

Title: Sovereign Over All!
Scripture: 1 Samuel 1:1-20
Series: God, the True King

1. Introduction –

- a. As we discussed in our introduction, the book of Samuel presents to us a people in transition.
 - i. At the opening of the book, we see that Israel’s spiritual condition was bleak. The sin of moral relativism had taken root. Therefore, each person did what was right in their own eyes. The standard of truth, the Word of God, was being ignored. Because of this, God had removed His protection from Israel, and they were brought low as a nation.
 - ii. What followed was a series of enemy occupations, surface-level repentance, and divine deliverance through the appointed Judges. This cycle became a generational curse.
 - iii. The book of Samuel opens with the circumstances of the birth of Samuel, the last great judge. Samuel will be the instrument by which God establishes the royal kingdom.
- b. Regarding sovereignty, the book of Samuel demonstrates that there can only be one true King who reigns. God is to be that king and His people must follow Him. In submitting to His kingship, the people are guided to a harmonious existence in which they can expect the abiding blessings of the Lord but to refuse His kingship incurs terrible judgment.
- c. Today, our passage deals with the question of dependence amid suffering and anguish. Because God

is the sovereign King, His people must trust Him and submit to His authority even in the darkest of circumstances.

i. Today we prove, through Hannah's life, the great truth of **Romans 8:28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

1. The referenced good in this verse is strictly the glory of God and not our comfort.

d. Beloved, our story is not just about a devout woman whose prayer was heard. In the midst of an ordinary family life situation, God directed Hannah's life so she played a crucial role as the mother of Samuel the kingmaker. The one who was to be born to her was not only a prophet of Israel but the one who would establish the kingship in Israel, appointing first Saul, a king after the people's heart, and then David, a king after God's own heart.

i. In anointing David as King, Samuel appointed the one by which the one true King would descend from. From David's royal line comes Jesus Christ, the King of kings.

e. Today we learn that if an incident in a woman's ordinary family life could be such a significant step in the eternal plan of the saving God, each day can be no less important to a believer.

2. Verses 1-5: The Setting and Characters: There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. (2) 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) Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. (4) On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. (5) But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her...

- a. Our narrative introduces a godly man that had committed a terrible mistake. He had ignored the divine design of marriage established in Genesis and had opted for a marriage that would cause heartache. In all of scripture, polygamous marriages were always a source of sin and pain. Elkanah's marriage would be no different.
 - i. There was bound to be tremendous tension in any household with two wives because of jealousy and hostility.
 - ii. We note that Hannah received a double portion to offer to the Lord because she was the preferred wife. Peninah knew this and was hurt because of it.
- b. Our verse tells us that Hannah had no children. We understand that having an heir in ancient Israel was very important, and Hannah felt insignificant due to her barrenness.
- c. We also note that Elkanah went annually to Shiloh to perform the seasonal sacrifice. He gave his whole family portions to offer to the Lord. This says much

about the man, for we know that the priesthood was very corrupt during this time. The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took advantage of the people both physically and financially and the abuse caused many to stop attending these feast.

- i. Elkanah continued to worship God. It was his duty, as commanded by scripture, and therefore he obeyed. We find in this husband a devote example of commitment.

3. Verses 5B-8: God's Greatest Work Often Begins with Affliction: ...though the LORD had closed her womb. (6) And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. (7) So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. (8) And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

- a. Twice in these two verses, we read that the cause of Hannah's infertility was the sovereign choice of God. God had closed her womb. Ultimately, God withheld children from Hannah.
 - i. Does this offend you? Do you wonder why the great God of heaven would refuse to give a child to a pious woman?
 1. The answer, which becomes evident in the rest of this chapter, is that God withheld Hannah's blessing not to curse her but to glorify Himself through her! God has a

great sovereign plan. His Acts are meant to bring glory to His name. God's plan includes both the good and difficult moments of the believer's life. Beloved, we cannot let this truth escape our attention.

