

# The First Book of Samuel

## A Bible Study Workbook

Larry White

# *1 Samuel*

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By Larry White

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# Introduction

Some of the most interesting passages in the Old Testament can be found in the book of 1 Samuel. In this book we will see a time that spans the birth of Samuel to the rise of David and many stories in between.

In this study we will follow along with the book but we won't just look at the chapters. I want us to look at the individual stories that are presented and even more importantly, I want us to look at the lessons and applications we may be able to glean out of this book for 21st Century America.

In this study we will look at the following stories:

- Birth of Samuel and the faith of his mother
- Eli and his sons
- Samuel's early life and call as a prophet
- Wrath of God over the ark
- Choosing a king over God
- Saul chosen king
- Instructions from Samuel to the king
- Saul prevails in battle
- Saul defies Samuel and God
- A new king will be chosen
- King Agag and the spoils of battle
- Samuel calls out Saul
- God chooses David
- David chosen as armor bearer for Saul
- David and Goliath
- Jonathan and David and their relationship
- Saul turns against David
- David is protected
- Jonathan/David covenant
- David flees Saul/Saul kills priests of the Lord
- David spares Saul's life (part 1)
- Samuel dies
- David/Nabal/Abigail
- David spares Saul's life (part 2)

## 2      *1 Samuel*

- David flees to the Philistines
- Spirit medium/Samuel/Saul (God does not answer Saul)
- Saul and sons killed in battle

These 27 events will give us a really good picture of 1 Samuel. As we look into these events I pray that we will be able to make applications to our lives today and that as we make those applications I pray that it will ultimately lead to us serving God better.

# Lesson 1

## *Prayer and Faith*

### 1 Samuel 1–2

**A**s we begin this study of 1 Samuel there is no better place that we could start than the beginning. 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 2 chronicles a story of prayer and a story of faith. I think there are many times that we may pray for something but not truly believe God will hear us. If we believe God hears us, then we may not believe He will answer us and the prayer that we make. In this section we will look at a different type of faith.

Let's take a closer look at this story and see what applications we can make:

In 1 Samuel 1:1–3 we see there was a man named Elkanah and that he had two wives. The wives were named Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah had no children but Peninnah had children. Verse 3 says that Elkanah would go up from his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord in Shiloh where the priests were located.

*What can we deduct about the faith of Elkanah based on his yearly trip to sacrifice to the Lord?*

In 1 Samuel 1 verses 4–8 we see the fact that on the day Elkanah sacrificed, he would give a portion to Peninnah and her children, but he would give a double portion to Hannah. Verse 5 tells us he loved Hannah but that the Lord had closed her womb.

This was not a popular decision to Peninnah. Verse 6 says Peninnah was a rival to Hannah and that she would “provoke her bitterly to irritate her”. This was not a one-time thing or provocation. We see this was something that happened yearly when they all went to the house of the Lord. The effect on Hannah was noticeable and significant. Verse 7 says that Hannah would weep and not eat. Elkanah would try to comfort her but it was not really enough.



*Why do you think Peninnah would provoke Hannah?*

*What effect did this provocation have on Hannah?*

*What in this instance sheds light on the character of Elkanah?*

As we continue in 1 Samuel 1 verses 9-18 we see where Hannah's faith lies. Hannah has been the subject of ridicule by someone that should have been in her corner. This most certainly could have crushed her spirit. Verse 10 says that Hannah was "greatly distressed" and that she "prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly". Hannah then made a vow to the Lord. Hannah promised that if the Lord would remember her and give her a son she would "give him to the Lord all the days of his life" and a razor would never come upon his head (Nazarite vow).

*When Hannah was distressed what was her solution?*

*What does that say about her faith?*

I think it is important for us to note that Hannah was distressed and was weeping bitterly. In this instance, probably when she was as low as she had been her whole life, her answer was to turn to God. Hannah could have lashed out against Peninnah. Hannah could have gone to Elkanah for comfort. Hannah could have implored Elkanah to get rid of Peninnah and her children. This was not the response that Hannah made. Hannah implored God to help her.

Of particular note here is the fact that Hannah vows to the Lord to give the child to his service all the days of his life. Think about what this means to Hannah. The one thing Hannah wanted most in her life was a son. This would be something that would have taken the ridicule away from her. This would have been a person that she could have with her all the time. This would have been the most important person in her life. Hannah was promising to not be with her son. She could not be there while he was serving the Lord. She knew that she would probably only see this son when she came for the yearly sacrifice. She knew she would still have to see Peninnah and her children on a daily basis and she knew she would have to continue to see Elkanah with his other children.

