; God alone knows thoughts and hearts.

¹ Luke 11:1.

(1:16)- *Prayer is to be grounded in real-life drama.*

Hannah says: "My prayer has been prompted by my deep sorrow and misery."

(1:18)- *Prayer can have a powerful, calming effect.*

After the catharsis of intense prayer and consoling words from Eli, Hannah ate and drank, breaking her fast of misery, and "no longer appeared downcast." Her very demeanor and face changed, and she was then able to fully worship the Lord (1:19). It is interesting to note that her countenance changed after she met with God—not after she received an answer to her prayer. She was now content whatever the outcome, but had renewed hope through Eli's blessing, that her petition would be answered. With joy and a light heart, she then conceived Samuel, who in turn would teach the people how to pray. Born of prayer, Samuel would himself become a mighty prayer warrior.

Who can you teach to pray in your family or circle of influence? Do so enthusiastically, as it will affect a future you will never see! _____

It was difficult for Hannah to wait to conceive. Do you accept God's delays or surprises with grace? _____

"First Samuel 1:20 says Hannah exclaimed of her newborn son, 'I have asked him from the Lord.' Hannah had a heart to ask and receive, because she knew the Lord had a heart to give. She knew that if her barrenness was to end, it must end by the hand of God. That is why she brought her barrenness to the Lord."²

What does God's intervention to bring about Samuel's birth hint about the future importance of this child? The pattern of barren women having children that prove to be pivotal players in the Salvation Story includes whom else? Genesis 21:1-3, 25:31; 30:22-24; Judges 13:2, 24; Ruth 4:13; Luke 1:7, 24-25. _____

Hannah's name means "grace," and Samuel, "God hears." Hannah lived in the hill country of Ephraim, at Ramah, about five miles north of Jerusalem. Shiloh was located about 15 miles from Ramah. Some scholars believe that Ramah is the Arimathea of the New Testament (Matthew 27:57).

Giving Our Children to the Lord (1:27-28)

What incredible sacrifice did Hannah offer the Lord (1:27-28)? _____

Given the corrupt environment in and around the Temple, with the transgressions of Eli's sons, this was an act of faith to leave three-year old Samuel (the typical age of weaning). She appears to have consecrated Samuel as a life-long Nazarite and promised for him to serve as a priest in the sanctuary. (Note that his father Elkanah was a descendant of Kohath, one of the three

² Barber, Wayne. *Following God: Life Principles from the Women of the Bible*. (c) 1994 by AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, TN, pp 89.

original sons of Levi, who served as musicians at the tabernacle in David’s time (1 Chronicles 6:31-34). Therefore, by lineage, Samuel was a Levitical priest.

Have you given your children fully to the Lord? _____

“The cross marks the moment of deepest surrender in the life of the Blessed Mother (John 19:25). There was nothing she loved more than her Son, and she offered Him back to the One who gave Him to her in the first place.... In order to surrender to God what we love most, we have to trust that He will take care of who or what we offer. In order to trust Him, we need to acknowledge the truth of God’s words in Isaiah 55:8-9. We hesitate to surrender what we love to God because we are afraid. We fear that He will allow something other than what we would choose. Think of something that’s hard to surrender to God. Then read Jesus’ words to Peter, receiving them as His words for you: ‘What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand.’ Can you exercise hope today even though you can’t see the why behind God’s actions?

In order to place what is most precious to us in God’s capable hands, we have to keep our focus on His sacrificial, never-diminishing love. When we rest under His tender, pure, compassionate, and true love, we feel secure. That security reminds us that we don’t need to be afraid. God is in control. He loves us. He has the big picture in mind. We do not.

Dear Lord,

My life and that of all I hold most dear are safe with you. I know that You came to rescue me, and You want to rescue those I love most, as well. They are each on their own journey, and the way You will capture their hearts is between You and them. I release my loved one into Your care. There’s no safer place than in Your hands. Amen.”³

1 Samuel Chapter 2

What do you learn from her song of worship in 1 Samuel 2:1-10? What themes do you pull out that are meaningful to you? _____

Summary of Themes of Hannah’s Song of Worship

(2:1)- “My heart exults in the Lord.”

Where do you find your joy? _____

(2:2)- “There is no Holy One like the Lord; there is no Rock like our God.”

What does it mean to worship a Holy God? Catch a glimpse in Isaiah 6:1-8; Revelation 4:8-11; Revelation 19:11-16 _____

³ Brenninkmeyer, Lisa. *Be Still: A Daily Devotional to Quiet Your Heart*/October 25, 2021. (c) 2019 by Walking with Purpose, Inc., pp 330.

To whom or what do you turn for security? _____

(2:3)- “God judges deeds.”

(2:7)- “The Lord humbles; he also exalts.”

“The central theme of the Song of Hannah is the Lord’s humbling of the exalted and exultation of the lowly, culminating in the exaltation of ‘the power of his anointed’ (Hebrew *mashiah*, or Messiah) (1 Sam 2:1-10). This theme will dominate the narrative of Samuel, in which one character after another is exalted to power from a state of lowliness, only to become proud and then experience God’s humbling in turn.”⁴

(2:8)- “The Lord raises the needy from the dust. He lifts up the poor.” See Psalm 145:14-20.

(2:9-10)- The battle is the Lord’s, and he will protect His faithful.

(2:10)- Introduces the theme of King and God’s anointed One!

Who will be the ultimate fulfilment of Hannah’s prophetic words? _____

How is Hannah’s song of praise mirrored in Mary’s Magnificat in Luke 1:46-55? How is Hannah a “type” of Mary (in Catholic typology)? _____

“Parallels Between Hannah and Mary

Hannah, Mother of Samuel

Mary, Mother of Jesus

Hannah’s name= “grace”

Mary is “full of grace”

“Maid servant” who “finds favor”
(1 Sam 1:18)

“Handmaid” who has “found favor”
(Luke 1:30, 38)

Woman of “misery” or “lowliness”
who is “exalted” (1 Sam 2:1)

Woman “of low estate” who is “exalted”
(Luke 1:48; 1:52)

“My heart exults in the Lord!”
(1 Sam 2:1)

“My soul magnifies the Lord” (Luke 1:46)

Samuel “grew in stature and in favor”
with “the Lord and with men”
(1 Sam 2:26)

Jesus “increased in wisdom and in stature,
and in favor with God and men”
(Luke 2:52)

⁴ Bergsma, John and Brant Pitre. *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament*. (c) 2018 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco, CA, pp 356-357.

In summary, the Church recognizes Hannah and Samuel as types of Mary and Jesus, following the example of Saint Luke, who composed the infancy narratives of our Lord (Luke 1-2) in such a way that they echo and recapitulate the early life of Samuel. Hannah typifies Mary as the woman of grace who miraculously conceives a child destined to be prophet and savior of Israel, and rejoices in a song of thanksgiving for God’s power displayed in his elevation of the humble. Samuel typifies Christ as the prophet marked from birth who responds with immediate docility to the call of God (1 Sam 3:1-10) and will deliver Israel from oppression by their enemies (1 Sam 7:10-14) due to the poor leadership of his people (1 Sam 2:12, 22; John 10:7-15) by establishing a permanent kingship (1 Sam 16:13).”⁵

Given that we are still in the period of rampant corruption socially, morally, and within the Levitical priesthood, is it surprising to find that Eli’s two sons serving in the Temple demonstrated what two concerning practices?

*(2:22)- _____

*(2:33)- _____

What was really going on with this sacrificial meat violation? “Hophni and Phineas violated the Lord’s rule about the fat (Leviticus 7:25, 31) by insisting that they be given their portion of meat raw from the animal before it was sacrificed. When the people who brought the sacrifice protested that the fat, at least, must be burned first as the law prescribed (2:15), they were voicing their fear that their sacrifices were not being properly offered, and therefore would not be acceptable to God. The sons of Eli were clearly distressing the people as well as despising the offerings of the Lord.”⁶

Keep in mind that young Samuel is growing up in this environment! Cling to the hope that God can guard the purity of your children even within a corrupt, immoral environment. What faith Hannah had to keep leaving her son there every year when they visited Shiloh to worship!

Contrast Samuel with Eli’s sons (2:26) and later with Jesus (Luke 2:40). _____

Eli’s Parental Lack of Firm Discipline

What rebuke does Eli receive from “a man of God” in 2:29? What calamities does he foretell (2:30-35; See 3:13)? _____

It is interesting that God describes Eli’s sons as “wearing out their eyes in consuming greed.” How might this apply to our consumer society (or family) and gluttony (food, sex, etc)? _____

⁵ Bergsma, pp 374-375; 379.

