

1 SAMUEL

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

This book, in the Hebrew copies, is commonly called Samuel, or the Book of Samuel; in the Syriac version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet, which is the First Book of the Kings; and the Septuagint version, the Book of the Kingdom: it has the name of Samuel, because it contains an history of his life and times; and the Jews say ^{f1} it was written by him; and as it may well enough be thought to be, to the end of the twenty fourth chapter; and the rest might be written by Nathan and Gad, as may be gathered from (~~132B~~1 Chronicles 29:29) as also the following book that bears his name; and both may be called the Books of Kings, because they give an account of the rise of the kings in Israel, and of the two first of them; though some think they were written by Jeremiah, as Abarbanel; and others ascribe them to Ezra: however, there is no doubt to be made of it that this book was written by divine inspiration, when we consider the series of its history, its connection and harmony with other parts of Scripture; the several things borrowed from it, or alluded to in the book of Psalms, particularly what is observed in (~~137B~~Psalm 113:7,8), seems to be taken out of (~~100B~~1 Samuel 2:8), and the sanction which the Lord gives to it, by referring to a fact in it, whereby he stopped the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees cavilling at his disciples, (~~111B~~Matthew 12:3,4), compared with (~~120B~~1 Samuel 21:3-6), yea, even, as Huetius ^{f2} observes, some Heathen writers have by their testimonies confirmed some passages in these books, which they seem to have been acquainted with, as Nicolaus of Damascus ^{f3}, and Eupolemus ^{f4}; it contains an history of the government of Eli, and of the birth of Samuel, and his education under him; of the succession of Samuel in it, and the resignation of it to Saul, when he was chosen king; of his administration of his office, and of things done in the time of it, both before and after his rejection, and of the persecution of David by Saul, and is concluded with his death.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL 1

This chapter gives an account of the parents of Samuel, of the trouble his mother met with from her rival, and comfort from her husband, (^{<0001>}1 Samuel 1:1-8), of her prayer to God for a son, and of her vow to him, should one be given her, (^{<0009>}1 Samuel 1:9-11) of the notice Eli took of her, and of his censure on her, which he afterwards retracted, and comforted her, (^{<0012>}1 Samuel 1:12-18) of her conception and the birth of her son, the nursing and weaning of him, (^{<0019>}1 Samuel 1:19-23) and of the presentation of him to the Lord, with a sacrifice, (^{<0024>}1 Samuel 1:24-28).

Ver. 1. *Now there was a man of Ramathaimzophim, of Mount Ephraim,* etc.] Ramathaim is a word of the dual number, and signifies two Ramahs; the city consisted of two parts, being built perhaps on two hills, and were called Zophim; because, as the Rabbins say, they looked one to another; or rather, because situated on eminences, there were watchtowers in them, where watchmen were placed; or because they were inhabited by prophets, who were sometimes called watchmen, (^{<3017>}Ezekiel 3:17) and here is thought to be a school of the prophets, (see ^{<0019>}1 Samuel 19:19-24) and which seems to be countenanced by the Targum, in which the words are paraphrased thus, “and there was one” man of Ramatha, of the disciples of the prophets; or, as others think, the sense is this, this man was one of the Ramathites, the inhabitants of Ramah, and of the family of Zuph, or the Zuphites, which gave the name to the land of Zuph, and the grand ancestor of Elkanah is in this verse called Zuph, (see ^{<0015>}1 Samuel 9:5). According to Jerom ^{f5}, this is the same with Arimathaea, of which Joseph was, (^{<4257>}Matthew 27:57) for thus he writes,

“Armatha Sophim, the city of Helcanah and Samuel, in the Thamnitic region near Diospolis (or Lydda), from whence was Joseph, who in the Gospels is said to be of Arimathaea;”

but Reland ^{f6} thinks it cannot be the same that was about Lydda, which was all a champaign country; whereas this was in the mountains of Ephraim,

which must be sought to the north of Jerusalem, and not the west, and so it follows:

of Mount Ephraim: which is added to distinguish it from other Ramahs in several tribes, as in Benjamin, Naphtali, etc. though this may refer not to the situation of Ramathaim, but to the country of this man, who was originally of Mount Ephraim, as was the Levite in (^{<0790>}Judges 19:1) who was the cause of much evil to Israel, as this was of great good, as Kimchi observes:

