

1 SAMUEL

The Miraculous Birth of Samuel

1 Samuel 1

Icebreaker

Have you ever had a time when you got lost (or separated from your parents) and were unsure how to find your way back to safety? What thoughts did you have?

Context

As we begin our journey through 1 Samuel, it is important to remember that this book is written as a narrative or story. It is constructed in such a way as to tell readers what occurred and communicate important truths to the reader. Stories are meant to engage our minds and hearts; to help us put ourselves in the middle of the story and experience what took place to the characters and what was happening around them. As you start your study, you would be well served to read through the passage as a whole (out loud) to capture the facts and the emotion that is being told within the story.

Discuss

1. Read Judges 21:25. **What do you think is the spiritual and moral condition of Israel based on this verse? Would you want to live in a place where the people lived this way? Why or why not?**
2. Leland Ryken, in speaking about narratives, wrote,

A good story does, indeed, entertain us, and it embodies human experience in such a way as to lead us to relive it along with the characters in the story. But a story is also intended by the author to convey a message. Further, this message can at some point be formulated as ideas. The literary term for such ideas is themes (generalizations about life).

Ryken, L. (2015). [How Bible Stories Work: A Guided Study of Biblical Narrative](#) (p. 14). Lexham Press.

What is the message (or theme) of today's passage?

3. List the main characters in this passage:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____ (He acts for the first time in verse 19)



4. In a culture where people are not obedient to God, **what stands out about Elkanah and Hannah in the first 5 verses? What character traits would a person need to exhibit to be spiritually faithful/active when others around you are "doing what is right in their own eyes"?**
5. Look at verses 4-6. **Based on what we are told in these verses was Peninnah publicly "spiritual"? How would you describe Peninnah's private character?** Read Matthew 23:1-5a. **What does Jesus think about people who are different people publicly versus privately?**
6. **What are good qualities exhibited by Elkanah? What are some bad qualities exhibited by Elkanah? What can husbands learn from Elkanah that we can apply today?**
7. **What are good qualities exhibited by Hannah?**
8. Read verses 10-11. **Have you ever prayed a "prayer of desperation" before? How do we keep a prayer of desperation from becoming an attempt to manipulate God to get what we want?** [See Luke 22:41-44]
9. **What are good qualities exhibited by Eli? Bad qualities? What, if anything, do we learn about Eli's spiritual discernment that he can't tell the difference between a drunk person and a person who is sincerely praying to God?**
10. Read 1 Samuel 1:19-20 & John 10:1-3. **How does the John passage help us understand what God does in Hannah's life?**
11. In Numbers 30:10-15, Elkanah has the right to revoke Hannah's vow but he (and Hannah) chooses to dedicate Samuel to serving the Lord (21-28). **What do we learn about Elkanah and Hannah's devotion to God through them "giving up" Samuel? Read Luke 9:23. Does Jesus call us to that kind of devotion? What are reasons why we might be reluctant to show that kind of faithfulness by setting aside that which we hold most dear?**

Next Steps

Hannah provides a great example of how to handle a hurt that reaches into a person's soul. Hannah is greatly distressed by her circumstances, but it does not prevent her from carrying her burdens to God. Her anguish does not keep her from worshiping faithfully. While she waited for God's answer, she did what she knew God had called her to do. If you are carrying burdens, continue to worship regularly and make your requests known to God.

Men, the picture of Elkanah should be an example for us to examine and compare to our own lives. What are you doing well and what are some areas of weakness in leading your family?