⁶ *Community Bible Study: Servants of God/ Lesson 15: Hannah, Eli, and Samuel.* (c) 1998. Reston, VA. pp 4.

1 Samuel Chapter 3: Hearing God

What two realities describe the climate in which Samuel lived as a youth, according to 3:1?
(a) _____
(b) _____

What is the both the physical and spiritual condition of Eli (3:2), and yet what flickering hope remains (3:3)? _____

The decline of Eli and the rise of Samuel is chronicled in 3:4-21.

Summarize young Samuel's first encounter with the Lord (3:4-18). _____

Why did young Samuel not initially recognize the voice of God? (3:7) _____

What does Jesus later say in Matthew 11:27 and Luke 10:22? _____

What has the Lord revealed to you? _____

"Perhaps the most indisputable sign of vibrant life in and with Christ is the increasing ability to hear the low murmur by which he calls his beloved 'Forth and abroad!' out of herself, her plans, her ambitions, her hopes, into the caverns of his incredible designs where only the language of total giving is spoken"- Mother Mary Francis, P.C.C.⁷

How might God speak to you today? John 14:17, 26; 2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 1:1-2

What is to be our posture of prayer? (3:9) _____
In prayer, what is your typical ratio of speaking to listening? Are you God's servant, or do you approach God to do your bidding? Who is serving whom? _____

Psalm 143:12- "I am your servant, O Lord."

St Bernard- "Greatly blessed is he who hears the voice of the divine whispering in the silence and who often repeats that phrase of Samuel's: 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.'"⁸

What did the Lord specifically tell Samuel in 3:11-14?

(3:11)- National alert: _____

⁷ Francis, Mother Mary, P.C.C. From her book *Forth and Abroad*. Quoted by *Daily Catholic Wisdom*. Accessed October 20, 2021 at yourfriends@catholicwisdom.org.

⁸ *The Navarre Bible: Joshua-Judges*. (c) 2004 by Scepter Publishers, New York, NY, pp 224.

(3:13)- What will happen to Eli and his family? For what reason? _____

What does Eli's reply to Samuel's reluctant sharing of the Lord's judgment tell you about Eli? _____

Do you accept God's will in all situations? _____
See Daniel 3:27-31.

How is Samuel's rise as Israel's final and greatest judge described in 3:19-21? _____

Note: To state that Samuel was confirmed as God's chosen servant from "Dan to Beersheba," implied that all of Israel recognized him as their leader, for Dan is located at the northern tip of Palestine and Beersheba at its most southern point. (3:20)

1 Samuel Chapter Four

The Philistines continued to be Israel's archenemy. Initially the Philistines killed how many Israelites (4:2)? _____ What plan do the Israelites concoct? (4:3) _____

What happened next that was a major low point in Jewish history? (4:10-11; 17) _____

Why did God "let" them be defeated? Can you "use" God as a good luck charm or manipulate Him to do your will? _____
"Israel cannot ignore the covenant and then presume to force God's action according to Israel's desires. Rather, God's power is poured out by grace on those who are faithful and repent of any sin, as Samuel is keen to point out (1 Sam 7:3). Only when God's people turn away from their idols and place their trust in God alone can victory be attained. After the Philistines surrender the Ark to Israel, Samuel leads the people in worship and sacrifice at Mizpah—a priestly leadership never displayed by Eli- and God delivers Israel from her enemies (7:13)."⁹

How did Eli and his daughter-in-law die? (4:18; 22) _____

Before dying after premature childbirth, Phineas' wife named her newborn son _____, which literally means _____ (4:22). Why was this appropriate? _____

See Psalm 78:56-64.

⁹ Gray, Tim and Jeff Cavins. *Walking with God: A Journey Through the Bible*. (c) 2010 by Ascension Press, West Chester, PA, pp 140.

1 Samuel Chapter Five

What catastrophes occurred in the seven-month period during which the ark resided in Philistine territory? Ashdod (5:6) _____

Gath (5:9) _____

Ekron (5:11) _____

How is God revealing His authority and power to the pagans? _____

Lesson learned: The Lord alone deserves our whole-hearted adoration, and no idol can stand in His presence.

