

MAY 7

1 Samuel 1:1-2:21

1 Samuel 1

So, just thinking out loud regarding this time in Israel's history, it is said that Samuel and Samson were alive at the same time. In this area of Israel, they were under Philistine dominance. Samson kept the Philistines at bay for 20 years and then destroyed the Philistine leadership at his death. No wars with the Philistines are mentioned during Samson's lifetime. No wars are mentioned during the early years of Samuel either. Later in Samuel's life, God used the wars with the Philistines to clear out the evil in the priesthood and to test the reign of King Saul. I would guess that Samson was older than Samuel and that Samuel became known in Israel during the later years of Samson's life, during which time Samuel became established as a leader in Israel, though under Eli. After Samson died, in the vacuum of power following the deaths of the Philistine leadership, Israel probably began breaking way from Philistine control and the Philistines fought Israel to regain that control. These wars would have been the occasion of Hophni and Phinehas dying in battle (in chapter 4) and losing the ark of the covenant to the Philistines. By this time Samuel was already well established as both a prophet and priest; and when the death of Eli (chapter 4) came immediately after the battle, Samuel was the only leader in Israel and was probably in his 20's or 30's. Samuel then led Israel against the Philistines as a judge.

So, I would guess that at the time of Samuel's birth, Samson was in his teenage years and beginning to notice girls.

It is interesting that the final two stories in Judges, then Ruth, and now this story all take place in the area around Jerusalem. Also, three of the stories involve Levites. In 1 Chronicles 6:35 Elkanah is said to be a Levite, even though he is not identified here as a Levite. This would make it possible for Samuel to be a priest. Elkanah was an Ephrathite by virtue of where he lived.

Ramah, where Elkanah lived, was just north of Jerusalem and south of Shiloh.

Vs. 1-2 Elkanah apparently had two wives because of Hannah being barren. He thought he needed an heir. Otherwise, it looks like Hannah would have been his one and only.

V. 3 Eli and his two sons will figure into the dysfunctional part of this story.

Vs. 4-11 There are a lot of things here, but notice that this awful situation is from the Lord.

V. 11 Again, the similarity to Samson can't be missed in that this, too, is an unusual birth situation. Notice also that she is vowing that the son will be dedicated to the Lord as a Nazirite, just like Samson. The only stipulation she mentions, like with Samson, was the razor. How cool would it be as a boy to know that you never ever had to have a haircut?

All of what God led Hannah through was to produce this kind of intensity in her life. As disciples, this is why we need to keep our eyes on the Lord and bear up under trials. He is trying to produce something in us that cannot be produced any other way. If we become bitter over the "right and wrong" in a situation, or if we are defeated by our own sorrow, we miss the point. He is working, and very likely, to produce a kind of resolve or passion or dedication in us. There is no other way to burn certain things on our hearts apart from the blazing heat of failure, rejection and trial.

Vs. 12-18 Eli is included as a judge of Israel and he will be judged because of his failure to correct his sons. Still, his blessing here holds for Hannah. Notice, like Samson's mother, Hannah doesn't drink wine or strong drink.

Vs. 19-28 Ramah was about 15 miles south of Shiloh. This was not a distance that meant Hannah could only see him once a year, but they didn't have cars back then and 15 miles of hilly country was a trip you didn't make every day.

V. 22 This sounds like what David says in his psalms, dwelling in the presence of the Lord forever.

V. 28 This was an incredible thing for Hannah to do.

In this time of the judges, Elkanah, like Boaz, comes away as a godly man. Hannah was obviously a godly woman, pushed closer to God by her God-given trial. I know the story is about Hannah, but still, it was Elkanah who took his family up to worship at Shiloh every year.

1 Samuel 2

Like so many of The Psalms, and like the Third Day song, you must go through the valley (trials) to stand upon the mountain of God (praising). What do you understand from this praise from Hannah? From things I have experienced and in the situation I find myself now, I sense the strong confidence in God's sovereignty. God's control is something that we as disciples can never lose sight of, even in uncertainty and suffering.

If you have time, compare this song with Mary's song when she visited Elizabeth in Luke, chapter 1. There are some great similarities.

Vs. 1-2 This sounds just like Mary's song.

Vs. 3-8 This is how God will honor those who set their hope in Him.

Vs. 9-10 God is the judge who judges the proud but helps His people.

Vs. 11-17 This gets us back to the description of the time of the judges we are used to. It is amazing that anyone came to Shiloh to worship. When you read this, you can understand how this would have created bitterness and disappointment among the devout, and it would have given reasons to the rebellious to avoid Shiloh and to make God in their own image. Eli's sons were doing this to everyone and every sacrifice.