and his name was Elkanah; which signifies “God hath possessed”; that is, possessed him, or he was in possession of God; he had an ancestor of the same name, (^{<1373>}1 Chronicles 6:23). This man was a Levite, one of the Kohathites, and a descendant of Korah; so that the famous prophet Samuel was of the sons of Korah:

the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph; the three last of these names are somewhat differently read in (^{<1365>}1 Chronicles 6:26,27), where they are Eliab, Nahath, Zophai; and in (^{<1364>}1 Chronicles 6:34,35). Eliel, Toah, Zuph:

an Ephrathite; which appellation is to be connected, according to Kimchi, not with Elkanah, but with Zuph; though neither of them were so called from Bethlehemjudah, the inhabitants of which were indeed called Ephrathites from Ephratah, another name of it; so Elimelech, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion, being of that city, were so called, (^{<8002>}Ruth 1:2) not from their being of the tribe of Ephraim, as Jeroboam of that tribe is called an Ephrathite, (^{<1113>}1 Kings 11:26), (see ^{<0725>}Judges 12:5) for these were Levites, the descendants of Kohath, in the line of Korah; but because they sojourned in Mount Ephraim, or dwelt there, as Elkanah did; and it is well known that the Kohathites had cities given them in the tribe of Ephraim, (^{<0215>}Joshua 21:5,21).

Ver. 2. *And he had two wives*, etc.] Which, though connived at in those times, was contrary to the original law of marriage; and for which, though a good man, he was chastised, and had a great deal of vexation and trouble, the two wives not agreeing with each other; perhaps not having children by the one so soon as he hoped and wished for, he took another:

the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah; the first name signifies “grace” or “gracious”, and she was a woman who had the grace of God, and very probably was also very comely, beautiful, and

acceptable, as she was in the sight of her husband; the other signifies a cornered gem, a precious stone or jewel, as the pearl, ruby, amethyst, etc. Very likely Hannah was his first wife, and having no children by her, he took Peninnah, who proved to be a rough diamond: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children; how many Peninnah had is not said, perhaps ten; (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 1:8) and that Hannah had none was not because she was naturally barren, but because the Lord had shut up her womb, or restrained her from bearing children, to put her upon praying for one, and that the birth of Samuel might be the more remarkable: (see ~~1~~ 1 Samuel 1:5).

Ver. 3. *This man went up out of his city yearly*, etc.] From year to year; or, as the Targum, from the time of the solemn appointed feast to the solemn appointed feast, from one to another; there were three of them in the year, at which all the males in Israel were to appear at the tabernacle; and being a Levite, this man was the more careful to observe this rule. He is said to “go up” out of his city, which was Ramathaim or Ramah; for though it was built on an eminence, from whence it had its name, yet Shiloh, whither he went, was higher; that being, as Adrichomius says ^{f7}, on the highest mountain of all round about Jerusalem, and the highest of all the mountains of the holy land. So that as he first went down the hill from Ramah, he went up an high ascent to Shiloh, which is the place he went up to as follows:

to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh; where the tabernacle was, the place of worship, and the altar of burnt offerings, on which sacrifices were offered. This place, according to Bunting ^{f8}, was twelve miles from Ramah, though others say it was not more than seven miles from it; hither he went to worship, or bow before the Lord; to pray unto him, as it is commonly interpreted; and being put before sacrifice, is said to be preferable to that, and more acceptable to God, and more eligible to be done in the tabernacle or temple than at home; (see ~~18:10~~ Luke 18:10) and though he is said to go up to sacrifice, it is not to be understood of his performing it himself, but by others, by the priest; for he himself was a Levite and could not offer sacrifices. This is the first time that mention is made of this title of Jehovah, Lord of hosts, of all the hosts and armies in heaven and in earth, the Lord of Sabaoth, as in (~~5:4~~ James 5:4) from **abx**, an “host”, or army; and from hence the Heathens called some of their deities by the name of Sabazius, as Jupiter Sabazius ^{f9}; and the Phrygians

and Thracians used to call Bacchus Sabazius, and other Grecians following them did the same ^{f10}:

