

Samuel 1 - Kingdoms Begin in the Home

Today, we are going to begin looking at the lives of Saul, David, and Solomon. These three kings reigned over Israel while it was a united kingdom. The Kingdom of Israel, and after it was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms, was the next development of the Theocracy in Israel.

The Theocracy in ancient Israel refers to a system of government where *religious* leaders played a significant role, and the laws were based on religious principles as God gave them to Moses. Before the kingdom, during the time of the Exodus and the settlement in Canaan, there was a more decentralized leadership structure with figures like Moses and Joshua. It wasn't a theocracy in the same formalized way as it came to be afterward. Just before the kingdom, *judges* were chosen by God to deliver and govern the Israelites.

The transition to a monarchy with kings like Saul, David, and Solomon, marked a shift in the political structure, but the religious aspects were still primary since God was the ultimate Sovereign over Israel. The king was often seen as chosen by God, and the religious institutions continued to play a central role in the governance.

The work of Samuel as a precursor to the Kingdom serves as an introduction to the Kingdom. Samuel, who was both a priest and the last judge of Israel, was used by God to prepare Israel to have a king. The concept of the Kingdom of God will be best symbolized and represented by the united monarchy of Israel. Samuel as the last judge is included as a part of the narrative in this next series of sermons on Three Kingdoms.

1. Kingdoms begin in the home -

We might think of primary season and transitional teams as birthing political administrations, but, on reflection, we see that the influence of the men and women who dominate them can be traced back to the home. It doesn't mean that different types of homes guarantee what the outcome will be. The idea that kingdoms begin in the home can be misleading, depending on what you mean. Not all godly homes produce spiritual children, nor do all ungodly homes yield wicked children. What *is* true is that homes provide the environment whereby we grow. No one grows up by themselves with no influence. There are those who deprive their children of spiritual input because they think it is noble to let children choose later for themselves and not have any one religious view imposed upon them. They impose bedtimes, curfews, nutrition, education, doctors, and political views on them, but, when it comes to faith, they become sanctimonious atheists. In this sense, the home is the womb for both wicked and righteous kingdoms. We praise God for those who react against an ungodly background. We mourn those who react against a Godly background.

What we can learn in Samuel chapter 1 is the depth of spirituality in which Samuel was raised. It would have been possible for Samuel to come to faith later in life and be used by God, but he had so much greater an opportunity to build a high impact life based on how early he was introduced to Godly spirituality. The history opens up with a Godly family. Elkanah is a priest in the line of Aaron. Each year he went up to Jerusalem to the Temple to fulfill his priestly duty of sacrifice.

1Sam 1:4-8 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: **[Elkanah was fulfilling his turn to be engaged**

in the Temple worship]

5But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. **[Those who participated in the sacrifice partook of the sacrifice. Hannah was given a double portion by her husband in light of her husband's concern for her being childless.]**

6And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

7And *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. **[Every year when they went up to do sacrifice, Penninah taunted Hannah and rubbed it in that she had not borne any children]**

8Then 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?

Here the desire for children is identified as one of the great values of humanity, particularly of women. Elkanah has *some* insight on this as he hopes that his treatment of Hannah can compensate for her situation, but as a man he cannot totally grasp what she is going through. This also requires preachers to have a little humility when preaching about this because, as men we cannot speak with personal authority on how women feel about child bearing. It is generally recognized in life that women have a unique maternal instinct. Not all women can or will have children, but it would be offensive to suggest that their lives are any less significant for not having children. It would be even more offensive to not recognize the nurturing character of women which makes their part in a family different than what a husband can provide. We especially give thanks on Mothers Day for what they have brought to our lives. But, in our church, we also celebrate that same nurturing and loving character in *all* women on Mothers Day.

Hannah's God-given desire for a child was not her only concern. She and Elkanah did not simply try to have a child. Believers are supposed to live their lives in relationship with God. Before Samuel was even conceived, she prayed for him. She was in such fervent prayer she was oblivious to how strange she looked to the High Priest, Eli.

1Sam 1:12-20 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

13Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

14And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

15And 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.

16Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

17Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

18And 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*.

19And 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.

20Wherefore 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.

In naming her child, Hannah commemorated the blessing of a family from God. Samuel's name specifically means *heard of God*, or, *the answer of God*.

This was not the end of Hannah's spiritual responsibility and provision for the home. She had dedicated her firstborn to the Lord in a special way. That does not mean that the additional children that God blessed her with were not dedicated, but Samuel was especially blessed.

1Sam 1:21-28 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

22But 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 for ever.

23And 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.

24And 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.

25And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

26And she said, Oh my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD.

27For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28Therefore 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.

Hannah's story has an even greater significance. In her desire for children, she was part of the greater responsibility for humanity. Her responsibility was beyond choosing to have *a life*. Choosing life is much larger than that. It is choosing all the responsibility for *building a whole* life. In later chapters we will see how Samuel responded to the spiritual opportunities that were presented to him. In 1Sam 7:15 we learn that Samuel judged Israel *all* the days of his life. It was Samuel who was used by God to navigate Israel moving into becoming the Kingdom of Israel.

2. The blessing of life -

- God blesses us with life.

Ps 139:14-18 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made: marvellous *are* thy works; and *that* my soul knoweth right well.

15My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, *and* curiously wrought

in the lowest parts of the earth.

16Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all *my members* were written, *which* in continuance were fashioned, when *as yet there was* none of them.

17How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them!

18If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with thee.

