

1 Samuel 1:1-10 - Thursday, May 30th, 2013

- Before we jump into our study of First Samuel, I want to take just a little bit of time to share with you some things about this amazing book.
- First, on a more personal note, God used this book, and more specifically, the men and women of this book in a powerful way in my life.
- Let me explain, during a period of ten years, when my wife and I were barren and unable to have children, Hannah became a friend to us.

- It was for this reason that we would give our firstborn son as is the custom in the Arab culture the middle name of my father's middle name.
- Actually my grandfather's first name was Samuel so my father's middle name would be Samuel, which we chose instead of Wahid or Faiez.
- Be that as it may, our firstborn son would become for us that which God would use as a catalyst of sorts in His calling me into the ministry.

- The second thing I would like to share with you about this amazing book is that First Samuel is chalk full of personal application to our lives.
- This because of who Samuel is, and what Samuel would do, which as we will see, Samuel was a man of prayer, and a man of God's Word.
- He would be the one whom God would choose to use in the anointing of Israel's first two kings with Saul then subsequently with David.

- It's interesting to note that Samuel was young when his mother Hannah dedicated him to the Lord, and when he's later, called by the Lord.
- This speaks to how it is that often times God is no respecter of age when it comes to those whom He calls, whether they're young or old.
- Also interesting to note, Samuel would become the last judge of Israel, while at the same time he would become the first prophet of Israel.

- I suppose you could say that from the last judge to the first prophet, Samuel becomes a key figure in the transition of leadership in Israel.
- By that I mean we will go from Eli to Samuel, from Samuel to Saul, then from Saul to David who will succeed Saul as the King of all Israel.
- The reason I point this out is because it seems that Samuel doesn't get much credit when it comes to the great men of God in all of Israel.

F.B. Meyer of this said, "Samuel the Prophet thus practically bridges the gulf between Samson the Judge and David the King: and there is deep significance in the fact that his name is identified with the two Books of Scripture which describe this great transitional period, every event of which was affected by his influence."

Jeremiah 15:1 NKJV Then the LORD said to me, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before Me, My mind *would not be* favorable toward this people. Cast *them* out of My sight, and let them go forth.

- On last thing before we start with verse one, First and Second Samuel were actually only one book in the ancient manuscripts of Hebrew.
- It would later be divided into two books when the Old Testament was translated into the language and included in the canon of scripture.
- Suffice it to say, we are in for a tremendous blessing as we uncover the priceless riches within the books of both First and Second Samuel.

(1) Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the mountains of Ephraim, and his name *was* Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. (2) And he had two wives: the name of one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

- Right out of the shoot here, we have two big problems, the first of which is that Elkanah had two wives, and one of the wives was infertile.
- The reason these are huge problems is that polygamy was against God's Word, and infertility was seen as God being against the wife.
- The point being is, while we're not off to a good start, God will see to it that this will have a good end, which should bring us great comfort.

- The reason I say that is because many of us started out and came out of less than honorable lifestyles, but God, made it good in the end.
- In other words, no matter how bad it was, or maybe even still is, it can't have the final word on how good God is to work it out for the good.
- If the truth be known, the scriptures are replete with one example after the other that testify of the grace and goodness of God in the end.

- Before we move on to verse three, I think I would be grossly remiss were I not to address this matter of practice of polygamy in the Bible.
- This particular topic has been the source of much confusion, in that many have interpreted the scriptures mentioning it as God condoning it.
- This is simply not true for a number of reasons not the least of which is nowhere in the Bible is mentioning it synonymous with condoning it.

- Rather, instead of God condoning it, we find voluminous warnings of the peril that comes from the practice of it, and such is the case here.
- Whenever we see the practice of polygamy in the pages of Holy Writ, it is always accompanied by the disastrous narrative, sure to follow.
- The fact of the matter is just because polygamy may've been permitted by the customs of the day doesn't mean it was condoned by God.

Adam Clarke – "The custom of those times permitted polygamy; but wherever there was more than one wife, we find the peace of the family greatly disturbed by it."

Charles Spurgeon - "It is a sad thing to find a Levite tainted with the error of double marriage, and in this case as in every other it caused much family misery, especially to that wife who was the best and holiest, though denied the blessing of children. Poor Hannah, a woman of great gifts as well as great grace, was so tormented by Peninnah, that her life was made bitter to her. How great a mercy it is that Christianity forbids polygamy, which the old dispensation barely tolerated, and that only because of the hardness of men's hearts."

(3) This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. (4) And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters.

- Lest we're too hard on this man Elkanah, who erred in his double marriage, as Spurgeon says, we'd do well to take note of what he does.
- This is huge, such that he offers his sacrifice in accordance to the Law of Moses and worships the Lord during a very dark time in Israel.
- Keep in mind that we're still on the heels of the period of the Judges, and as such, Israel just did whatever seemed right in their own eyes.

- Furthermore, if that weren't bad enough even the priests, which, are mentioned by name in these verses were exceedingly wicked and evil.
- The reason I bring this up is because it reinforces how that Elkanah was acting in a godly and righteous way in spite of their wickedness.
- In other words, his offering to the Lord was not predicated upon the righteousness of the priests, because he knew God would still bless it.

- Also, notice how that he takes care to provide spiritually for his wives and his family as evidenced by his giving of portions to his children.
- While, as we'll see next, he gives a double portion to Hannah, at least he's committed to his God and his family in spite of his disobedience.
- The reason I bring this up is that often times we think that just because we've blown it, we might as well just keep on sinning because of it.

- There's something else here that I want to mention before we move on and it has to do with portion of meat in this particular peace offering.
- I do so because knowing about this will be germane to our understanding of the why behind the "what" happens next in verses five and six.
- Here's why this offering was such that the Levite's could eat a portion of the meat they offered to God, which is why he gives it to his family.

(5) But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the LORD had closed her womb. (6) And her rival also provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. (7) So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat. (8) Then Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" (9) So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the tabernacle of the LORD.

(10) And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and wept in anguish.

- Meat was a rarity in that day, so much so, that many times this was the only time of the year that they would actually be able to eat meat.
- The reason I point this out is because for Hannah to not eat her double portion would seem to indicate that she was too emotionally upset.
- Then for her insensitive buffalo of a husband to ask her why she's so upset and crying so much must have added a horrible insult to injury.

- By the way, this is probably one of the best passages, if not the best passages in the Bible that we could turn to for godly marriage advice.
- Here's how I get there, as loving as her husband was, she knew that there was absolutely no way that he could ever truly understand her.
- The reason I believe this is, conspicuously absent from record is any mention of Hannah arguing with, or nagging on, her husband for this.

- I'll take it a step further and also suggest that it's evidenced by how Hannah does not fight back when Peninnah continually provokes her.
- This begs the question of how Hannah didn't snap in the face of who was against her, and how she didn't think that God was against her.
- The only answer I can come up with from the text is that Hannah knew that she couldn't go to her husband she could only go to her Lord.

Charles Spurgeon - "Her husband loved her, but she needed richer consolation, and she sought it in much earnest prayer. This is the sure fount of comfort."