and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests of the Lord, were there; Eli was the next judge of Israel after Samson, and who also was the high priest, as is generally supposed; but when and how the high priesthood came into his family is nowhere said, who was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, in whose line it continued to the time of Solomon; and Josephus ^{f11} places three between Phinehas and Eli, who were all of the line of Eleazar, whom he calls Abiezer, Bouci, and Ozis; but their Scripture names are Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, (^{<1186>}1 Chronicles 6:50,51). And according to him, after Uzzi came Eli to be high priest, and therefore must be the first of the line of Ithamar that was in that office. His two sons are mentioned as officiating as priests in Shiloh, at the time Elkanah used to go yearly thither to worship and sacrifice; who were very wicked men, as appears by an after account of them; and it is generally thought that this is observed here, to show that the wickedness of these priests did not hinder this good man from doing his duty; nor did he make use of it as an excuse for not attending the worship of the sanctuary.

Ver. 4. *And when the time was that Elkanah offered,* etc.] That is, brought his offering to the priest, to offer it for him, which was at one of the three festivals. According to R. Joshua Ben Levi ^{f12}, this was at the time of Pentecost; but Abarbinel thinks it was at the time of the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, which was a time of rejoicing, even the feast of tabernacles, and which is most likely:

he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions; parts of the offering, everyone a part, or portion; by which it appears, that this was a peace offering he offered, the greater part of which belonged to the owner, and which he made a feast of for his family and friends; (see ^{<6125>}Deuteronomy 12:5-7 16:10-15). Jerom ^{f13} interprets these portions of garments.

Ver. 5. *But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion,* etc.] Or, one choice portion, as the Targum; the best part or portion in the peace offering, of what the priest had not; he had the breast and the right shoulder, the next best piece he gave to Hannah; and the word being of the dual number, some render it a double portion; others, “one part of two faces” ^{f14}; which Jerom interprets, which might be received with a cheerful countenance, it was so good and excellent in its kind; others interpret it that he gave it with

a sorrowful ^{f15} and displeased countenance, because of the reason following, that she had no children; but Ben Gersom understands it of a part or portion of meat that had two faces or appearances; that he gave her one of the pieces, one part of which was very fat, and the other had no fat on it, so that she might choose what she liked best:

for he loved Hannah; loved her best, and therefore did everything to please her, and make her comfortable under her affliction for want of children, and to express his tender affection for her:

but the Lord had shut up her womb; restrained her from conception, and bearing children; (see ^{<OLD>}Genesis 20:18) or “though the Lord had shut up her womb” ^{f16}; this did not abate his love to her.

Ver. 6. *And her adversary also provoked her sore*, etc.] That is, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah; for when a man had more wives, two or more, they were usually at enmity to one another, as the two wives of Socrates were, being always jealous lest one should have more love and respect than the other from the husband; and this woman provoked Hannah one time after another, and continually, by upbraiding her with her barrenness; and this was another reason why Elkanah did all he could to comfort her, not only because the Lord had restrained her from bearing children, but because also she that envied and emulated her sadly provoked her:

for to make her fret; and be uneasy, and murmur at and complain of her unhappy circumstances: some render it, “because she thundered” ^{f17} against her; that is, Peninnah was exceeding loud and clamorous with her reproaches and scoffs, which were grievously provoking to Hannah. So said Socrates, when Xantippe first scolded at him, and then poured foul water on him: did not I say, says he, that Xantippe first thunders, and then rains ^{f18}?

because the Lord had shut up her womb; it was this Peninnah upbraided her with, and at which Hannah fretted and grieved.

Ver. 7. *And as he did so year by year*, etc.] Elkanah went up every year to Shiloh, and offered sacrifices, taking his family with him, and gave to Peninnah and her children their portion, and to Hannah a double portion, or if but one yet the best:

when she went up to the house of the Lord; that is, Peninnah, along with her husband, with whom she went every year to the tabernacle at Shiloh:

so she provoked her; her rival Hannah, upbraiding her with her barrenness; to which she was stirred up by seeing her husband on these festivals take so much notice of her, and show so much love and respect for her, as always to give her the best portion. Abarbinel thinks that Peninnah and Hannah lived at two separate places, the one at Ramah and the other at Ramatha, which both together are called Ramathaim; and that they only met with and saw one another at these festivals, and then it was that the one was so very insulting and provoking to the other:

therefore she wept and did not eat; that is, Hannah wept at the insults, reproaches, and scoffs, cast at her by her antagonist; insomuch that she could not eat of the peace offerings, though her husband always gave her the best part and portion of them; but her grief took away her stomach and appetite, that she could not eat; (see ^{<90B>}Psalm 42:3).

