

I SAMUEL

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 1 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Now keep in mind that in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts, I and II Samuel were one book, they were not divided into two books until the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the Septuagint version in around 250 BC or so.

As you will see as we go through I Samuel that it is a transitional book. We are going to move from the Judges, Samuel being the last Judge to the time of the Kings in Israel. As we have seen in our study in the book of Judges, for some 300 years the nation was a mess. It was filled with political, moral and spiritual anarchy. There was no leader overseeing the nation and God was not on the throne of their hearts and thus, **“In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”**

Judges 21:25.

Now the timeframe as the book of I Samuel opens up, narrowing it down from just the time of the Judges, is probably around the time of Samson. Back in Judges 13:1 we are told that Israel was in bondage to the Philistines for 40 years and then Samson came on the scene to deliver the children of Israel, but he was not as successful as he could have been because of his sin. And as the book of I Samuel opens up, it is during this time period of the Judge Samson that we will see Samuel born.

Who wrote the book of I Samuel? We don't know for sure who the human instrument was but we do know that the Holy Spirit spoke through various men and they penned these words that are the Holy Scriptures. Let me try to shed some insight into who some say wrote this book. The Jewish Talmud, which is a collection of writings constituting the Jewish civil and religious law, consists of two parts. There is the Mishnah (text) and the Gemara (commentary) and they assert that Samuel wrote the first 24 chapters of I Samuel.

In regards to the rest of the book, we see that I Samuel chapter 25 reports the death of Samuel and so Nathan and Gad probably wrote the rest of the book. We see in I Chronicles that it gives us some insight to this. It reads, **“Now the acts of king David, first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.”** I Chronicles 29:29.

Why is this book, this time period so important for the nation? They were moving from a loose tribal affiliation under the Judges to a strong central government under a king. Thus, it was a critical time for the nation that was falling away from God and needed to be lead back to the true and living God. And thus, during this transition period God needed someone to stand in the gap for the nation. It was going to take a special person, and so God raised-up Samuel for the task.

And so God, in raising up the prophet Samuel, was going to use him to deal not only with the physical enemy, but more importantly the enemy within, the flesh. It is their spiritual condition that Samuel will address and try to get them back on track with God. The time frame of this book is around 1100 B.C., and again we are still in the time frame of the Judges, in fact Samuel is the last Judge before the monarchy begins.

Before we dig into I Samuel, listen to these comments that Warren Wiersbe makes regarding the book of I Samuel. He wrote:

“What are all histories but God manifesting Himself,” said Oliver Cromwell over three centuries ago, but not everybody agrees with him. The British historian Edward Gibbon, who wrote *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, called history “little more than the register of crimes, follies, and misfortunes of mankind,” and Lord Chesterfield, his contemporary, called history “a confused heap of facts.” But Dr. A.T. Pierson, preacher and missionary statesman of the last century, said it best when he wrote, “History is His story.” This is particularly true of the history recorded in the Bible, for there we have the inspired account of the hand of God at work in the affairs of mankind to bring the Savior into the world.

The Book of Judges is the book of “no king” and describes a nation in which anarchy was the norm. “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg 17:6; and see 18:1; 19:1; and 21:25). Israel wasn’t a united people, as during the days of Joshua, but it was a loose confederation of tribes with God-appointed judges ruling in widely separated areas. There was no standing army nor were there permanent military leaders. Men from the different tribes volunteered to defend the land when they were summoned to battle.

But during those dark days of the Judges, a love story took place that's recorded in the Book of Ruth. Boaz married Ruth the Moabitess and from their union came Obed, the father of Jesse who became the father of David the king. There was no king in Israel, but God was already at work preparing the way for His chosen servant (Ps 78:56-72). If Judges is the book of "no king," then 1 Samuel is the book of "man's king." The people of Israel asked for a king and God gave them Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, who turned out to be a tragic failure. But the Lord had prepared David for the throne, and 2 Samuel is the book of "God's king."

You cannot read the records of the past without seeing the hand of "the Lord of Hosts" at work in the events of what we call history. The Lord is mentioned over sixty times in 1 Sam 1-3, for He is the chief actor in this drama. Men and women are free to make their decisions, good or bad, but it is Jehovah, the Lord of history, who ultimately accomplishes His purposes in and through the nations (Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-26; Dan 4:25,32). Indeed, "history is His story," a truth that is a great encouragement to God's people who suffer for their faith. But this truth is also a warning to unbelievers who ignore or oppose the will of God, because the Lord of hosts will ultimately triumph.

