



HANNAH: A WOMAN OF PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

Hannah was a woman of prayer. She was barren. In the midst of her hardship, she poured her heart out to God, not allowing her sorrow to control her. Instead, she turned to the only One who knew the agony she endured as she pleaded to God for a child. She understood that she was barren by the will of God, and He alone could open her womb.

Through prayer, aligning her will with God's, she vowed to give the child back to God for His service. Her prayer was one of humility, and God gave her the desire of her heart. She was blessed with a son and called his name Samuel, which means, *asked of God*. Hannah was faithful to God and Samuel was dedicated for the service of the Lord at the temple. She entrusted her beloved son to Him and left Samuel in the temple to minister to the Lord all the days of his life.

God blessed Hannah tremendously because of her obedience. Her son became a powerful prophet to God's children. She then was blessed with more children. Hannah is a beautiful example of a woman who prayed to God and trusted Him until He answered.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

Therefore also I [Hannah] have lent¹ him [Samuel] to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD (I Samuel 1:28).

¹ lent - Hebrew *shaw-al* to inquire/request: made him over to; a complete and irrevocable giving up of the child to the LORD.

Names Given to the Women in this Story

Hannah . . . *the name of the one* [wife] *was Hannah* . . . (I Samuel 1:2).
The name *Hannah* in Hebrew means: gracious, having or showing kindness, courtesy, charm, having pleasing qualities, attractive, pleasing or desirable.

Peninnah . . . *the name of the other* [wife] *Peninnah* . . . (I Samuel 1:2).
Peninnah in Hebrew is from the root word, *paniyn*; which means a pearl: ruby or coral.

SECTION 1 – The Wives of Elkanah

READ I Samuel 1:1-8.

1. Who was Elkanah and where was he from (v. 1)? _____²

As an Ephrathite³, Elkanah came from the priestly lineage of the tribe of the Levites. God anointed the Levites for service and ministry in the temple. Numbers 18:6 says that the Levites were taken from among the children of Israel as a gift from the Lord and given to Aaron to do service in the tabernacle of meeting.

2. How many wives did Elkanah have (I Samuel 1:2)? _____

Who was Elkanah's first wife? _____

Who was his second wife? _____

God's original plan for marriage was for man to be the husband of one wife (Genesis 2:24). Although Elkanah was a Levite and a godly man, he followed the common practice of polygamy of those days which was allowed in the case of a childless first marriage (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Judges 21:25 tells us, *In those days there was no king in Israel: everyone did that which was right in his own eyes.*

3. What is the significant difference between Peninnah and Hannah (I Samuel 1:2b)? _____

4. What was Elkanah's spiritual practice (v. 3)? _____

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² Ramathaim-zophim: Lit. heights of the Lufhite. A longer name for Ramah, a city in the hill country of Ephraim, fifteen miles north of Jerusalem.

³ Ephrathite: a citizen of Ephratha, an ancient name for Bethlehem.

⁴ Shiloh: located twenty miles north of Jerusalem; the religious center for the nations at this time; the location of the tabernacle.

Who was there? _____ 5

LOOK DEEPER

READ Deuteronomy 16:16, 17. In order to remember that Israel had been freed from slavery, how many times were the sacrifices made to the Lord?

What are the names of the feasts? _____

How were they to give? _____

5. What did Elkanah do for his wives and children when it came time for the offering⁶ to God (I Samuel 1:4, 5a)?

How did the portions given to Hannah differ from the ones given to Peninnah? _____

Why did Elkanah give Hannah more than he gave Peninnah? _____

6. Why was Hannah barren (v. 5b)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

In the following verses, what does it say about the One who is the Author of life?

Ruth 4:13 _____

Psalm 139:13-17 _____

John 1:3, 4 _____

⁵ Eli: the Priest of Shiloh officiating at the sacrifice presented in the court of the tabernacle. Hophni and Phineas: the vile sons of Eli who were also priests in the Temple (I Samuel 3:13).

⁶ offering: a gift and sacrifice to the Lord.

We now begin to see the fruit of strife, jealousy, bitterness, and sorrow which was probably the result of Elkanah's lack of trusting God with his barren wife.

7. What did Peninnah do to Hannah (I Samuel 1:6, 7)? _____

Why? _____

How did Hannah react to this treatment? _____

Barren women in Israel were looked down upon with reproach and ridicule. Their husbands worried that they would not have children to preserve the family lineage. This most likely is why Elkanah felt it necessary to marry Peninnah. She probably felt unloved and used by her husband. Consequently, Peninnah unleashed her bitterness on Hannah.

PERSONAL

How do you react when you are unjustly treated in a painful situation? How are you to conduct yourself through the trial (James 1:2-12)? Why?

8. How did Elkanah try to comfort Hannah (I Samuel 1:8)? _____

Elkanah truly felt that his love for Hannah was sufficient enough to fulfill all her needs, even the need of bearing a child. There is only One who can fulfill all of our emotional, physical, and spiritual needs, and that is the Man, Christ Jesus.

PERSONAL

MEDITATE on Philippians 4:19. . . . *my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* What is your deepest need today?

As you go to the Lord in prayer, trust God to supply *according to His riches in Christ Jesus.*

SECTION 2 – Hannah’s Vow⁷

READ I Samuel 1:9-18.

As you go through this section, NOTICE Hannah’s faith and perseverance through prayer. In the midst of her anguish, she cried out to her Lord. She knew that He was the only One who truly understood her sorrow and could answer her prayer.

1. Where was Hannah (vv. 9, 10)? _____

Where was Eli the priest? _____

What was the condition of her soul? _____

What did she do with her grief? _____

LOOK DEEPER

What is God’s heart toward the righteous (Psalm 34:15-19)? _____

Hannah poured her heart out to the Lord. She could no longer hold in the pain, sorrow, and grief that overwhelmed her because of her barrenness. Seeking refuge from the hostility of her surroundings, she came to the Lord with a broken and contrite spirit.