Ver. 8. *Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou?* etc.] Since it was a time of rejoicing, as every festival was, especially at the ingathering of the fruits of the earth:

and why eatest thou not? since they were at a feast, and she had the best part and portion of the provision:

and why is thy heart grieved? to such a degree that she could neither eat nor drink:

am not I better to thee than ten sons? which, as Jarchi says, Peninnah had borne to him; his meaning is, that the share she had in his love and affections ought to have been esteemed by her more than if she had ten or many children by him; and it suggests that Peninnah would have been glad to have such a share in his affections as Hannah had; and it would have been more eligible to her, than to have borne him so many children as she had.

Ver. 9. *So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drank,* etc.] After dinner, after Elkanah and Peninnah, and their children, had eaten heartily, and drank freely, and made a comfortable meal, and even a feast of it, at the place where the tabernacle and altar were, and their peace offerings were offered up, part of which they had been regaling themselves with. The Targum is,

“after she had eaten in Shiloh, and after she had drank;”

for upon the entreaty of her husband, and to make him easy, she might be prevailed upon to eat somewhat, though it might be but little; and to drink, though it was but water; for as for wine and strong drink, she declares afterwards she had not drank, (^{<0015>}1 Samuel 1:15)

now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord; for so the tabernacle was called, and sometimes the temple is called a tabernacle, (^{<2400>}Jeremiah 10:20). Now at the door posts and side of the threshold of the temple of the Lord, as the Targum; at the entrance of the great court of the Israelites, Eli had a seat placed, on which he sat; this must be at the gate of the court of the tabernacle, by the pillars of it; for in the court itself none afterwards might sit but kings of the family David ^{f19}; here Eli sat as an high priest and judge, give advice in difficult cases, and to try and judge all causes that were brought before him; some say ^{f20} that he was on this day constituted an high priest, and others say ^{f21} he was now made a judge; but no doubt he was both high priest and judge before this time.

Ver. 10. *And she was in bitterness of soul*, etc.] Because of her barrenness, and the taunts and reflections she had met with on that account; her life was bitter to her, she could take no pleasure in any of the comforts of it:

and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore; her prayer was with strong crying and tears; it was very fervent and affectionate; she prayed most vehemently, and wept bitterly. This perhaps was about the time of the evening sacrifice, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God, at the door of the tabernacle, or near it, as it should seem by the notice Eli took of her, who sat there.

Ver. 11. *And she vowed a vow*, etc.] Which might be confirmed by her husband; otherwise the vow of a woman, if disapproved of by her husband, was not valid, (^{<0008>}Numbers 30:8) and Elkanah might make the same vow his wife did, and so it stood; for as this was a vow of Nazariteship, it is a tradition of the Jews ^{f22}, that a man may vow his son to be a Nazarite, but a woman may not; but as this instance contradicts the tradition, they endeavour to explain away this vow, as it may respect a Nazarite, as will be observed hereafter:

and said, O Lord of hosts; this is properly the first time this title was used by any that we know of; for though it is expressed in (^{<0003>}1 Samuel 1:3)

there it is used as the words of the writer of this history, and so long after this prayer was put up; (see Gill on “~~1~~ Samuel 1:3”); and it is an observation in the Talmud ^{f23}, that from the day God created the world, no man called him the Lord of hosts till Hannah came and called him so:

if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid the sorrow of heart she had, the reproach she met with, on account of her having no children:

and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid; which petitions are the same in other words, and are repeated to denote her vehemence and importunity in prayer, and may allude to usages among men, that will look upon a person in distress, and turn away and forget them, and never think of them more; which she deprecates may not be her case with God:

but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child; or, “a seed of men” ^{f24}; a son in the midst of men, as the Targum; such as is desirable by men, as a male child for the most part is; though some Jewish writers interpret it of the seed of righteous, wise, and understanding men, such as be fit to serve the Lord, which seems to be a sense foreign to the text; a man child she asks, because no other could serve the Lord in the temple; and that she meant by this phrase such an one is clear, because she vowed that a razor should not come on its head, which is never said of females, as Kimchi observes:

then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life; to serve him, and minister unto him in the sanctuary; being born a Levite, it was incumbent on him to serve the Lord, and he had a right to his service; but then a common Levite did not enter on it until twenty five or thirty years of age, and was not always serving, but was dismissed from it at fifty (~~Numbers~~ Numbers 8:24,25); but the child she vows, if the Lord would give her such an one, should be trained up in his service from his infancy, and continue it all the days of his life; and was to be also a perpetual Nazarite, as Samson was, as follows:

and there shall no razor come upon his head; as was not to come upon a Nazarite, during his Nazariteship, (~~Numbers~~ Numbers 6:5) and as such a vow made by a woman contradicts the tradition of the Jews before mentioned, they give another sense of this clause; as the Targum, which paraphrases it, “and the fear of man shall not be upon him;”

but about this there is a division ^{f25}; but that Samuel was Nazarite, and a perpetual one, is the sense of their best interpreters.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord,* etc.] Being very earnest and importunate with him to grant her request, and therefore repeated her petition, and prolonged her prayer, being unwilling to let the Lord go, until she had a promise, or some satisfaction, that she should have the thing she liked; some think she continued an hour in prayer:

that Eli marked her mouth; observed the motion of her lips, and no doubt her distorted countenance, and uplifted eyes and hands, but chiefly the former; not knowing what the woman was at, and what could be the meaning of such motions.

Ver. 13. *Now Hannah, she spake in her heart,* etc.] It was mental prayer she used, some ejaculations of her mind she sent up to God, which she was sensible were well known to him, and she needed not to express vocally:

only her lips moved; as her heart spoke, and sent up her petitions, as if she had used words and phrases in form:

but her voice was not heard: that she might not seem to be ostentatious in her prayer, and that she might not interrupt others in their devotions; and she knew that her voice was not necessary with respect to God:

therefore Eli thought she had been drunken; by the motions she made, and gestures she used, as if she was muttering something to herself, and by her long continuance therein, and it being after a feast she had been at with her husband, and the rest of the family; from all which Eli concluded this must be her case.

Ver. 14. *And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken?* etc.] What, every day drunk? what, continually in this wicked practice? when will it be stopped? for Eli might have observed on other days, and at other times, odd looks, and a strange behaviour in her, which he took for the effects of drinking too much wine: or how long will this drunken fit last? she had been a considerable time as he thought in it, and it was not gone off yet: the Targum is,

“how long wilt thou behave like a fool, or a mad woman?”

as drunken people generally do act, as if they were fools, or mad:

put away thy wine from thee; not as if she had any with her there to drink of, but he advises her, since it had such an effect upon her, to abstain from it, and wholly disuse it, and so break off such an habit and custom she had got into; or he would have her go home and sleep it out, and wait till she had digested it, and the strength of it was gone off, before she came to such a place of devotion and worship; from hence the Jews say ^{f26} it may be learnt, that a drunken person ought not to pray.

Ver. 15. *And Hannah answered and said, no, my lord*, etc.] That is not my case, you have greatly mistaken it; she answered with great mildness and meekness, without falling into a passion at such a scandalous imputation upon her, and with great respect and reverence to Eli, suitable to his office; so in later times the high priest used to be addressed after this manner, particularly on the day of atonement, “Lord high priest”, do so and so ^{f27}; indeed these words of Hannah are interpreted as not so very respectful, as if the sense was, not a lord art thou in this matter; nor does the Holy Ghost dwell upon thee ^{f28}; which thou hast sufficiently shown, or thou wouldest never have suspected me of drunkenness:

I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: depressed with trouble and grief on account of afflictions; if she was drunk, it was not with wine, but with sorrow: or “a woman of a hard spirit” ^{f29}; which is sometimes taken in an ill sense, and, according to Abarbinel, is here denied by her, who connects this clause with the preceding thus; not, my lord, am I a woman of a hard spirit, or such a hardened wretch, and such an impudent woman, as I must be, were it so, to come drunk into the house of God, and pretend to pray unto him:

I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink; not any sort of intoxicating liquors that day, neither wine new or old, as the Targum:

but have poured out my soul before the Lord: the affliction of it, as the same paraphrase; the grievances and distresses, the complaints of her soul, which were many, and which she had poured out before the Lord freely and plentifully, and which had taken up some time to do it; (see ^{<90B>}Psalm 42:8 102:1 *title) where phrases similar to this are used, and which seem to be taken from hence.

Ver. 16. *Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial*, etc.] A yokeless, a lawless, impudent, and abandoned creature; one of the most wicked, vilest, and most profligate wretches; as she must be to come drunk

into the sanctuary of God; (see ~~1257~~ 1 Samuel 25:17,25). Drunkenness in man is an abominable crime, but much more in a woman. The Romans^{f30} forbade wine to women, and drunkenness in them was a capital crime, as adultery, or any other; and indeed a drunken woman is liable to all manner of sin:

for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, whether it is matter of trouble or of joy; the heart of Hannah was full of grief, and her mouth full of complaints, on which she long dwelt, in order to give vent thereunto, and ease herself.

Ver. 17. *Then Eli answered and said, go in peace*, etc.] He found he was mistaken in her, and that her discourse was not only sober and rational, but religious and spiritual; and therefore dismisses her in peace, and bids her not distress herself with what he had said to her, nor with anything she had met with from others, or from the Lord; but expect peace and prosperity, and particularly success in what she had been engaged, and had been solicitous for:

and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him; which may be considered either as a prayer for her, he joining with her in a request to the Lord, that what she had asked might be granted; or as a prophecy that so it would be, it being revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, as the high priest of the Lord; or impressed by an impulse upon his spirit that the favour asked would be given; and therefore she might go home in peace, and with satisfaction of mind.

Ver. 18. *And she said, let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight*, etc.] She had found favour in his sight she perceives, and she desires it might be continued and increased; and that as he had prayed for her, he would still use his interest at the throne of grace for her:

so the woman went her way; took her leave of Eli, and went from the tabernacle to her husband: and did eat; what remained of the peace offerings, which were to be eaten that night, and not left till the morning; and though she would not eat her dinner, her heart was so full of grief, yet she could now make a good supper, being eased and relieved in her mind:

and her countenance was no more sad; sorrowful and dejected, but cheerful, brisk, and lively; believing that her prayers, and those of the high priest, would be answered.

Ver. 19. *And they rose up in the morning early*, etc.] Partly for devotion, and partly for the sake of their journey:

and worshipped before the Lord; went up to the tabernacle, and prayed with their faces towards that part of it, the western part, where stood the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; and when they no doubt gave thanks for all the favours they had received there, and prayed for a safe and prosperous journey home, committing themselves to the care of divine Providence:

and returned, and came to their house to Ramah; or “Ramatha”, the same with Ramathaim, (^{<BOOK>}1 Samuel 1:1). Abarbinel thinks that Elkanah had two houses, one at Ramah for Peninnah, and another at Ramatha for Hannah; and that this was Hannah’s house, to which they returned and came:

and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife: cohabited with her as a man with his wife; it is a modest expression of the conjugal act; (see ^{<BOOK>}Genesis 4:1) and is observed to show that the conception and birth of Samuel were not in a supernatural way, but in the ordinary way and manner of generation:

and the Lord remembered her; the prayer she had made to him, opened her womb, as he had before shut it, and gave her power to conceive.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived*, etc.] Or, “at the revolutions of days”^{f31}; at the end of a year, of a complete year, as Ben Melech, from their return from Shiloh; for it might be some time after their return that she conceived; or rather the sense is, that at nine months’ end, the usual time of a woman’s going with child from her conception, which is the date here given:

that she bare a son: was brought to bed of a son:

and called his name Samuel, [saying], because I have asked him of the Lord; one would think rather his name should have been Saul, for the reason given; but, as Ben Gersom observes, givers of names are not always grammatically strict and critical in them, or in the etymology of them, as in the names of Reuben and Noah, in which he instances; and this may be the rather overlooked in a woman, than in a man of learning. According to Kimchi, it is as if it was Saulmeel; that is, “asked of God”, and by contraction Samuel; but Hillerus^{f32} gives a better account of this name, and takes it to be composed of Saul-mul-el, “asked before God”, “in the sight of God”, “before the ark of God”. This name Hannah gave her son (for

sometimes the father, and sometimes the mother, gave the name) in memory of the wonderful favour and goodness of God in granting her request; and to impress her own mind with a sense of the obligation she lay under, to perform her vow, and to engage her son the more readily to give up himself to the service of God, when he reflected on his name, and the reason of it.

Ver. 21. *And the man Elkanah, and all his house*, etc.] All his family, excepting Hannah, and her son Samuel; or all the men of his house, as the Targum; for only the males were obliged to appear at the three festivals:

went up to Shiloh; to the house of God there:

to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice; either the passover, to which men commonly went up with their families: (see ^{<124>}Luke 2:41,42), or rather it may be what was offered at the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel thinks, the time of the ingathering the fruits of the earth, when men went up with their families to offer sacrifice, and express their joy on that account, (^{<160>}Deuteronomy 16:10-15)

and his vow: which he had made between feast and feast; for whatever vows men made at home, on any account, they paid them at the yearly festivals; and this vow might be on the account of the birth of his son, by way of thanksgiving for that.

Ver. 22. *But Hannah went not up*, etc.] For women, though they might go if they pleased to the yearly feasts, yet they were not obliged to it; whether she went up at the time for her purification, and for the presenting and redemption of the firstborn, is not certain; some say the Levites were not obliged by that law, the perquisites of it falling to them, and so did not go up; others that she did, though it is not expressed, the Scriptures not relating all facts that were done; though by what follows it looks as if she did not:

for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned: which, according to Jarchi, was at the end of twenty two months; but others say at the end of twenty four months, or two years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here; (see Gill on ^{<128>}Genesis 21:8"). Comestor ^{f33} observes, there was a three fold weaning of children in old times; the first from their mother's milk, when three years old; the second from their tender age, and care of a dry

nurse, when seven years old; the third from childish manners, when at twelve years of age; and that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was twelve years of age, and fit to serve in the temple; but the proper sense is best, since she is said to bring him when weaned: her reason for it seems to be this, because had she went up with her sucking child, she must have brought him back again, since he would not be fit to be left behind, and would be entirely incapable of any kind of service in the sanctuary; and according to the nature of her vow, she could not think of bringing him back again, after she had once entered him there:

and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord; and minister in the service of the sanctuary in what might be suitable to his age; there and then she would present him, and give him up to the Lord, as she had promised she would:

and there abide for ever; that is, as long as he lived; for her vow was that he should be a Nazarite all the days of his life, and be separated to the service of God as long as he had a being in the world.

Ver. 23. *And Elkanah her husband said unto her, do what seemeth thee good,* etc.] He spake like a kind and indulgent husband, knowing that she would not thereby break any law of God; and it might be more for her own health, and the health of the child, to stay longer:

tarry till thou have weaned him; when he would be more fit for the journey, and to be left behind:

only the Lord establish his word; which some understand of the prophecy of Eli that God would grant her request, which being delivered under the direction of the Spirit of God, is called his word; but this was already fulfilled, and established by Hannah's bearing a son: or the word "his" refers not to the Lord, but to Samuel, and so may respect the word which his mother spake concerning him; either when she made her vow, as Abendana, that he should be a perpetual Nazarite, and the Lord's as long as he lived: and so Elkanah wishes that he might have health and grow strong, and be fit for the service of the Lord, and live many years to perform it; or what she had just now said, as Abarbinel, that he should abide in the house of God for ever, or as long as he lived:

so the woman abode; at home, while Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh:

and gave her son suck until she weaned him; did not put him out to a wet or dry nurse, but suckled him herself with what nature had provided for his nourishment, as becomes women to do, if their circumstances of health, and the provisions of nature, will admit of it.