Samuel was God's "bridge builder" at a critical time in Jewish history when the weak confederation of tribes desperately needed direction. He was the last of the judges (1 Sam 7:15-17; Acts 13:20) and the first of a new line of prophets after Moses (3:24). He established a school of the prophets, and he anointed two kings — Saul who failed and David who succeeded. At a time when the ages were colliding and everything seemed to be shaking, Samuel gave spiritual leadership to the nation of Israel and helped to move them toward national unification and spiritual rededication.

In human history, it may appear to us that truth is “forever on the scaffold” and wrong is “forever on the throne,” but that isn’t heaven’s point of view. As you study 1 Samuel, you will see clearly that God is always in control. While He is long-suffering and merciful and answers the prayers of His people, He is also holy and just and punishes sin. We live today in a time of radical worldwide change, and the church needs leaders like Samuel who will help God’s people understand where they’ve been, who they are, and what they are called to do.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition
Commentary: Old Testament

Amen to that! May we be those people. With that said, let’s begin reading in 1 Samuel chapter 1, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word and may we have the heart, the passion, the desire to shine for God and stand up for what is right in a world that is in darkness as Samuel did!

I SAMUEL 1

VERSES 1-2

1. I love the way this book opens up, “**Now there was a certain man . . .**” This certain man was living in a certain time and God was going to use him in a powerful way. The same God who used this certain man by the name of Elkanah will use certain men and women for His purposes. Look at the days we are living in, not much different than during the time of Elkanah and God is still looking for certain men and women to work in and through to fulfill His plans and purposes.

We are told in II Chronicles 16:9, **“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. . . .”** God is looking for men and women today in whom He can work through and show His power and might, to bring Him glory. May we be those people who are willing to surrender our lives to Him and be used by Him!

Also, in Ezekiel 22:30-31 we are told, **“So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Therefore I have poured out My indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed their deeds on their own heads,’ says the Lord God.”** How tragic is that! God was looking for someone who would stand in the gap, represent Him, to prevent the destruction of His judgment from coming and He found no one! Thus, His judgment came. May we learn the lesson and instead of complaining about all the wrong that is in this world and in our country, may we stand in the gap and represent God because in His grace and mercy, He may hold back on His judgment from coming!

2. For Elkanah and the children of Israel, the Philistines were a growing power. They came from the Island of Crete, (Amos 9:7) in small numbers at first during the time of Abraham but now, during this period of time their numbers had grown and they occupied 5 city-states along the Mediterranean Sea Coast. And the Philistines were known for two major things; they were hard drinkers and they used iron to make weapons of war and thus, they were a threat to the children of Israel as we saw with Samson. And yet God would raise up this man and through him and his wife they would have a son who would deliver Israel and bring them into the period of the Kings.

3. And so as this story opens-up we see the introduction of a man called Elkanah. And according to I Chronicles 6:33-38, he was a descendant of Levi, a Kohathite, not a descendant of Aaron and not a priest in the strictest sense. And this man was living in one of the Levitical cities in Ephraim. He was not an Ephraimite but a Kohathite and thus, he was a Levite by lineage but an Ephraimite by residence. Don't be confused by that.

4. Now we see that he is married to two women and one was barren, Hannah. That may be the reason he married Peninnah, because she was able to bear him children. But that does not justify his actions. We do see polygamy over and over again in the Old Testament and some try to justify it, but you can't! God established what marriage was to be, one man married to one woman and that is that. God does not need help folk's and that seems to be what Elkanah was doing or even worse, he wanted the blessing of children and so he side-stepped God's desire for marriage. And think about it, if it is right, how come every time we see polygamy in the Bible there is a mess within the family? You see, God had the standard for marriage and as we follow that standard, as we live as God has said, then our marriage will be blessed! And we will see shortly how this caused problems within the family.

VERSE 3

1. Elkanah heads to Shiloh, which was located about 20 miles north of Jerusalem. It was in the center of the land and it was the area where the tabernacle was set up, (Joshua 18:31). Now for some 400 years this was the place where people where to come to worship the Lord. They could not worship the Lord and sacrifice to Him anywhere or anyway they wanted. Eventually the temple would be erected but until then, Shiloh was the place to go to worship the Lord.

2. You can visit Shiloh today and it is nothing but a barren wasteland. You can see the outline of ruined walls that had once surrounded Israel's tabernacle for some 400 years, but now, it is an object lesson for all who would turn from the Lord. In Jeremiah 7:12-14 we are told, **“But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I set My name at the first, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. And now, because you have done all these works,’ says the Lord, ‘and I spoke to you, rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I called you, but you did not answer, therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh.”**

Shiloh was to be an object lesson for the nation. When they first entered the land they set up the tabernacle in Shiloh and later as the nation was divided, the Northern Kingdom of Israel ran into idolatry and God judged them for it. And Shiloh became no longer a place of worship, but a barren wasteland that remains in that condition today. But the people refused to look and listen to what God was saying. In Psalm 78:58-61 we read **“For they provoked Him to anger with their high places, and moved Him to jealousy with their carved images. When God heard this, He was furious, and greatly abhorred Israel, So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent He had placed among men, And delivered His strength into captivity, and His glory into the enemy's hand.”** That is also a warning to us, not to turn against the Lord or our lives will become a barren wasteland!

3. We will see as we move on that Eli, the high priest had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and they were wicked. But here we are just told their names and not the wickedness that they did!

VERSES 4-7

1. This is why I feel that Hannah was his first wife, he loved her more and when she couldn't bear children, he married Peninnah, who was able to give him children. And it would seem that Peninnah recognized this, that Elkanah loved Hannah more, especially when Elkanah gave Hannah a double portion when they went to the tabernacle for their yearly pilgrimage.

Obviously this could not be the sin offering because no one ate any portion of the sin offering, it was given to the Lord. This offering most likely was the peace offering and in regards to this, Clarke makes these comments, "The sacrifices which were made were probably peace-offerings, of which the blood was poured out at the foot of the altar; the fat was burnt on the fire; the breast and right shoulder were the portion of the priest; and the rest belonged to him who made the offering; on it he and his family feasted, each receiving his portion." I believe that is what we see going on as they come to the tabernacle in Shiloh each year.

2. Obviously there was conflict between these two women and Peninnah took advantage of the situation by teasing her, making fun of her being barren. Thus, when they came to the tabernacle for this feast, it was to be a time of rejoicing, but Peninnah made it miserable for Hannah. Hannah wanted children so badly, and with this provoking by Peninnah, it just made the situation worse and instead of partaking of the meal, she did not eat, but only wept!

3. How does this relate to us as Christians today? Many times, as we see the bareness of another, whatever that may be, and we use it to put another brother or sister down. Many rejoice in the failures of others with a kind of, "I told you so" attitude. Obviously this is a tragic situation when we see this played out in the body of Christ! What should we be doing? It is as Paul said in Philippians 2:3-5, **"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."**

Now, what is Paul talking about when he is speaking of putting on the mind of Christ? That He being God became a servant for us that we may live. He was willing to die for us and we should have that same attitude towards others, not rejoicing or using their failures for our advantage, but being there for them to encourage them and even rebuke in love if needed. Look out for the needs of others! When we gather together to worship the Lord it should be a time of rejoicing in Him and not provoking others to the point of making them not want to partake, even making them weep!

4. Now as we look at Peninnah she does not seem to be very nice. On the other hand as we look at Hannah, she does seem to be nice. Why did God bless Peninnah with children and leave Hannah barren? Folks, we are not going to always understand the how's and why's of God, but God does have a plan and a purpose and often we don't understand it until we get on the other side of the situation as we will see with Hannah. God is going to use this woman in a powerful way.

VERSE 8

1. Sorry ladies, but we men don't get it many times and we can see that with Elkanah and how he responds to Hannah's weeping and not partaking of this meal. He tells her, "Honey, you've got me, what more do you need?" Elkanah loved Hannah and I believe she knew that but he missed the point. It was not that she didn't love him or that he didn't meet her needs, he didn't love her, but her desire was to have a child and he missed the point. He was totally insensitive to her desire to have a child. You see, he had children through his wife Peninnah, but Hannah remained barren.

VERSES 9-11

1. Do you think Hannah prayed for a child before? Of course she did! Then why didn't God answer her? We don't know for sure but it is possible that in this situation the Lord was waiting for Hannah to be completely broken, to be willing to give this child back to the Lord. Prior to this, maybe she was not ready. Does God always do things this way? Obviously not, but here God needed a man to lead the people during this transition period. Keep in mind that the people had turned from the Lord, they were not listening to the Lord and He was going to use this young man who was to be born to ignite the hearts of the people back to God.

2. Now in this prayer she said that this child would be a Nazirite all the days of his life, from the day he was born, really from the day he was conceived until the day he would die. Usually a Nazirite vow was short term, maybe lasting 30 days, it could be longer, however long you wanted to dedicate yourself to the Lord but we only see a few people in the Bible who we would call Nazirites from birth and that is Samson, Samuel and John the Baptist. Listen to what they were to do according to Numbers chapter 6 regarding this vow.

- The vow of the Nazirite meant they were to not partake from any product that came from a grape vine, signifying distance from all fleshly pleasures. No wine, not even grapes!
- The vow of the Nazirite meant that they were not to partake in any mourning for the dead, nor to come near a dead body, because the dead show the corruption and the fruit of sin.

- When the vow of the Nazirite was taken, that meant that they were never to cut the hair, because it was a public, visible sign to others of this vow.

3. Now keep in mind that Eli, the high priest is sitting by the doorpost of the tabernacle and he is watching Hannah and taken all this in, although, as we will see, he will misinterpret what he is witnessing.

VERSES 12-14

1. Here is this poor woman, devastated over the situation she is in and she is crying out to the Lord, praying to the God that made her and her prayers are silent. Yes, her lips were moving but it was a prayer that was from the heart. And standing there watching all of this is Eli the high priest. And what is the conclusion that he comes to when he sees her? He thinks that she is drunk! Why would he even think that, this was the place where the tabernacle was at, the place where God dwelt?

Keep in mind that the nation was in spiritual darkness and it may have been a common practice at these fellowship meals that people got drunk, even the women! In fact, Clarke had this to say regarding what was going on in the days prior to Samuel's birth. He wrote, "The fact that Eli supposed her to be drunken, and the other of the conduct of Eli's sons already mentioned, prove that religion was at this time at a very low ebb in Shiloh; for it seems drunken women did come to the place, and lewd women were to be found there." So this, sadly, could have been a common practice around the tabernacle!

2. So Eli is just basing what he sees on experience, but he was wrong, very wrong!

Praise the Lord that our High Priest, Jesus Christ does not come to the wrong conclusions when He sees us pray, pouring out our heart to Him. In fact, Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:14-16, **“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”** That is the God we serve, as we come before Him, He will pour out His grace and mercy upon us, we will find the help we need in His timing and according to His purposes and plans!

VERSES 15-16

1. Hannah went to her husband for help, and he was insensitive to her needs, he did not help her. Here is the high priest and he too is insensitive to her needs. Where will Hannah go to now, who will she seek for help? Obviously, it is the LORD, He alone can help her and I think that is a great lesson for all of us. Our spouses are wonderful and they can be of great help and encouragement to us. Our friends can also help us in times of need, as well as pastors and church leaders, but many times the Lord wants us to cry out to Him so that He can answer our hearts cry!

Folk's, if you hold it in you will become bitter, angry and God wants you to give it to Him, to pour it out of your life and lay it upon His. It is as David said in Psalm 23:4, **“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”** The rod was used for protection, the staff was used for correction and that is what our Lord does in our lives, He protects us and corrects us because He loves us, and thus, may we bring all our hearts desires to Him!

VERSES 17-18

1. Did Eli speak these words from the Lord or did he just speak them to make Hannah feel better? We are not sure but here is what we are sure of. The Words he did speak were of God, even if he did not realize it!

2. Now as you look at Hannah, what changed in her life? Here was a woman that was still barren. She has no son and yet, she was eating once again, she was no longer sad but was filled with joy, what happened to this woman? It is because of what Eli said to her and she believed it by faith. She believed that God was speaking through Eli and that was a huge encouragement to her. And because she believed what God was saying, that He was more than able to give her a son, her whole countenance changed. You see, what began on the inside of her as she poured out her heart to the Lord, as the Lord spoke to her through Eli, is now being manifested outwardly! May our actions and attitude be in harmony of what we say we believe! May people see that our faith is real!

VERSES 19-20

1. Did you notice that both Elkanah and Hannah worshiped the Lord before they went home and I am sure that Peninnah was also with them? But for Hannah, she was able to worship God, to rejoice in Him even though the promise did not come to pass yet. And it says that Elkanah had sexual relations with his wife and I think the idea here is that it was not the first encounter and she became pregnant. That again is faith, that she did not give up but trusted that what God had promised He was more than able to bring to pass.

2. May we encourage others in the faith not to give up but to wait upon the Lord for the promises that He has given to them. In Hebrews 6:11-20 Paul reminds us, **“And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, ‘Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.’ And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”**

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

You see, keep your eyes on the Lord even and especially when things seem to be falling apart around you for He is our strength! For David, he **“strengthened himself in the LORD his God”** and so should we! If you do you won’t be dull, weak but fully assured not only of your salvation but also of all that God has for you, knowing that He is able to bring to pass all that He has said. Don’t go back to your works but come forward to the rest that Jesus has for you, the rest in Him, the rest of His Spirit!

Now this is a good lesson for all of us, to follow those who have walked with the Lord, learn from their examples. Paul said in Romans 15:4, **“For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.”** The promises of God are ours; all we need to do is walk by faith!

