

A Study of 1st Samuel

Study Guide

Introduction

The primary commentary and resource used for the basis of this study is the *Concordia Commentary* on **1 Samuel** by Andrew Steinmann, M. Div, Ph.D. He is a former Lutheran Pastor and recognized Old Testament Scholar and author. Other resources are *The Lutheran Study Bible*, a multitude of non-Lutheran resources within *PC Study Bible* software, and some commentary by Dr. Timothy Keller of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City.

A brief Biblical Timeline to provide context of Samuel. Note that the approximate time at the start of **1 Samuel** is 1090 B.C.

Excerpts from Dr. Steinmann's introduction to **1 Samuel** in the Concordia Commentary

The fifty-five chapters of this single Hebrew book (1 and 2 Samuel in English Bibles) trace Israel's transition from a tribal confederacy designed to live under God's rule to a monarchy established and supported by God...

*Like many of the historical books of the OT, Samuel does not name its author. Clearly the writer composed his narrative based on historical sources. While some of them may have been oral, written records played a major part as indicated, for instance, by the various lists of David's officials...Perhaps books by the prophets Samuel, Gad, and Nathan were also employed. Though the book is named after Samuel, he could hardly be its author since all of the events related after **1 Sam 25:1** take place after his death.*

Note: As we go through 1 Samuel, we will look at clues within the book that give indication of the time of its authorship.

The book of Samuel is so large that it is difficult to speak of only a few other theological themes that characterize it. However, several stand out among the many that found within this work.

Prosperity and success come only from God

Prophecy (i.e. the role of prophecy)

The Spirit of Yahweh

***Samuel** contains more text-critical problems than perhaps any other book of the OT. The LXX appears at times to have followed a different Hebrew text for the basis of its translation, and the writer of **Chronicles**, who incorporated large sections of **Samuel** into his work, also seems to have had a text that in some places had different readings than the current MT of **Samuel**...*

*The ancient manuscripts from Qumran [The Dead Sea Scrolls] appear to confirm that there were Hebrew manuscript traditions for **Samuel**.*

Note: As we go through 1 Samuel, we will look at some of these translational/textual difficulties and address their significance or lack thereof.

Let's read **1 Samuel 1:1 – 20**.

Compare verse 1 to **1 Chronicles 6:16, 22 – 28** understanding that Zophai in **1 Chronicles** is Zuph in 1 Samuel. Considering that Samuel would be born of Elkanah and become a prophet and priest to Israel, what is the significance of his lineage?

In what is Hannah counting on for her happiness and how is that working out?

In what is Peninnah counting on for her happiness and how is that working out?

On what does Elkanah want Hannah to base her happiness and how is that working out?

How does this same pattern play out in our lives and how do we know it is not working?

If someone said that the Bible endorses polygamy with Elkanah being a good example, how would you respond?

It appears that Hannah is bargaining with God in her prayer. Is that a proper characterization? Why or why not?

What is the significance of Hannah promising that no razor will touch her son's head? See **Numbers 6:1 – 5**.

What is the significance of her change in attitude upon hearing the blessing from Eli?

Upon what is Hannah now basing her happiness?

Read **1 Samuel 1:21 – 28**.

Relative to Elkanah, what is the significance of verse 23?

From your commentaries, approximately how old was Samuel when he was left with Eli?

Considering his young age, how does that confirm Hannah's and Elkanah's faithfulness ?

To whom is the last sentence of verse applying?

“Liberal scholars” have challenged whether **1 Samuel 2:1 – 11** was truly spoken by Hannah. As we read it look for internal evidence from Hannah's prayer (Poem) that points toward Hannah.

What internal evidence do you see to support Hannah's authorship?

Regarding Hannah's Prayer, Dr. Steinmann in Concordia Commentary comments:

Hannah's prayer is one of four significant poems in the book of Samuel. The other three are David's Song of the Bow (2 Samuel 1:17 – 27), his song of deliverance (2 Samuel 22, Psalm 18), and his last words (2 Samuel 23:1 – 7). All four occur at important junctures in the narrative. Hannah's prayer prefaces the ministry of