- a. The reason that God withheld children from Hannah was to put her in a position in which she would learn dependence and therefore offer up to God that thing that she wanted most.
- ii. Barren women seem to be God's instruments in raising critical figures in the history of redemption.
 1. Consider the following examples:
 - a. Isaac, the promised seed, came from a barren woman.
 - b. Jacob, the father of the nation of Israel, came from a barren woman.
 - c. Joseph, Samson, and Samuel, the saviors or preservers of Israel, came from barren women.
 - d. John the Baptist, the forerunner to the great Messiah, came from a barren woman.
- iii. We must remember that God tends to make our total inability His starting point. Our hopelessness and our helplessness are no barrier to His work. It is at this point where God is most glorified.
 1. When the people are without strength, without resources, without hope, without human gimmicks—then He loves to stretch

for His hand from heaven and act on their behalf.

2. Hannah needed to get to this place.

- b. God worked in Hannah's distress. Peninah, the second wife, used the special worship occasions for tormenting Hannah.
 - i. Year after year, it went on. Peninah was baiting Hannah, irritating her, winding her up until Hannah could bear it no more, and turned to seek God.
 - 1. Our distress often rids us of our pride and self-sufficiency and makes us admit our need for God Himself.
 - 2. The evil that Peninah visited on Hannah was her own, but God used the distress to draw Hannah to complete dependence. Beloved, this is sovereignty. This is all things working together for good.
 - 3. The difficulties in your own life are but a beginning point to the mighty working of God in His sovereignty.
- c. Beloved, there will be times in your life where your only comfort can come from the Lord. In verse 8, we see the tender affections of Hannah's husband. He reminds her of his deep love for her. Yet, we find that Hannah is well beyond human comfort. Her heart is grieved and must come to the Lord for healing.
 - i. You, too, will experience such moments in your lives.

4. Verses 9 and 10: In our distress, sometimes all you can do is weep: After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah

rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. (10) She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly.

a. Sometimes tears make up all of our prayers. Tears are genuine prayer.

i. **Psalm 6:8** Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the LORD has heard the sound of my weeping.

ii. Notice that there was nowhere else for Hannah to turn. She had to flee from Peninnah's cruel mockery, and she found no comfort in her husband's affection. Affliction is a vehicle that directs believers closer to their holy God.

b. Hannah turns to the LORD. She turns to that name that proclaims "I AM that I AM." To the self-sufficient one. She turns to God in her distress and weeps bitterly before Him. God had brought her to the place of surrender. Everything in Hannah's life has been leading to this moment, to this prayer of submission. God is glorifying Himself in her!

i. God is removing earthly desire from her heart and replacing it with holy reverence for the Almighty who has our lives in His hands.

5. Verse 11: Our Sufficiency is in God: And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

- a. Beloved, notice that she offers her prayer to the cosmic ruler; to the **Lord of hosts**. What basis does this earthly woman have to address the eternal sovereign? She makes her plea based upon His love.
 - i. No matter how small by the world's standards, every believer is precious to God, and He inclines His ear to hear them.
 - 1. God once reminded Moses in **Exodus 3:7**
 - ...I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings,
 - a. God knows our suffering!
 - b. This is a great joy to know. He sees His people and how they are treated. In due time, God will act on their behalf to glorify His name.
- b. Hannah asks for a child, perhaps for the millionth time. But this time, she does not ask for herself. She does not ask in order to prove her rival wrong. She asks for a blessing in order to return that blessing to God. God is worthy of our very best, and Hannah has begun to learn this after so many years of affliction. She begs for a child, and she states, **“then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”**
 - i. She promises to give him to the Lord as Nazarite and not for a limited time but to be an eternal servant to God.
 - ii. The child would play a crucial role in preparing God's people to receive Jesus, the one true King,

because Samuel anoints David as a precursor to the Messiah.