You are marvelously made. God created man originally as part of His glory. Today, people work to pervert and disfigure that creation. What great responsibility we have by all we have been given! How greatly man squanders the opportunity that comes with that responsibility!

The ultimate responsibility is life.

Gen 9:5-6 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

Exo 21:22-23 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart *from her*, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges *determine*.

23And if *any* mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life,

It is very interesting that the word *fruit* is not the usual way the Hebrew word is translated. If it were, someone might argue that it is merely referring to a fetus or a product of conception and not a person. The Hebrew word that is used here is translated 82 times as either child or young ones and 7 times as sons or young men. Whichever way it is translated, it always refers to a person. It is never used to describe merely a product of conception. There is no way to interpret this passage other than that God considers life in the womb as human life to be protected.

- God's people bless the world.

Matt 5:43-45 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

44But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

45That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

3. Choose responsibility -

1 Samuel 1 is more than an issue of recognizing how women feel who become mothers. Having a family is not always possible. However, a problem has developed in our culture where having a family is reduced to an issue of personal convenience. Known as *DINKs*, or Double Income No Kids,

a growing number of young couples attempt to glamorize their chosen childless lifestyle. These young people will brag about their ability to eat out regularly, go on expensive vacations at the drop of a dime, and pick up extravagant hobbies whenever they feel like it — all because they've chosen not to have children. There is a problem if you pride yourself on how self-indulgent you are. Critics have pointed out how this will come back to haunt them as they reach old age. It will not only affect couples in their old age, but an entire culture.

Concerning the issue of abortion, one side styles itself as "pro-choice." If that were actually the case, they should learn a lesson from China. China successfully promoted abortion with its one child policy when they bought into the worry over population explosion. Now, not only China, but other countries as well, are facing the problem with an aging population and the economic and social difficulties of replacing the population. A responsible pro-choice position would be to promote life! Instead of promoting responsibility for a very real problem as a member of humanity, they turn it into an issue of personal convenience. This is why the other side of the issue is not called anti-abortion. It is properly called pro-life because it promotes not just life itself, but *all* that is about getting a life.

Gen 1:26-28 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

27 So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Having a family is bigger than personal indulgence and convenience. In civilization it is a *human responsibility*.

To truly choose life means to choose to respond responsibly to life. This extends beyond what *we choose* to pursue. It also refers to how you respond to what happens *to* you. There are certainly some things about living that are up to us, but some things are not. When we realize we are accountable to God, we have to choose responsibility.

People want to avoid accountability. It is common to hear that it's not the criminal's fault, it's some psycho-social problem brought on by poverty, drugs, marginalization, a parent who didn't love you, the fact that you don't love yourself, or whichever president you don't like

Don't fight responsibility, embrace it. Embrace it because you will come out better than if you buck and fight. That's life.

We are held accountable by God to live up to His standards so we have to do it. You *will* give an account. You can't avoid it. You might not want to be held to account if you steal, slander, hurt others, but the sooner you embrace your accountability the sooner you will be able to enjoy the success that goes with it. That's life. You might or might not live in better housing (any apartment or hovel is better than jail). When you embrace responsibility before God and bring yourself into compliance by accepting the salvation God offers, you will ultimately live in the most fabulous place (heaven is better than hell). If you buck and resist God, you might seem to have success for a piece of time, and it might even seem to be for a lifetime, but it won't be for an eternal lifetime. Choose God, choose Christ, don't choose a way that *seems* right to you, choose eternal life.

Life is not always convenient. It is not just a matter that we have to live according to the choices we make, we also have to live responsibly with the choices that are thrust upon us. Life is not always fair, fun, or fulfilling. You still have to choose to live responsibly. That is part of what it means to be an adult. Even being a child does not excuse you. You are growing in responsibility. You *will* be held responsible for obeying your parents, learning about God, and many other things. Your responsibilities grow as you grow. We are going to see, later, that Samuel embraced the spiritual responsibilities that were presented to him. You can resist life and its responsibilities or you can choose life which means you embrace responsibility.

4. Choose life -

The first life choice needs to be true life. True life is life in Christ. Before Christ, the Bible describes us as being dead in our sins. When we choose life in Christ, we are quickened, or made alive by being one with Christ.

Eph 2:1-7 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;
2Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:
3Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
4But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,
5Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)
6And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:
7That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

He not only brings life, but *abundance* of life.

John 10:7-11 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.
8All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them.
9I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.
10The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.
11I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

True life starts out with salvation, but it is abundant. Life in Christ is meant to be lived. It becomes part of the fabric of our day to day life. Serving God and making a difference in people is the joy of that life. This is true to some extent in all our work and relationships. The artist and the architect hope to inspire. The chef wants to open up a new experience for diners. The teacher, the nurse, the construction worker, and the janitor all want to bring something to bless others. The

greatest inspiration and blessing is to bring new, eternal life for a soul to become a child of God.

This is the day that you can receive eternal life. This is the day to begin living for God.

If you *are* a child of God, you have to recognize that being pro-life is more than protecting the unborn. We have to recognize that that is just the beginning. To live responsibly before God will bring a new generation to the fullness that God has for us. Do you avoid taking on responsibilities because you don't want someone holding you accountable? Do you avoid commitments because you jealously guard your control over life? Are you letting secret sins hold you back from serving God? Today can be the day you choose to change that.

1. Kingdoms begin in the home - 1Sam 1:4-28
2. The blessing of life - Ps 139:14-18, Gen 9:5-6, Exo 21:22-23, Matt 5:43-45
3. Choose responsibility - Gen 1:26-28
4. Choose life - Eph 2:1-7, John 10:7-1