

A CHARACTER STUDY IN

THE LIFE OF SAMUEL

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF
SAMUEL

I Samuel 1:1 - 28

Adult Sunday School
Gethsemane Baptist Church
H. David Nichols

PREPARATIONS FOR THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL

The book of I Samuel “Presents the personal history of Samuel, last of the Judges.” (Scofield. Notes to I Samuel.) “The call of Samuel to be the prophet and judge of Israel formed a strong turning point in the development of the Old Testament kingdom of God.” (Wycliffe P. 273) Samuel is often over looked in his importance in the history of Israel. Jeremiah considered him to be on a par with the man Moses in Godliness. *“Then said Jehovah unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind would not be toward this people:”* (Jeremiah 15:1) “Samuel was presented in the book bearing his name as the first great religious reformer after the time of Moses.” (Harrison. P. 710)

We have observed the kind of example his father, Elkanah, was to the young boy, Samuel. Now we should examine the influence that his godly mother, Hannah, had on the shaping of His character. We learn of her in the first chapter of I Samuel.

Here she is presented as the favorite wife of Elkanah. Elkanah loved Hannah but unfortunately Hannah could not conceive and bear children. This fact may explain why he felt he should take a second wife. Nowhere in the Scriptures does God endorse polygamy. In almost every instance polygamy is the source of unrest and conflict in the households where it occurs. This is certainly true here in the lives of Elkanah, Hannah and Peninnah, the second wife. Peninnah had several children and lorded this over Hannah. This cause Hannah much anguish. Notice the words used to describe her state of mind and heart in this chapter. She was provoked and the conflict made her “fret” or to become very angry. (vs. 6) She could not eat and she wept over this humiliation. (vs. 7) She was in bitterness of soul over it. (vs. 10) She prayed in Shiloh with such intensity that her lips moved even though she spoke not a word aloud. (vs. 13) In this state of mind, this godly woman came to the Lord in prayer and made this vow. *“O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember*

me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.” (vs.11) The Priest Eli saw her praying and, thinking that she was drunk, rebuked her. “How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee.” (Vs. 14) She explained, “No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.” (vs. 15-16) At that point it seems that the Lord revealed to Eli that He was working in the life of this woman. Eli blesses her with the words, “Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.” (vs. 17) The result of this event in the life of Hannah was that her upset of heart left and God gave her peace. “So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad.” (vs. 18)

There are lessons that can be taken away from this story. Notice first of all, that this godly woman did not respond in kind to her antagonist, Peninnah. She let God deal with her. Scripture tells us that Elkanah gave Peninnah and her children a portion at the sacrifice feast but to Hannah he gave a “worthy” or a double portion. This showed to Hannah that he favored her and that he loved her more than he did Peninnah. This act must have been a stinging rebuke and humbled Peninnah. For Hannah to have taken her anger into her own hands would have made the conflict much worse. Notice next, that Hannah took her pain to the Lord in prayer. This taunting for Peninnah went on for years. (vs. 7) Each year Peninnah gave to Elkanah another child. Each year this heaped even more shame and anguish on Hannah. As they went to worship at Shiloh each year Hannah prayed. She committed this to the Lord until finally she reached her limit. God does not expect us to make bargains with Him to gain answers to our prayers but in this instance Hannah made God a promise. She promised that if God gave her a son she would raise him to

be a servant of the Lord his entire life. God accepted this offering from her heart and answered her prayer. We often wonder how long we should pray about a matter. Hannah prayed until God sent peace to her heart. She rested in the Lord's promise from the man of God and she "was no more sad."

God sent a son into this family and Hannah kept her vow. She kept the boy until he was old enough to leave the shelter of Elkanah's home. Consider what this impressionable boy learned in those five or six years. He saw the faith and piety of Elkanah. He learned the reality of the God of Israel and to put his faith in him. He saw the sour spirit in Peninnah and how his godly parents responded to it. God was preparing to place him in a very difficult place and we will see that he will be ready to serve there.

Notes