1 Samuel Chapter Six

How do the Philistines safely return the Ark to Israel? (6:10-16) _____

It is ironical that these cows were the most obedient of all, marching right back to Israel without deviating from the path!

The Jewish men of Beth-shemesh ask what profound question in 6:20? _____

1 Samuel Chapter Seven

The Israelites send the ark to Kiriath-jearim, where it stays for 20 years, and major religious reform ensues (7:2).

How do you “devote (yourself to the Lord) and worship Him alone”? (7:3) _____

Revival and massive repentance occurred at Mizpah, “and Samuel began to judge the Israelites” (7:6). Samuel’s intercessory prayer saves the Israelites from the attacking Philistines, who may have misconstrued their gathering as a war maneuver. How was this battle victory the Lord’s? (7:10) _____

Geographical note: Mizpah, (along with Bethel), was one of the two primary great Israelite shrines of the North, located some 12 miles north of Jerusalem. See Judges 20:1-2.

What peace did the Jews then enjoy? (7:13-14) _____

Summary of Samuel’s life:

“The sacred writer shows Samuel to have three key functions, like a new Moses: as **prophet** he preaches to the people, causing them to have a change of heart (7:3-6) and he intercedes for them (7:7-8); as **priest** he offers burnt offerings to the Lord (7:9-12); as **judge** and leader he ensures a long period of peace (7:13-17). With him the era of the judge-rulers of Israel will come to an end.”¹⁰

¹⁰ *The Navarre Bible: Joshua-Kings.* pp 233.

The Role of Liturgy in 1 & 2 Samuel

It is interesting to note the movement of the Ark through the Book of First Samuel. It begins in Shiloh, “with the liturgy under the direction of the negligent Eli and his actively sacrilegious sons, who commit grave liturgical abuses. This continues the characterization of the period of judges as one of **disordered worship**. More directly, it also results in a temporary loss of the ark to the Philistines. Even when the ark is returned, it remains separated from the Tabernacle and the Holy of Holies: this disorder remains throughout the books of Samuel. It is only finally corrected when Solomon reunites the Tabernacle and ark, builds a new Holy of Holies, and brings the ark into it (1 Kings 8:4-6). Thus, under the prophet Samuel, worship in Israel appears to have been irregular, directed by Samuel personally by virtue of his prophetic authority.... David’s final recorded acts include the purchase of the place for the permanent dwelling of the ark (2 Sam 24). So the plot of the books of Samuel move from the corrupted worship at Shiloh under the incompetent Eli (1 Sam 2:12-17) to David (the Melchizedekian priest-king) offering efficacious sacrifice at the future site of the Temple (2 Sam 24:25).”¹¹

What’s next?

“Although named after the prophet Samuel, the story of whose birth introduces the work, the main figure of these two books is without doubt David. He is the central figure who connects nearly every other major character in the narrative: Samuel is the prophet who anoints David; Saul is the royal predecessor and father-in-law of David; etc. After 1 Samuel 16 David takes over from Moses as *the* dominant figure of the Old Testament: whereas Moses is mentioned 767 times in the Jewish Scriptures, David is mentioned 1075 times. The second half of 1 Samuel and the entire book of 2 Samuel are dedicated to detailing David’s life. Intriguingly, the Old Testament pays more *biographical* attention to David than to any other character—more so even than Moses. Indeed, in the entire canon, the only figure to eclipse David in terms of biographical attention will be Jesus himself in the four Gospels.

The primary reason for David’s significance within the Old Testament is his reception of an everlasting covenant from God (2 Sam 7:8-16; 2 Sam 23:5; Psalm 89:20-37) that bestows upon himself and his heirs the status of *son of God* and universal high king (Ps 89:27). The sonship that was offered to Israel at Sinai, but rejected in its subsequent history of idolatry, is granted now to the Davidic king.”¹² With the salvific work of Christ, we shall all, Jew and Gentile alike, be graciously invited to become sons and daughters of the King.

(c) Glenda Canfield, October 2021.

¹¹ Bergsma, pp 352.

¹² Bergsma, John and Brant Pitre. *A Catholic Introduction to the Bible: Old Testament*. (c) 2018 by Ignatius Press, San Francisco, CA, pp 352-353.