

PRECEPTS FOR LIFE
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P.O. Box 182218, Chattanooga, TN 37422-7218
1-800-763-1990/ www.precept.org

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SERIES: I Samuel, Part 1 (The Heart of a Leader)

MONDAY

OPEN

Oh beloved, do you realize that your understanding of God, your concept of God, your belief in who God is sets the tone for the way that you live? It sets the tone for all of life. It determines the way that you are going to function, the way that you are going to think, the values that you are going to have. And that's what we're going to see today as we look at the book of 1 Samuel.

PART ONE

Well, Beloved, believe it or not we have come to 1 Samuel, chapter 2. And 1 Samuel, chapter 2 opens with Hannah's prayer, a prayer that when you read is given to the Lord right there when she dedicates Samuel to the Lord, when she brings Samuel to the temple to leave him there, so to speak, forever. This a child that she promised to give back to the Lord if the Lord would only open her womb, if the Lord would only give her a son. And now, as she's

there at the temple, it says in chapter 2, verse 1, “Then Hannah prayed and said...,” And all the way through verse 10 we read her prayer. And then in verse 11 it says, “Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest.” (1 Samuel 2:11) So as we look at chapter 1, really the events of chapter 1 are not over until you get to 1 Samuel, chapter 2, verse 11 when Elkanah and Hannah go back home and leave Samuel under Eli. Now since they return home and Samuel is left, what I want us to do is I want us to look at Hannah’s prayer, because Hannah’s prayer sets the tone for the whole book. Let’s just stop and look at Samuel. Samuel is the account of God’s gracious intervention into the affairs of His people before they totally self-destruct. Remember that the setting is the days of Judges and yet it’s not part of the book of Judges and that’s because of the transition of events in Israel’s history. And these events all begin with the fervent prayers of a single woman, a single woman who had known the bitterness of disappointment, the disgrace of a barren womb and the taunting reproach of her peer. This was a woman whose womb was reserved by God so that Samuel might be sovereignly pledged, given to the Lord for a very special task. So let’s pause now here and catch the atmosphere. Come with me to Shiloh. Stand with me there on that place where the tent of meeting was once erected. Stand there with me and look around you and catch the wind blowing through your hair. Wrap that shawl around you. This is where Elkanah and Hannah came up with Samuel. I think in all probability that Peninnah and her sons and daughters were with her also, because the whole family would go up yearly to make sacrifice. Now Samuel has come to the age where he is weaned. Now it has come the time for Hannah to keep her vow to the Lord. She’s not going to weep bitterly this time because God has answered her prayer. I imagine as she went up there she remembered that day when she stood there at the tent of meeting, that day when she was standing there praying and Eli thought that she was drunk because her lips were moving but no words were coming out,

that day when she turned to Eli and she said I have poured out my soul to the Lord and that day when Eli said the Lord bless you, the Lord answer your prayer, and she went home and she conceived Samuel. Now the day has come to dedicate her son to the Lord, to return him to stay there forever. And what does she pray? Listen to her prayer because this is the prayer that sets the tone for the whole book. “Then Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart exalts in the Lord; My horn is exalted in the Lord...,’” Now the word, horn was a symbol of strength. It was a symbol of power. You take these bulls and those horns on their heads and you see them butt and try and throw the other animal to the ground with their horns. This was a symbol of strength. And so as she stands there giving this son to the Lord, this is a matter of her heart. Her heart is exalting in the Lord. You say how can she exalt in the Lord? She’s leaving this boy. Maybe he’s three, maybe he’s four; she’s leaving her son and she’s going to walk away from him. Yes, she is going to walk away from him. Yes, she is going to go back to Ramah. But wonderful things are going to happen to her at Ramah. You say how can she do this? She can do this because she knows the Lord. She can do this because she’s dedicated to the Lord. She can do this because her heart belongs to God and because she has given something to God and she couldn’t give anything dearer to God than her only son, just as God could not give anything dearer to you than His only Son. You know I think, as I say this to you I think about Romans 8. I think about that chapter where God reminds us that “...all things [are going to] work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.” And how God takes these things and He conforms us to His image and “...whom He [has] predestined; He... [has]...called; and...whom He has called, He... [has]...justified; and...whom He [has] justified, He...[has]...glorified.” (Romans 8:28-30) And then it says in verse 31, “What then [can] we say to...things? If God is for us, who is against us?” (8:31) And how do we know God’s for us? “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will