Note that what is mentioned here is how Eli's sons got food for themselves. That seems minor, but I think it is a big issue in this story, as we'll see later. Paul talks about guys like these and other false disciples and servants of the church, when he warns Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:5, *people who are depraved in mind and deprived of the truth, imagining that godliness is a means of gain.*

When our lives as disciples are about anything more than following Christ in the harvest to save the lost and make disciples, not only are we prone to error, but we can pervert the good that God has given to assist us in our service in the harvest.

Vs. 18-21 Samuel was becoming true to God, in contrast to Eli and his sons. That Hannah brought Samuel a robe each year means that's when she brought him the robe, not the only time when she saw him. Remember, they only lived 15 miles apart. I don't know about you, but if my kid only lived 15 miles away, I'd see them more than once a year. And besides, according to the law, all males had to appear before the Lord at the tabernacle three times a year.

God blessed Elkanah and Hannah. Hannah had five more kids and Elkanah had a happy wife, and both were in love with each other and with God. Oh yeah, and the hand of God was on Samuel.

John 5:1-23

Commentators usually see this feast as Jesus' second Passover. That would mean John is giving us a very abbreviated history here, just touching major points. It would mean that between the end of chapter 3 and here, a complete year has passed by in John. During this time, Jesus'

popularity has skyrocketed. Jesus has recently healed the paralytic carried by four friends and He has preached through all of Galilee. At this point, Jesus still has not chosen the Twelve.

When you think about what it means to abide in Christ, the best example of seeing what this means is to look at Jesus abiding in the Father. Jesus lived His life, conscious every moment that He was walking with the Father and therefore looking to see what the Father was doing. This chapter is like a lesson in abiding.

Vs. 1-9 Notice, that if Jesus had been to Jerusalem three times a year, He had seen this man often. This pool was very near to the temple. Verse 4 is an editorial note put into the Bible years later. According to the Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT, p. 298, this verse doesn't appear in any manuscripts until after 400 A.D.

Now, in v. 6, Jesus is led by the Spirit to notice this particular man. This is an example of Jesus abiding in the Father. Jesus was aware that the Father was pointing to this man to be healed, although Jesus had seen this man many times before.

V. 8 Jesus did this quickly and quietly so as not to draw attention to Himself (v. 13). What will overshadow this miracle is that it took place on the Sabbath.

Vs. 10-13 Now the remark of the Pharisees in v. 12 should shock you. Their problem was they couldn't conceive of God breaking His own law. But really, there were laws the Pharisees had made in addition to God's laws. But the situation is even deeper. Shortly before this, some of these Pharisees had been in Capernaum and heard Jesus say He was the Son of Man (the Messiah) and say He had the authority to forgive sins. He proved this by saying to the paralytic, *Get up, take up your bed, and walk* (v. 8). These guys were officially members of the "I don't like Jesus, regardless of who He is" fan club.

Vs. 14-18 This is the reason why John is including this event, to show why the Pharisees hated Jesus and why they wanted to kill Him. They understood that Jesus was calling Himself God's Son, and thus, God.

V. 17 You notice what Jesus said about abiding in the Father. The Father was always working. Jesus was always looking for the Father to show Him what to do. He noticed this man and noticed that the Father wanted this man to be healed on the Sabbath. The Son had to be obedient. If the Pharisees wanted to get mad at someone, it should have been at the Father.

Vs. 19-20 This entire chapter is a very tight, logical argument. It is worth looking at it, finding the transitions in what Jesus says and then trying to figure out why He went from one theme to the next. This is probably Jesus' most ambitious try to win over the Pharisees and save them. In the course of this chapter, Jesus will declare Himself to be both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

Vs. 21-23 The relationship is established between the Father and Son, and therefore, the signs are given to the Son to perform when the Father says to perform them, regardless of the day and time. The Father is working and Jesus sees that. Jesus moves on to describe why the Father has done this. The raising of the dead is seen here as authority to judge. The Son has been given that authority so that everyone may honor the Son as they do the Father. Jesus is saying here, that He is a pretty important person. You can't say you honor God, if you don't honor Jesus as the Son of God.

In the harvest, regardless of how good people seem, if they don't honor the Son (who, by the way, created all things), that becomes the ultimate sin. The good news isn't just about forgiveness or connecting with God. It is about Jesus, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Psalm 105:37-45

Keep underlining *he*. Notice that v. 45 appears to be the point of the psalm and of God's actions.

Vs. 37-38 This is the redemption of Israel out of the house of slavery.

Vs. 39-42 The miracles of God's provision in the wilderness came because of God's faithfulness to the promise to Abraham.

Vs. 43-45 Israel was blessed by God to obey Him and thereby be a witness and blessing to the world in accordance with the promise to Abraham.

Proverbs 14:28-29

It looks like the success of v. 28 is determined by the character of v. 29. Someone with a hot head doesn't become a godly leader of people. Kind of cool, huh?