Hannah was willing to endure all of this and really sacrifice her own happiness if the Lord would just bless her. A normal human reaction would be to take the child that she would be blessed with and never give him up. Hannah set an example with this promise. She was saying that she knew the Lord would bless her and because of that she would be willing to give her only son (at the time) to serve him forever.

*How difficult would a vow like this be for Hannah?*

*Why would she make such a vow?*

At the end of this section Eli (who had initially thought Hannah was drunk) told Hannah to “Go in peace” and “May the God of Israel grant your petition”. Hannah went away and ate and her face was no longer sad. I don’t want us to just skim over verse 18. Hannah went away and her face was no longer sad. So what happened here? Hannah had faith and at this point she had given all of her worry and all of her concern to God in prayer. She knew that no matter what took place from that point forward, God was in control, and she had laid all of her concerns at his throne. At that point she was able to go away and no longer be sad.

*How do we you feel when you have just given all of your concerns to God?*

*Why might you have a feeling of peace when you have laid it all out to God?*

This however is not the end of the story. The next morning Hannah and all of her family rose early and worshiped God. Upon returning home the Lord remembered Hannah and she conceived and gave birth to a son that she named Samuel.

Now is really the time that Hannah's faith would have been tested. She has made this vow that we have discussed and now it is time for her to actually fulfill her part. Imagine the thought of utter joy when this son is born to Hannah. Imagine the feeling of being blessed by God with a son. Now imagine the remembrance of the vow you have made and the thought of allowing that child to go.

The very next time Elkanah went up to worship Hannah did not go up with him. She said that she would wait for the child to be weaned and in v. 22 she says that once that happened, she would bring him up so that he may appear before the Lord and stay there forever. Hannah has every intention to keep the vow she made to the Lord. He was faithful and granted her request. This woman of faith was not going to go back on what she had promised to God.

Once Samuel was weaned, Hannah took Samuel with her along with a sacrifice to the Lord. Hannah took Samuel to Eli the priest and reminded him that she was the woman that had stood before him praying to the Lord. In vv. 27–28 we see that Hannah fulfilled her vow. She dedicated Samuel to the Lord and he worshiped there.

In the first 11 verses of chapter 2 we see Hannah's song of Thanksgiving. In that song, Hannah prays and praises the Lord. Hannah says that salvation is in the Lord and there is no one holy like the Lord. Hannah says that the bows of the mighty are shattered and the feeble gird on their strength.

Hannah says even the barren give birth to seven but she who has many children languishes. Hannah says that the Lord makes the poor rich and He raises the poor from the dust.

Hannah had just gone through a situation where she had probably felt as low as she could have felt. In that despair she turned to God, and He blessed her. Once she was blessed she did not forget from where she came. She remembered God in her blessings just as she had remembered God in her troubles. Many times we remember God in our times of trial.

*Why might it be harder to remember in times of blessings?*

*How can we be more like Hannah?*

Finally, in v. 11 we see Elkanah (and his family) went back to his home. Samuel was left to minister to the Lord before Eli the priest. We see here in the end of this story that Hannah did in fact keep her promise to God. Hannah would have left with her husband and she would have left her only son there to serve God all the days of his life.

Hannah was willing to give of her best for God when God blessed her. Hannah had already made plans to give of her best to God before He even blessed her. The plans that Hannah made to serve God and give back to Him were made when she was in the worst moments of her life.

We all go through bad moments in our lives, but we should all have faith that God will hear and answer our prayers. When Hannah prayed to God, she had faith He would hear her plea and He did. Hannah remembered her promise to God when He blessed her. Hannah's faith in good time and bad times is something we can look to as an example.

*Did God use the faith of Hannah to further His will?*

Hannah prayed in faith and God used Samuel for his good purpose. It is not unlike the conversion of Saul in Acts 9. Once we get past Saul on the road to Damascus we see him praying. Acts does not come out and say this, but we have every reason to think Saul was praying in faith. We know how this all turned out. God would use Saul/Paul for his purpose.

Here is the thing: When you pray, pray in faith. When God answers your prayer in the way you thought or in a totally different way, remember God. Understand what James tells his readers in James 5:13–15:

Is anyone among you suffering? Then he must pray. Is anyone cheerful? He is to sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.

I hope and pray we all have the faith of Hannah. I pray that we turn to God in good times and bad.