He not also with Him freely give us all things?” (8:32) You see Hannah had given her only son to the Lord, she did it because her heart exalts in the Lord. My horn, her strength came from the Lord. That’s why I said at the beginning of this program that your understanding of God sets the tone for your whole life. It determines how you’re going to look at something. It sets the standard for your choices. And so she goes on to say, “My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation.” (1 Samuel 2:1b) She knows where her hope comes from. She knows where her help comes from. She knows where her salvation comes from. And because she knows that, then her mouth can speak boldly against her enemies. She says, “There is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.” (2:2) Do you know that? Do you realize that there is no other God? Do you realize that anything that anyone else worships, if it’s not God Almighty, it is a nonexistent god? It is a god of your imagination. It is a god of someone else’s imagination and they bought a lie and you bought a lie. Do you realize that when people say that they worship Allah, that they’re not worshipping the God of the Bible, because he doesn’t measure up to the God of the Bible? The God of the Bible has a Son. The God of the Bible wants an intimate relationship with you, not just a God to be feared. The God of the Bible does not reward people that go to war and have jihad and say you’re going to die and come to paradise and you’re going to have all these virgins. That’s not the God of the Bible. And so what she’s saying here is she’s saying there’s no one holy like the Lord. There is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God. Now what does it mean, neither is there any rock like our God? In other words, a rock cannot be moved. A rock is stable. A rock stands firm. And what you see is you see Moses at the end of his life putting together a song. And when Moses puts together this song, this is what he says about God. He says in Deuteronomy, chapter 32, verse three, “For I proclaim the name of the Lord; Ascribe greatness to our God. The rock! His work is perfect...,”(Deuteronomy 32:3-

4a) The word for rock is cur, c-u-r and it's saying the rock, "...His work is perfect ...all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He." (32:4) This is the rock that never changes. This is the rock that never moves. And this is the rock that is cleft for you and me. And what's the cleaving of the rock where you and I can hide? It's Jesus and the cross of Jesus Christ. So she comes back and she says in 1 Samuel 2, verse three, "Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the Lord is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed." (1 Samuel 2:3) Now who might be standing there? Who might be listening to her prayer? Wouldn't it be Peninnah? Peninnah who arrogantly irritated her rival who shamed her because her womb was closed because she didn't have any children. Well now there's a different story, isn't it? And it says boast no more so very proudly. Don't let arrogance come out of your mouth. Why? For the Lord is a God of knowledge and with Him actions are weighed. You know when you remember that it does set the tone for your life. When you have that respect and understanding of God, then it keeps you from doing certain things. That knowledge of God restrains you because you know with Him actions are weighed. We'll talk about I more when I come back.

PART TWO

Welcome back my friend. Well, I left you right in the middle of Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel, chapter 2 and we read verse three, but I want to go back and I want to show you something. It says in verse three, "Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth...;" Why? "...For the Lord is a God of knowledge and with Him actions are weighed."(2:3) Remember I told you that Hannah's prayer sets the tone for the whole book. But I also said that our understanding of God sets the tone for our life. And what you see is if you understand that God knows everything, if you understand that there's no hiding from God, if you

