

1 Samuel Chapter 01 Commentary

1Sa 1:1 ¶ "Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite:"

We see from the definitions of the names, in the lineage given, that this man and his family come from roots that were connected to godliness.

The place:

- Ramathaimzophim means *double height of watchers; a place in Palestine which God had given them.*
- Ephraim means double fruit.

The Lineage:

- Hannah (mother) means *favoured.*
- Elkanah (the father) means *God has obtained.*
- Jeroham (the grandfather) means *compassionate.*
- Elihu (great grandfather) means *God of him.*
- Tohu (great-great grandfather) means *abasement.*
- Zuph (great-great-great grandfather) means *honeycomb.*
- Who was an Ephrathite which means: *fruitfulness and is another name for Bethlehem.*

We certainly can see godliness in all the generations of Samuel's life, and we can make application of this to our own lives. If we are God's children, we know our lineage goes back, as demonstrated here, to Bethlehem where Christ our Saviour was born. Those, who are raised under godly influences, have an advantage over those, who are not so fortunate.

There is the prophetic picture, and lesson, for us, that we are to spend our time in the places of godliness, the church, and with people, who demonstrate their salvation by grace lineage, and rear our children in this kind of an environment.

2 "And 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. 3 And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, were there."

Again, we see a man that is disobedient to God's commandment by having multiple wives. We see that Hannah is named first and expect that she was the first wife. We see that Hannah was barren, and this may be the reason for the second wife, but we cannot affirm this from the text.

Aside from this, we see that this was a family, under the scriptural instruction for a husband and father, that worshipped together. As parents, we have a responsibility to teach our children to worship as a family, by setting the example in life.

The other side of the definition of names is demonstrated in Eli and his sons.

- Eli (high priest and father) means *lofty, to ascend.*
- Hophni (son) means *to fight with the fist.*
- Phinehas (son) means *mouth of a serpent.*

As you follow the scripture, you will see; the two sons of Eli were not good, in any sense of the word. They were evil, and they taught the people evil, for the fulfillment of their own lust. God will eventually destroy them in battle.

4 "And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:"

We take time to point out; Elkanah was of the Levitical priesthood and would have been well acquainted with all the rituals of the priesthood. I have included some lineage history that Matthew Henry searched out.

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: *We have here an account of the state of the family into which Samuel the prophet was born. His father's name was Elkanah, a Levite, and of the family of the Kohathites (the most honorable house of that tribe) as appears, 1Ch 6:33-34. His ancestor Zuph was an Ephrathite, that is,*

of Bethlehem-Judah, which was called Ephrathah, Ru 1:2. There this family of the Levites was first seated, but one branch of it, in process of time, removed to Mount Ephraim, from which Elkanah descended.

5 "But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. 6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb."

"But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion;" Elkanah gave, to all his family, the law prescribed portions to make their sacrifices. Unto Hannah, he gave a **"worthy"** portion, which was more than was required, and was likely a double portion. Elkanah did this because she was his true wife, and he had special God given love for her. Elkanah knew Hannah was barren and this **"worthy"** portion was to show his divine love for his true wife.

We see that having multiple wives is not a good thing. The second wife (Hannah is named first) was an adversary to the first. Multiple wives bring disharmony in godly families. This is often pointed out by God in scripture. For example: remember Abraham and Sarah, and Hagar, Sarah's handmaid, and the trouble they had.

7 "And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore, she wept, and did not eat. 8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? 9 ¶ So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11 And she vowed a vow, and said, 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. 12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore, Eli thought she had been drunken."

Elkanah provided for his family, each year, when he brought them to make their sacrifices. We see the continued spitefulness and antagonism of Peninnah, who is always heckling and pestering Hannah, because of her barrenness, which is the source of Hannah's grief.

"Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard:" We see that it is not necessary to pray out loud all the time. We know that true prayer is the earnest desires of our heart that are heard by God. We have a New Testament explanation of this in: **Ro 8:26-27; 26 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."** Notice, that people sometimes pray out of the will of God. However, the Holy Spirit always makes intercession for us in God's will, thus these kinds of prayers are always answered. Sometimes, our prayers are not heard because they are not in the will of God.

Notice, Hannah prayed for a man child. A child, she could bring to be of service to God in the priesthood. One, who could serve in the temple worship of the Lord, for answering her prayer. When we ask God for children, we should also pray that God would give us children that would be of service to him, and that God would claim them as his own, and save them eternally.

14 "And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15 And Hannah answered and said, 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. 16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. 17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So, the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. 19 ¶ And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her."

Eli supposes that Hannah is drunk, because she is not praying aloud, and he rebukes her. Hannah explains what is going on and receives Eli's blessing.

Hannah's effectual and fervent prayer is heard, and God changes her dead womb to a fruitful womb.

20 "Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD."

God answers Hannah's prayer and grants her a son. Hannah gives her son the name Samuel, which means *heard of God*, because God has heard, and answered, her prayer.

21 "And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide forever."

Hannah reminds her husband; when she carries the child to the temple he will remain there, according to her vow to the Lord. She says she will not go up until it is time to leave the child.

23 "And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him."

Elkanah reminds his wife; she must do what she promised God. He is warning her; do not be tempted to not fulfill her vow.

24 "And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young."

From historical studies made; it seems that the child would be about three years old when it was declared weaned. Scripturally, we support this from: **2Ch 31:16 "Beside their genealogy of males, from three years old and upward, even unto every one that entereth into the house of the LORD, his daily portion for their service in their charges according to their courses;"** From this scripture we draw the conclusion; the male children were to be at least 3 years old, before they were counted eligible for service in the temple.

25 "And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: 28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there."

Notice, that in fulfilling her vow to God, for his faithfulness to her, that she kept Samuel at home until he was weaned. Weaned means *to ripen*; meaning; he was mature enough to be able to fend for himself and mature enough spiritually, to know how to worship God. It is apparent that Hannah also taught Samuel about God, and what his life expectancy was, because he knew how to worship on his first trip to the temple. This leads us to the question: Do our children know how to worship the Lord when they come to church?

How many of us, as parents today, are as faithful as Hannah, in rearing our children, in accordance with scriptures, as seen in? **Eph 6:4 "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."** This is another biblical reason that churches should have bible study, to help to prepare parents, and children, in their faithful service to God. Godly parents need to be well schooled in proper bible disciplines so they can teach their children properly.

In Hannah's actions in this chapter, we see a very good demonstration, and admonition, for our own lives. How often, in our distresses in life, do we ask God for something, and then straightway forget that we made God a promise? Hannah made a request to God, and in her request, she made a promise. Have you ever done that? I did once, which I well remember. My promise was to preach the Gospel if God would deliver me from my trouble. I soon forgot my vow, but God did not. God finally brought me to my vow, and now I willingly do that, which I vowed when I was a very young man.

In this expression **"lent to the Lord"** we see the prophetic picture, of how we should raise our children to be **"lent to the Lord,"** all their lives. To be saved, and have eternal life, is a gift from God. To have children is a gift from God. With both gifts comes responsibility. Let us be as faithful as Hannah with both blessings in our lives.

Another lesson we learn; we should serve God as faithfully as Hannah did; knowing that we can depend fully, and wholly, on God. We also know; our true prayers will be answered. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah!