

## 1 Sam 1:1-8 [1]-HANNAH'S TRIAL

PRELIMS. This book gives us an account of the **transition** in Israel from Judges ruling (and everyone did what was right in their own eyes), to kings ruling. There are 3 important **characters** which are prominent in the book: **Samuel, Saul, David**. 1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel were originally **one book** – book titles are not ‘inspired’! We do not know who wrote the Book apart from the Holy Spirit guiding him. The name Samuel means ‘heard of God’ – as we read in chapter one! Samuel was a child of **earnest prayer!**

### A GODLY MOTHER

Israel, God’s covenant people, were in a very **poor spiritual** condition, despite there being some godly people. But we see clearly here, God was **taking care of His Cause** among them.

“*There was a certain man...*”[1] – good man named Elkanah. He came from the same place as Joseph of **Arimathea**. He was a **Levite**, so his work was entirely devoted to the tabernacle. In fact he had at least one son who “*ministered with song*” in the tabernacle according to [1 Chron 6:33,34].

A **problem!** “*He had two wives*”![2] Was he a **bigamist?** In these days it was **common**, even among God’s people to have more than one wife!! The patriarchs had them! The **reason?** God had **not revealed** to them his displeasure at such a thing! You know, we **need** God’s **revelation** in order to discover His will and what is Truth! Our own guesses are not good enough! Else we are back to ‘every man doing what is right in his own eyes’. (So like today, discarding God’s Word as the standard for Truth, and doing our ‘own thing’!)

God **gradually revealed** His will regarding **many** subjects, including marriage. God does **not completely** reveal **everything** about a subject. That is the way God works with some things! One reason is because we are **not able** to grasp or

**adapt** to such changes as a **generation**! “*I have many things to tell you but **you** are **not able** to bear them **now***”[John 16:12]. Many **social** changes take **decades** to become effective. Re marriage the NT Church insisted that elders/deacons must be the “*husband of **one** wife*”[1T3] and widows in order to qualify for the ‘**Church DHSS Assistance**’ programme had to be the “*wife of **one** husband*”[1Tim5:9]. It was a **gradual** revelation.

The laws that God gave Moses in Exod/Lev/Deu may seem **harsh** to you/I in **our** culture today. But it was **music** to the ears of those living at **that** time because **all** societies had pagan principles of **dominion** over women! Xnity **liberated** women!

There are some things that by their very nature **cannot** be changed **overnight** but will take **several generations** to **implement** and be effective. So God, in His most excellent **wisdom**, gradually **unfolded** His will for some social orders! If it was suddenly and immediately implemented, there would be many **deaths** through the **impatience** and **frustration** of men!

Of course these early believers would be **horrified** at some of **our standards** today, even **with** the God’s Word! OT and NT believers **had** very **strong** principles! Being a Xn in NT times, often meant either having to **leave** your work, or not being able to find **suitable** employment! A **mason** might be asked to build a **shrine** – not on! A **knife** sharpener asked to sharpen **sacrificial** knives – not on! Many Xns refused to dine **socially** in case a **cup** had been offered to a **god**! These early Xns really did put **God first** in their lives! They were **holy**! One Xn **complained** to Tertullian about restrictions said ‘But after all I **must** live’ Reply: ‘**Must** you?’ Can you not die as martyrs for Truth? Such holiness changed the Roman Empire!

This leads to **another matter** which was different from our culture today! Having **children** was recognised as being truly **blessed**! It was seen as being **favoured** and **privileged** – for children were a **gift** from **God**! That children are a gift from

God is clear from the fact that “*the Lord had closed her womb*” [5] You see “*children are a heritage from the Lord*” [Psa127:3] Every single child is from the Lord. There are ‘no **accidental**’ births in God’s world – just our’s! He opens and closes wombs. Couples try to have children and fail; couples try to refrain from having and bingo! Because every child is a **deliberate** and ‘special’ **gift** from God! **He** has a **purpose** for that child!

Even in some Xn circles today, children are **not** seen as a **gift** but a **burden** and an **inconvenience**! In the Bible **motherhood** is portrayed as one of the greatest privileges a woman could have. Motherhood is a **vital** calling the **nation depends** on it!

Hannah was **upset**! She was in an excellent relationship, **married** to a fine man. But she was **not bearing fruit** and the fault was definitely not her husband’s for he had fruit to others! In the matter of the one great thing that only women can do, she came up short! She was **barren** and **childless**! As far as she was concerned she was a **failure**!

**APP** Spiritual application – as a Xn, being married to Christ, are **you concerned** about bringing forth fruit from that marriage? For if you are married to Christ you **will** bear fruit! It is **impossible** to be fruitless when united to Christ! No child of God ever failed to **demonstrate** that he had the **seed of God** within him. Here is one of the things John said about having the “*seed of God*” in us “*No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him...By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God*” [1John 3:9,10] “*You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide*” [John 15:16] What spiritual fruit can **you** point to in your life that will convince people you are a Xn, someone different from others, only through God’s grace? The **lovely** thing about this is that Hannah was **ambitious** for

**God!** Today, many Xns are **lacking** in **zeal** for God! They have no ambition for God – **no desire** to do something great for God **No desire** to **demonstrate** and **leave** some **testimony** that they loved the Lord and that He was **worthy** of **acknowledgment!**

God **is** sovereign – but we **must** pray! Hannah prayed – **hard!** But it was like God just never heard her - but He was hearing all the time. We must **persevere** in prayer, even when there is **silence** from God! God often **begins** by silence! To test our sincerity and genuineness (and other reasons). However...

We must remember God is sovereign. Some PMs I have gone to, it seems as though God has made a **mistake** in not saving the whole city of... and saving everyone in the congregation! There is **anger** at God, as if He did not know the situation. Xns pray as if God did not know the need around us! I read this week a request for prayer but wisely added: ‘Of course, God does **not** need **us** to tell Him where His **sovereign** power should be released. God does not need our directions or our **assessment** of the need. But it appears that He chooses to work in this way...” (ie, the way of being **earnest** in **prayer!**)

For Hannah, God had a child – but it was **not yet God’s time!** It is one thing to **believe** in the sovereignty of God – it is **another** thing to **acquiesce** in it through the **experience** of it!

God’s sovereignty! In the meantime Hannah was to **suffer** an ‘unfair’ **aggravation!** Her **sister-in-law** used to “**provoke her grievously to irritate her...year by year**”[6] It lasted for **years!** \*\* “**as often as she went up to the house of the Lord**”[7] The more **spiritual**, greater the **trial!** Real faith **endures** suffering!

We need a lot more **humility** in prayer! We need to **bow** before a holy and sovereign God, in **utter dependence** on His **mercy** for He has been **greatly offended** by our sins. **Remembering** that **all** people are **not destined** for salvation! The Bible makes that very clear. No room for **presumption!**