

## I Samuel 1-7 Notes and Quotes

The whole Bible may be considered as one story – the narrative of God creating all things, especially humanity, for himself (the first 2 chapters of the first book); of God always pursuing, reconciling a willfully errant humanity to himself (the vast majority of the Bible), and finally of God recreating all things new, especially humanity (the last two chapters of the last book). While there are stories within stories, some storied hard to place, very few details in some, and a wide range of kinds of stories and how they are told, one thread weaves through the whole fabric – the ‘salvation-history’ of the people of God.

A first, God dealt with all humanity (Genesis 3-11; we studied this the summer of 2021), then blessed Abraham his family in order to, in time, bless all the families of the earth (Genesis 12-50). Then, from the descendants of Abraham, God built a nation, established a congregation, developed a leader, and formed faithfulness in a people (Exodus; we studied this this summer).

The book of Joshua continues the narrative of this people in the promised land in the next generation (we told these stories in the children’s stories). The book of Judges continues the narrative in the next generations (we are telling these stories in the children’s stories). The book of Ruth tells one story of one family in the midst of God’s great story in one of the last generations.

The stories of I Samuel 1-7 are transitional, narrating an interim period, in this one story of God’s mission of reconciliation.

Now I Samuel tells the final stories of the interim period between Moses and David. Generational leaders who are spiritual, political, and military leaders like Joshua, Moses’ successor, and the judges Deborah, Gideon, and Samson, are replaced in this generation by Samuel. Not since Moses has there been such a faithful leader. He will be the last. Following him will be kings. And there will be kings – good and bad – until the end of the nation 500 years later, and the coming of the King of the Kings, Jesus, as reported in the New Testament Gospels, 500 years after that.

I and II Samuel, which give way to I and II Kings and I and II Chronicles which narrate the centuries of the kings, can be outlined this way:

I Samuel 1-7: The Rise of Samuel

I Samuel 8-15: The Rule of Saul

I Samuel 16 – II Samuel 5:10: The Rise of David

II Samuel 5:11 – 8:18: The Reign of David

II Samuel 9-20: The Family of David.

These last interim stories pick up where the previous ones left off - the story of a woman in a family. Where Ruth ends, the story of Hannah begins. The story of widowed, immigrant, homeless Ruth, who is welcomed into the family of Naomi, marries a kinsmen-redeemer and has a son. The story ends importantly and beautifully this way, speaking of Ruth's son: *'They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.'*

The story of Hannah begins this way: 'Hannah, who had no children.'

Hannah prays passionately – a challenging model for our own casual prayers.  
Hannah sings powerfully – perhaps helping to establish psalm singing in Israel.

Hannah wants what Hannah wants; The Lord wants what the Lord wants.  
Hannah wants what the Lord wants; The Lord wants what Hannah wants.  
The two wants become one.

Hannah represents a perfect model of the interaction of the intimate and the public.  
The answer to her prayer is the means by which God effectively calls Israel back to himself.  
Her very personal prayers are a statement of God's universal will.

The son prayed for, becomes Israel deliverer – Samuel.  
God and Hannah are in fellowship.  
Each has their will worked out through the willing participation of the other.

We will not see this again, so beautifully so powerfully, until we see Jesus whose will, whose prayer, was to do the Father's will.

At the end of II Samuel a reader will have noticed sweeping changes in the life of the nation and compelling evidence of God's unrelenting pursuit of his people. The overwhelming oppression and intimidation of the Philistines is broken, tribes become nations, the nation become more centralized, urban centers develop, wealth and its unequal gap grows, factions entrench. God will have favored a deeply flawed and faithful man, David, and entrusted the nation to him, always being on his side. God will have acted as sole sovereign throughout the narrative, sometimes in grand gestures and sometimes with subtle moves unnoticed by the primary characters.

At the end, we may ask: Who is the example of one who best embodies the salvation mission of God – by initial desire and by faithful follow through? Put another way: Who, in the Samuel narratives, best anticipates the faithful disciples of Jesus, indeed, Jesus? Still another way: Who will have the most spiritual offspring in this narrative of the salvation of God? The answer is at the beginning – Hannah, 'who had no children'.