

# Redemption Depends on God's Sovereign Grace

## 1 Samuel 1

### I. Review: 1 Samuel's Setting

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

1. God's people are in the land God promised them, but they are not living under His rule. Sinful, ineffective leaders and rebellious people lead to God's discipline.
2. This is also the same time period as the book of Ruth.
  - a. Which zooms in on the lives of a faithful Israelite named Boaz and a God-fearing woman from Moab, Ruth.
  - b. We see that though the days are very dark, God is at work to bring a king (Ruth 4:21).

B. Today we will begin the first section of Samuel

1. 1 Samuel 1-7: Samuel – the prophet/priest and king-anointer.
2. The first chapter zooms in on one broken family, and one barren wife named Hannah.
  - a. To show us that God designs trials and human weakness, grants the godly faith, and works through their humble dependence on Him to accomplish His plan.
  - b. In summary, all hope hinges on God's sovereign grace.

### II. The Empty but Faithful vs. the Full and Arrogant (1 Sam. 1:1-7)

A. A certain man (1:1 cp. 1 Chron. 6:33-38)

B. Elkanah's family (1:2-3)

C. Hannah's sorrow and Peninnah's gloating (1:4-7)

1. Dale Ralph Davis describes **Peninnah** as...*"an overly fertile, mouthy, thorn in the flesh (vv. 2, 6-7)."* He goes on to say, *"We may wonder whether this domestic conflict can have anything to do with the kingdom of God."*<sup>1</sup>
2. What do we learn about **Hannah**? The Lord had closed her womb.
  - a. *"Barren women seem to be God's instruments in raising up key figures in the history of redemption, whether the promised seed (Isaac), the father of Israel (Jacob), saviors or preservers of Israel (Joseph, Samson, Samuel), or the forerunner of the great King (John the Baptist)."*
  - b. *"Our hopelessness and our helplessness are no barrier to his work. Indeed our utter incapacity is often the prop he delights to use for his next act"*<sup>2</sup>
3. God gives the trial to show the total inability of human effort to provide rescue or redemption. God's redeeming work is totally dependent on His sovereign grace.

### III. Crying out to God (1 Sam. 1:7b-18)

A. Hannah takes her sorrow to the LORD (1 Sam 1:7b-11)

1. Weeping and prayer can go together often in this world (v. 10 cp. Ps. 6:8)
2. She prayed (v. 11)
  - a. Addressing God in His sovereign majesty
  - b. Approaching Him as a humble "servant" (x 3 in v. 11)
  - c. Making her requests known to God (Phil 4:6).

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<sup>1</sup> Dale Ralph Davis, *1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart*, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Pub, 2000), 15.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, *1 Samuel*, 16 for both quotes.

- d. She asks for the Lord's glory (she is not bargaining with God). "Remember me" is a prayer for God to be faithful to His covenant promises (see Gen. 8:1, 19:29, 30:22, Ex. 2:24).
- 3. We too must have this transcendent and immanent view of God if we will be faithful in prayer.

**B. Hannah models the logic of faith**

- 1. The logic of faith - "knowing and trusting God's sovereignty and his goodness toward us."<sup>3</sup>
- 2. Do we pray with such a view of God's transcendent ability and greatness and His immanent goodness to us?

**C. Eli's dull faith (1:12-16)**

- 1. Eli is spiritually dull (perhaps weary of the darkness and unexpectant of God's intervening).
- 2. Hannah asks that he not regard her as a "worthless woman" (cp. Eli's sons 1 Sam. 3:7).
- 3. We understand that Eli lived in a dark time – when there were not many faithful.
  - a. We do too. We will be tempted to be apathetic or unexpectant – assuming God will not work to redeem His people.
  - b. It is true that the NT shows persecutions and false teachers will attack the church, and people/society will go from bad to worse. But that doesn't mean God doesn't have his people. We should expectantly pray for Him to act in sovereign grace.

**D. As weak as Eli is, he is still the priest, and God still pronounces a blessing through him (1:17-18)**

**E. Application – prayer in times of distress. Why we pray:**

- 1. Because God works His sovereign plan through our praying.
- 2. Prayer changes us. It focuses our attention on the Lord of hosts and leaves us hopeful.

## **IV. Receiving God's Grace (1 Sam. 1:19-20)**

- A. They return home to Ramah. Life carries on as normal ("in due time...")
- B. The Lord "remembered her."

## **V. Giving out of God's Grace (1 Sam 1:21-28)**

- A. Hannah gives back Samuel as a living sacrifice (cp. Rom. 12:1).
- B. In spite of the unique place Hannah has in redemptive history, there are common principles that allow us to make an application to ourselves.
  - 1. Children are given to us to serve the Lord with (as is our own life).
  - 2. We always and only give to the LORD what He has first given us.
- C. Yet, we must not miss the main point of this passage.
  - 1. God, His character, and His work of redemption.
    - a. It is not a story simply about God's grace to Hannah, but His grace to Israel and to the world. Samuel is the prophet who will prepare the way for the Davidic kingship.
    - b. Just as God sent John the Baptist to barren Elizabeth about 1,000 years later to prepare the way for the eternal King who comes from David's line.
  - 2. Thus, the main point of 1 Samuel 1 is that redemption depends on God's sovereign grace.

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<sup>3</sup> John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader in Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2014, 29-30.