understand that you can't run and say the darkness will be night around me and you forget that God says no, it's not going to be darkness around you. It's going to be light. So if you remember that and you remember that God sees everything and you remember that with Him actions are weighed. In other words, you may do something to impress a person; God knows why you did it. You may lie to save your neck; God knows why you did it. He looks at your actions and He weighs your actions. And that's why your knowledge of God sets the tone of your life. And that's why there are certain ways that I will restrain myself because I do not want to bring displeasure to God. And there are times when I don't restrain myself and I say what I shouldn't say or I get perturbed when I shouldn't get perturbed and then I remember hey, it's not just that I've hurt this person or not that I've just looked irritated to this person, but God has just weighed my action. And I was weighed in the balances as it says in Daniel, "...Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin...[you have been weighed in the balances and you have found wanting.] (Daniel 5:25-27) So that's why you're important that your knowledge of God is so very, very important. It sets the tone for your life. Now watch what she goes on to say: "The bows of the mighty are shattered, But the feeble gird on strength." (1 Samuel 2:4) In other words, here is this bow of this mighty, mighty archer pulled back, and God can shatter it just like this. And then she goes on to say, "...But the feeble gird on strength." (2:4b) Was she feeble? Yes, she was feeble; she could not have a child. But God could make her have a child. She goes on to say those who were full hire themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry cease to hunger. Now watch the contrasts. Here this person is full and now he's hiring himself out working in order to get enough bread to feed himself, but those who were hungry cease to hunger. In other words, God is in charge and God is able to take those that are weak. God is able to take those that are hungry and God is able to give them strength and supply their needs so that they hunger no more. It says, "...Even the barren gives birth to seven, But she

who has many children languishes.” (2:5b) Now here is Hannah and it says, “Even the barren gives birth to seven...,” Now she’s given birth to how many? She’s given birth to one. And here is Peninnah who has many children who can languish. In other words, God is in charge. God closed Hannah’s womb. God opened Hannah’s womb. And that’s very, very clear. “The Lord kills and makes alive...;” (2:6a) Now that ought to bring you great comfort. It goes on to say, “[and] He brings down to Sheol and [He] raises up.” (2:6b) In other words He’s the one that kills a person and takes a person to the grave, but He is also the one who is the resurrection and the life, who lifts us out of the grave, who takes this mortal and puts on immortality, this corruptible and puts on incorruptibility. This is God. And listen, understanding this sets the tone for your life. You know we have many people that work with our ministry, that are in countries where their lives are in danger. I mean all over the world there are people that are suffering for their faith. You say why do these people do this so voluntarily? Because their knowledge of God has set the tone of their life and they know that they can’t die without God’s permission. And they know that it’s God that keeps them alive. They know that it is God who is in control. I think of a young man that is one of our workers and God showed him, you’re making your plans and you’re asking Me to bless them. And that’s not the way it works with Me. I’m to make your plans and then I will bless them. And what’s happening is, you’re not being faithful to sit at My feet in the Word of God day by day, but sometimes you rush out to do your own thing, saying bless me, this is what I want You to do. Before you leave the house, I want you before you leave the house to sit at My feet and sit in My Word and stay in My Word and then you can leave and I will bless you. Well one day he had to make arrangements to leave the country and he had so much to do that he decided he would go out the door and he would go get in line at this place where he would get his papers to get out of the country. And as he started the Lord said hey, wait a minute; we’ve got a deal. Now you sit down and

you spend time in the Word and then I'll let you go. And so he wrestled with it for a minute and he remembered they had a deal. So he sat down to spend time with the Lord. And then he looked at his watch and he thought I better get up, but the Holy Spirit would not let him get up. The Holy Spirit made him stay there another 10 minutes. He got up then; he had permission from the Lord and he went out. And as he went down the street he saw all these police and he saw all this rubble and everything and a bomb had gone off where he would have been standing if he had been there 10 minutes earlier. God preserved his life. And this is what we need to understand: "The Lord kills and [He] makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and [He] raises up. [He] makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor..." (2:6-8b) Now why can He do this? It says, "...For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and He set the world on them." (2:8c) In other words, hey, I'm the One that made the heavens and the earth. I'm the One that made the pillars and sat the world on them. If I did that and you remember that, then you can know that I'm the One that's in charge. I am Jehovah-saboath; I am the Lord of hosts. And remember we meet that name for God for the very first time in 1 Samuel, chapter one, verse three. So now we're seeing what the Lord of hosts is really like. Now listen to the last part of this prayer: "Those who contend with the Lord will be shattered. Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; ...He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed." (2:10) O, Beloved, God has the final word and God is the One who exalts the horn of His anointed; and that's what we're going to see. This is Hannah's prayer that sets the tone for the whole book and truth that will set the tone for your life.