

1 Samuel 1:1-20 - Does God Care?

January 9, 2022

1. Background — Israel was having a leadership crisis.

The three leaders God sends in this book are:

1. Samuel
2. Saul
3. David

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Judges 21:25 (ESV)

2. God's answer to the anarchy of life came from an unexpected place.

A. Elkanah's city and ancestors were insignificant.

There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. 1 Samuel 1:1 (ESV)

B. Elkanah's family life was a mess.

He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. 1 Samuel 1:2 (ESV)

- God's answer to the leadership crisis in Israel came from the most unexpected place and the most unexpected family. In a similar way, God's answer to the anarchy in our lives comes from a leader nobody expected. His name is Jesus!

3. God hasn't forgotten us. He cares about us.

A. Elkanah was a faithful godly man.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. 1 Samuel 1:3-5 (ESV)

B. Peninnah, Hannah's rival wife, loved to taunt her.

And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. 1 Samuel 1:6-7 (ESV)

C. Elkanah tried to comfort Hannah.

And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?" 1 Samuel 1:8 (ESV)

D. In her brokenness, Hannah ran to God, not from Him.

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. 1 Samuel 1:9-10 (ESV)

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28 (ESV)

E. If God answered her prayer, Hannah promised to dedicate her son to God for life.

And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head." 1 Samuel 1:11 (ESV)

F. Hannah poured out her troubles to God in prayer.

As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you."

1 Samuel 1:12–14 (ESV)

But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation."

1 Samuel 1:15–16 (ESV)

Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him." 1 Samuel 1:17 (ESV)

G. Hannah believed she could leave her worries with God because God cared for her.

And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. 1 Samuel 1:18 (ESV)

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:6–7 (ESV)

...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6–7 (ESV)

H. God answered Hannah's prayer with the birth of Samuel.

They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the

Lord remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the Lord."

1 Samuel 1:19–20 (ESV)

4. Conclusion

- A. We can learn from the example of Elkanah who was a faithful and godly husband.
- B. We can learn from the example of Hannah who cast all of her anxieties on God and was confident He cared for her.
- C. The main message of the chapter is not just that God cared for Hannah, but that God cares about us. God didn't just rescue Hannah and Israel from their painful troubles on that day by the birth of Samuel. God rescued us from the much greater trouble of our sin by the birth of Jesus.
- D. While Samuel was the leader born in Bethlehem that God sent to rescue His people who were wandering from God, Jesus is the leader born in Bethlehem that God sent to rescue us from the problem of sin once-and-for-all. Jesus is the king our heart wants. He is the leader we need.

Life Group Questions

1. What did you learn from this study you did not know?
2. Why did God allow polygamy in the Old Testament? From what we see in the polygamous marriages of the Bible, how do we know polygamy is never a better plan? **See also Genesis 2:24 and Matthew 19:5.**
3. What do you do when you are upset and broken? How do these verses teach us to respond when things fall apart in life?
4. Is there a difference between how women felt about having children in biblical times and how women feel about having children today?
5. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord. Do you think parents should formally dedicate their children to the Lord today?
6. Why do you think God allowed distress in Hannah's life before giving her a son? How does God use suffering in our lives to change us before using us?
7. **Read 1 Peter 5:7 and Philipians 4:6-7.** What do these verses teach us about how we can find the peace from God in prayer that Hannah found when her world was falling apart?