1. Why has God withheld a child from Hannah? He has done so to get her to this point in which she is yearning to give a child to the Lord and not have a child for herself.
 - a. Samuel must belong to God and not to Hannah.
 - b. If God had given her a son before this, Hannah would have kept him for herself.
 2. God's gifts of barrenness and affliction were for Hannah's salvation and for a great work in His people's redemptive history.
 3. We can trust the sovereign God in all of life's situations.
6. Verses 12-17: Pouring out our Souls to God in Prayer: As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. (13) Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. (14) And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you." (15) But Hannah answered, "No, my Lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. (16) Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." (17) Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him."

- a. Hannah is a person with a heavy spirit. Many of God's people find themselves in this place. What should be done? Go to the Lord!
- b. **Praying before the LORD...pouring out her soul before the Lord:** These two phrases give the sense that Hannah was fully absorbed in the presence of the Lord, forgetting herself and, for a long time, not knowing that Eli was watching.
- c. The initial content of her prayer, our passage tells us, is **a troubled spirit, great anxiety, and vexation.**
 - i. **Psalms 142:1-2** With my voice I cry out to the LORD; with my voice I plead for mercy to the LORD. (2) I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him.
 1. Are you troubled? Are you in anguish? Is the world closing in on you? Come to our God!
 2. The Lord is a God that allows us to come to Him amid our anguish. Jesus demonstrates this very truth to us. We find him praying during His time of spiritual turmoil.
 - a. **Matthew 26:38A** Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death...
 - b. **Luke 22:44** And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.
 - i. If Jesus could pray in a time of deadly sorrow and agony, shouldn't we do the same?

ii. Jesus, as the high priest of our salvation, beckons us in this regard.

1. In **Matthew 11:28** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
2. **1 Peter 5:7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

d. **Side Note:** In our passage, We also see how harshly the Priest Eli judged Hannah. Sometimes, as believers, we are more critically judged by those within the family of God than those outsiders. This is the spirit of legalism. Eli is ready to correct a perceived wrong in Hannah's coming to the Lord, but he was unwilling to fix his sons' known evil. This is hypocrisy. But God knows. Do not let the opinion of others keep you from coming to the Lord!

7. Verse 18 and 19A: God is sufficient for every believer: And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. (19) They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah...

a. Can you see the change that has come to Hannah through the grace of dependent prayer? Eli has sent her to her husband **in peace**. It is his prayer that **God would grant to her the petition that she has made**. But she is not promised a child. She leaves the holy place without this promise.

i. And yet, we see the change in her. She goes and eats and is no longer sad. She rises early in the

morning and worships before the Lord. She leaves the holy place and goes back to her life. What is the source of this new joy in her life, seeing that God made her no promises concerning pregnancy.

1. The source of her joy was not in getting what she wanted but in coming to the Lord. The source of her joy was pouring out the hurt to a God who cares and knowing that He cares enough to listen. The source of her joy was knowing that her life belonged to the Lord and God could do whatever He wanted with her. The source of her joy was knowing that God loved her and that she was in a salvational relationship with Him.
2. In other words, Hannah gave up what she wanted and accepted God's sovereignty over her and her situation. God is always glorified in this type of thinking.

8. Verse 19B to 20: God Remembers His People: ...And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. (20) And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."

- a. **The Lord remembered her:** Now that Hannah is ready to accept anything from the hand of God including bareness, and her bitterness of soul has been purged through prayer, God begins His work of deliverance. She conceives. What an incredibly joyous time this must have been. Hannah's eyes are

no longer on her tormentor but on the God that delivers and accomplishes His will.

- b. Hannah walks in submission from this point on. When the child comes, she names him Samuel—heard of God. This will serve as a constant reminder that this boy is a testament that God hears the saints' prayers. The Lord in His sovereignty is completing His glorious plan. What a blessing to know that our lives are part of that plan!

9. Benediction:

- a. **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Public Reading of Scripture
Hebrews 4:14-16