Ver. 24. *And when she had weaned him*, etc.] At the usual time of weaning children; (see Gill on “⁰⁰¹²³1 Samuel 1:23”) some refer this not only to the milk of the breast, from which he was weaned, but to such food as was common to children, and so supposes him grown up to nine or ten years of age:

she took him up with her; to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at a yearly festival: with three bullocks; for three sorts of offerings, burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering; or since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with while there; or as a present to the high priest, to whose care she committed her son:

and one ephah of flour; if the bullocks were all sacrificed, three tenth deals, or three tenth parts of the ephah, went for a meat offering to each bullock, which made nine parts out of ten, and the tenth part she had to dispose of at pleasure; (see ⁰⁴⁵⁹Numbers 15:9), though that seems to be restrained to a burnt offering only:

and a bottle of wine; part of which might be for the drink offering which always attended a meat offering, and the rest for her own use, and that of her friends:

and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: the tabernacle there, and delivered him up to the care of the high priest, to be trained up in the service of God:

and the child was young; a very child, very young in years, a little infant; not a sucking child, as the Targum, because weaned, otherwise of a very tender age; though some think this expresses that he was a well grown lad, and was sharp and acute, and could well distinguish between good and evil.

Ver. 25. *And they slew a bullock*, etc.] One of the three Hannah brought, unless the singular is put for the plural, and so all three were slain, some for sacrifice, and some for food perhaps; or if only one was slain, it might be offered as a sacrifice previous to the presentation of Samuel; or else was made a present of to Eli, at the introduction of Samuel to him, as follows:

and brought the child to Eli: to be under his care, to be instructed and trained up by him in the service of the tabernacle; from hence it appears that Elkanah the husband of Hannah came along with her at this time.

Ver. 26. *And she said, O my lord,* etc.] According to the Targum, it is a supplication or request, I beseech thee, my lord; that is, to look upon her son, and take him under his care as his disciple or scholar, to instruct him in the law of God, and enter him into his service; to which Eli might be very backward and indifferent, and even treat it with some degree of contempt, that such a young Levite should be brought to him, when the soonest the Levites were admitted was at twenty five years of age:

as thy soul liveth, my lord; which Ben Gersom takes for the form of an oath, as if she swore to the truth of what follows by the life of the high priest; but as it was forbidden to swear by any but by the living God, by his life, it cannot be thought so good a woman as Hannah would be guilty of such a sinful and Heathenish practice; this rather is a wish or prayer for his life and health, and the continuance thereof, to bring up her son in the exercise of true religion:

I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord: by which it appears that Eli was now at the tabernacle, and in the same place he was, (^{<000>}1 Samuel 1:9) when she was some years ago praying near him, at the distance of four cubits, as the Jews say: she takes no notice of his mistaking her for a drunken woman, nor of his censure on her, and the reproof he gave her; but puts him in mind only of her praying to the Lord standing near to him, which made him take the more notice of her; standing is a prayer posture; the Jews say there is no standing but what is prayer, or prayer is meant by it; (see Gill on "^{<005>}Matthew 6:5").

Ver. 27. *For this child I prayed,* etc.] Which she now had in her hand, and was presenting to Eli:

and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him; and which he also desired might be granted her, or foretold that it would be, (^{<007>}1 Samuel 1:17) though perhaps he knew not then particularly what it was she asked; nor did she acquaint him with it at parting, as she now did, having obtained of the Lord what she was so solicitous for, and now makes mention of with thankfulness.

Ver. 28. *Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord*, etc.] To be employed in his service, not for a few days, months, or years, but for his whole life. The Targum is,

“I have delivered him, that he may minister before the Lord;”

as she had received him from him as an answer of prayer, she gave him up to him again according to her vow: as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord, or as the Targum,

“all the days that he lives he shall be ministering before the Lord;”

or “all the days he shall be asked” (or “required”) by or for the Lord^{f34}; that is, he shall be lent unto him, and serve him as long as it is desired:

and he worshipped the Lord there; in the tabernacle at the same time; either Elkanah, who with Hannah brought the child to Eli, and now gave thanks to God for giving them the child, and prayed unto him that he might be received into the service of the sanctuary; or else Eli, to whom the child was brought for admittance, who when he heard that Hannah’s request was granted, which he had entreated also might be or had declared it would be, bowed his head, and gave thanks to God for it; or rather the child Samuel, as he was taught and trained up, bowed himself before the Lord, and worshipped him in the tabernacle as soon as he was brought into it, though a child; for he only is spoken of in this and the preceding verse; and by some interpreters^{f35} the name Samuel is supplied; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the plural number, “and they worshipped the Lord there”: that is, Elkanah and his wife; so Mr. Weemse^{f36} translates and interprets it.