2. What did Hannah request in her vow to the Lord of Hosts⁸ (I Samuel 1:11)? _____

Hannah’s vow was not out of selfish motives, but out of obedience to the Lord. She declared she would give the child back to the Lord, to serve Him all the days of his life. The child would also be separated to the Lord as a Nazarite⁹. (Read Numbers 6:1-8 for an explanation of the requirements of a Nazarite).

⁷ vow: an oath; a promise between two or more persons in which the name of God is invoked as witness and guarantor.

⁸ LORD of Hosts: a military figure; referring to God as the One who commands all the angelic armies of heaven (I Kings 22:19, Revelation 19:14)

⁹ Nazarite: one who is separated for a designated period of time in holiness to the LORD, denying himself of certain rights.

3. DESCRIBE the intensity of Hannah's prayer (I Samuel 1:12-16)? _____

Eli the priest misunderstood her sorrow. What did he accuse her of? _____

4. What was Eli's response to Hannah's explanation (vv. 16, 17)? _____¹⁰

Although she was falsely accused by Eli, Hannah honored his authority. She humbly told Eli the condition of her heart and the reason for her behavior.

PERSONAL

Have you accused someone falsely? What is the ninth commandment given to us by God (Exodus 20:16)?

5. What difference was there in Hannah's countenance, after she prayed to the Lord (I Samuel 1:18)?

LOOK DEEPER

What does Scripture tell us about how we are to pray? LOOK UP the following verses and MATCH them with the correct answer.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| _____ Matthew 6:7 | a. pray without ceasing |
| _____ Luke 18:1 | b. supplication ¹¹ in the Spirit |
| _____ Ephesians 6:18 | c. always pray and do not lose heart |
| _____ Philippians 4:6 | d. do not use vain repetitions |
| _____ I Thessalonians 5:17 | e. everything with thanksgiving |
| _____ I Peter 4:7 | f. be serious and watchful |

¹⁰ Belial - Hebrew *Beliyaal* worthlessness: a Biblical name for the devil and/or one of his friends.

¹¹ supplication: a petition, prayer, request.

What are the results of prayer?

Matthew 6:6 _____

James 5:16 _____

Philippians 4:6, 7 _____

SECTION 3 – Samuel’s Birth and Dedication

READ I Samuel 1:19-28.

1. What did Hannah and Elkanah do before they returned to their house (vv. 19, 20)? _____

What did the Lord do for Hannah? _____

What did Hannah name her son? Why? _____

2. Why didn’t Hannah go up with her husband to the yearly sacrifice (vv. 21, 22)? _____

3. How do we know Elkanah was supportive of Hannah’s vow to the Lord (v. 23)? _____

4. How did Hannah fulfill her vow to the LORD (vv. 24, 25)? _____

LOOK DEEPER

Hannah did not forget the vow she made to the Lord. READ Ecclesiastes 5:1-7. What are the warnings given concerning vows?

5. What did Hannah remind Eli the priest (I Samuel 1:26-28)? _____

According to Hannah, how long would Samuel serve the Lord in the temple? _____

Hannah entrusted her son to the Lord. Without wavering or hesitating, she left him at the temple to serve God forever; thus fulfilling her vow. Samuel followed her lead and worshiped the LORD also.

6. What does Proverbs 3:5, 6 say about trust? _____

PERSONAL

MEDITATE on I Samuel 1:24-28. What should your attitude be when God is faithful in answering your prayers, no matter how big or how small?

SECTION 4 – Hannah’s Prayer of Thanksgiving

READ I Samuel 2:1-10.

As God worked a wonder in Hannah’s life, we see a remarkable transformation from Chapter 1 to Chapter 2. She was no longer sorrowful, grieved, or bitter. On the contrary, her prayer revealed a woman who had a beautiful and intimate relationship with her God. She was full of joy, peace, thanksgiving, and praise for her God who was faithful.

REREAD Hannah's prayer and NOTICE the praise, honor and reverence she gave God with the beautiful descriptions of His character. MATCH the verses with the appropriate characteristic.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| _____ v. 1 | a. His salvation |
| _____ v. 2a | b. He kills and makes alive |
| _____ v. 2b | c. God of knowledge |
| _____ v. 3 | d. God our Judge |
| _____ vv. 5, 6 | e. God humbles and exalts |
| _____ vv. 7, 8 | f. keeper of the saints |
| _____ v. 9 | g. God our Rock |
| _____ v. 10 | h. His holiness |

Hannah had faith and trust in God. She became a woman of prayer and poured out her heart before Him. She knew only God could grant her the petition of her heart. She knew Him personally and intimately. Her prayer is evidence of her relationship with God.

SECTION 5 – Samuel's Service to the Lord

READ I Samuel 2:11-26.

1. What did Samuel do in the temple (vv. 11-18)? _____

DESCRIBE Eli's sons and the environment around Samuel as he ministered unto the LORD? _____

2. What did Samuel's mother do for him and what did she and her husband continue to do (v. 19)?

3. How were Samuel's parents blessed by God (vv. 20, 21)? _____

4. What do the following verses tell us about Samuel's character (vv. 21b, 26)? _____

5. In what special way did God honor Hannah's prayer and use her long awaited son (1 Samuel 3:19 - 4:1)?

MEMORY VERSE

(1 Samuel 1:28).

Hannah is a devoted mother. She teaches us to be serious with God concerning the petitions we offer up to Him. We learn through her to seek God's perfect will in prayer, and submit to Him wholly so that He can give us the desires of our heart for our families in an abundant way.

NOTES: _____

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