And Paul gives us the example of Abraham who waited 35 years for what God promised Him to come to pass and when he tried to help God out, it only caused trouble. When Abraham was 100 years old and his wife Sarah 90 years old, God brought to pass the promise, the impossible became possible, the barrenness of Sarah’s womb for all those years was now going to bring forth a child, Sarah had a son named Isaac. Paul is telling us to look at the example of Abraham as a man who was patient with God and follow his example!

3. Now when it says, “**the LORD remembered her**” it is not that He forgot about her. It was not, “Oh no, I forgot about Hannah that I was going to give to her a son. I better get on it right away!” That is not at all what is being said here. The idea here is that it was now time for God to intervene. It is always in His time, according to His plans and it is His perfect timing. Poole put it like this, “So the meaning is, That although her husband knew her conjugally at his return, and God was mindful of her, and intended in his time to give her his blessing, yet she did not conceive at first, but after some days or time afterwards.” Paul put it like this in Galatians 4:4-5 regarding the timing of the birth of Christ, “**But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**” God’s perfect timing!

4. And thus, in God’s timing they have a son and call his name “Samuel” which means, “asked of God” or “heard of God” for little Samuel was the result of answered prayer!

VERSES 21-23

1. In those days they nursed anywhere from 2 to 3 years and I am sure that Hannah was in no hurry to give her child to Eli the priest to raise. She wanted him as long as possible. And I love the response of Elkanah here. It is the right response. He says, “**Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the Lord establish His word.**” In other words, obey what the Lord has said to you and as you are obedient to Him, His Words will be established, they will come to pass! Very wise words!

VERSE 24

1. Samuel was probably 2 to 3 years of age at this time. He no longer was drinking breast milk and thus he could be brought to the tabernacle and given over to Eli, the high priest, so that he could care for him and train him up. Hannah freely gives back to God that which was most precious to her, her son Samuel. How hard this must have been for her and her husband Elkanah.

2. And notice the great sacrifices they brought for this occasion. I will comment on this in a minute, after we read the concluding verses.

VERSES 25-28

1. We read in I Samuel 1:24 that there were three bulls that were brought to Shiloh and yet, here in I Samuel 1:25 in mentions that only one was sacrificed. Why is that? I believe it shows that one of the bulls was used as a burnt offering for the cleansing and consecration of Samuel. Listen to what David Guzik said regarding this. He wrote:

The magnitude of Elkanah's offering when Samuel was dedicated to the LORD - offering an entire bull - shows that a "grown up" offering for sin was made at his dedication, even though Samuel was only about three years old. This is a subtle reference to the *inherited* nature of our sinfulness. Though Samuel has not sinned as much as an adult, he is still a guilty sinner, because he has inherited a sinful nature from Adam - as we all have.

- David Guzik

2. As they come before the high priest, Eli, Hannah recounts her story of how God answered her prayer as she poured her heart out to the Lord. And how Eli was there and gave her the words of God that He would give to her a son and now she was dedicating this answer to her prayer, little Samuel, to the Lord. Don't get the idea that Hannah is lending him to the Lord and will get him back. It is the idea of total dedication to the Lord.

3. Many times God asks of us to give to Him that which is most precious to us. It may be our money, our resources, our talents, our time and-so-on and we are afraid to do it. We think we will lose out. But the reality is, God will bless us exceedingly abundantly as we obey Him. Look at what God will do through this young child and all because this family was willing to let go and let God do His work!

4. One more point here as we close this evening. People wonder where we get this idea of dedicating our children to the Lord. It comes out of this portion of I Samuel as Hannah and her husband dedicate little Samuel to the Lord. We give our children back to God, that He might train them and use them for His glory through us. That He would give us the wisdom in raising them. The blessing He has bestowed upon us, entrusted to us, we ask Him to help these children to grow into the men and women that He wants them to be so that they may serve Him all the days of their lives!

Now some may wonder why don't we baptize infants? Because baptism is a conscious decision, we are to repent and be baptized and infants can't do that. Thus, we baptize those who are of age, who understand what it means to have a relationship with Jesus for baptism is an outward showing of what has already taken place in your heart!

5. What holy influences ever rest on children whose parents pray for them "without ceasing!" and what multitudes have by such means been eternally saved! May we pray for our children and grandchildren, they are a gift from God and how important our prayers are. Think about those that have prayed for you and where you are today. As I close, remember what we read in Ezekiel 22:30, "**So I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.**" May the Lord not be able to say that of us, may we be men and women of prayer, men and women who are open to His leading, and men and women who will stand in the gap for Him and the land we are living in!