

# 1 Samuel – *Birth of a Kingdom*

Fall Quarter, 2010 – Kettering Church of Christ  
Wednesday PM Study

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## LESSON 2 – DEDICATION OF SAMUEL (1 SAMUEL 1:1-2:11)

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### 1:1-8 – HANNAH'S SITUATION

Elkanah lived in Ramah in the area of Ephraim. He had two wives. Hannah was most likely his first wife, but was unable to bear him children. In Middle Eastern culture, bearing of children was of absolute importance, so Elkanah married Peninnah in order to pass on his inheritance. Each year, Elkanah would gather his family and go to Shiloh to sacrifice and pay offerings to the Lord. Peninnah would always treat Hannah with contempt because of Hannah's inability to have children. She tormented Hannah about this and the time of the yearly sacrifice became a dread for Hannah. The text does a good job letting us see her distress. She felt empty and useless because she could not produce an heir for her husband. Despite the best efforts of her husband, Hannah could not be consoled. Elkanah said,

Hannah, why do you weep and why do you not eat and why is your heart sad? Am I not better to you than ten sons?"

### CHARACTERS IN THIS LESSON

- **Elkanah** – *man who lived in Ramah.*
- **Hannah** – *Elkanah's wife. He loved her. Barren.*
- **Peninnah** – *Elkanah's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife. Constantly provoked Hannah for being childless.*
- **Eli** – *the high priest & judge over Israel.*
- **Hophni** – *priest & son of Eli*
- **Phinehas** – *priest & son of Eli*

1 Samuel 1:8 NASU

### 1:9-19a – HANNAH TAKES THE MATTER TO GOD

When it came time for Hannah to present her offering, she entered the sanctuary weeping and knelt down to entreat the Lord. She approached God humbly, referring to

herself as God's "maidservant." In her prayer, she vows that if God would give her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord and give him over for service to God all the days of his life.

While Hannah was praying, the high priest, Eli, sat on a chair observing her actions. As she prayed she did so with her lips moving but no sound came out of her voice. Eli spoke up and accused her of being drunk. It is tragic that this religious leader would automatically assume the worst of her. Hannah politely replies that she was not drunk, but that she was "pouring out her heart to the Lord." To this Eli replies,

Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.

1 Samuel 1:17 NASU

After praying, she returned to her family and continued her meal. The Scripture says that her entire demeanor changed as "her face was no longer sad." After their visit to Shiloh Elkanah and his family returned home.

### **1:19b-28 – HANNAH'S PRAYER ANSWERED**

Soon afterward, Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. The child was named Samuel, "name of God." The arrival of Samuel was a direct answer to the prayer Hannah prayed in the sanctuary at Shiloh. The next year, Elkanah returned to the tabernacle to worship and pay his vow. Hannah did not accompany him, as she stayed at home until Samuel was weaned. Under Mosaic Law, women were not obligated to attend annual festivals. Smith has written, "Unless repudiated by her husband, the vow of a wife became an obligation upon her husband." What she had vowed concerning Samuel was now the responsibility of Elkanah.

Eastern women typically weaned their kids at the age of three years. After the weaning process, Hannah took a large offering and her son to the sanctuary at Shiloh. The family offered their sacrifice and brought the boy to Eli. She reminded Eli of her prayer that day three years earlier in the sanctuary. Samuel was the result of that prayer and she would now give him to God for lifelong service. In response, Eli bows down in worship to the Lord.

## 2:1-11 – HANNAH’S PRAYER

The first eleven verses of chapter two contain a prayer of Hannah. In her prayer, God is the focus as she identifies four sources of great joy in her life. First, she rejoiced for God answering her prayer in delivering her from the misery of being unable to bear children, 2:1. Next, she rejoiced in who God is. God is holy and possesses all strength and knowledge, 2:2-3. Then, she rejoiced in the reign and power of God. She expressed that over time, all things tend to work themselves out. God will make all things right, 2:4-8. Finally, she rejoiced in her hope. She says that the righteous are always taken care of by God and the wicked are ultimately rejected. There is a Messianic prophecy in 2:10. The phrases, “strength to his king” and “exalt the horn of his anointed” refer to Jesus. After presenting Samuel to Eli, Hannah and the rest of Elkanah’s family leave and return to Ramah. Samuel remained at Shiloh ministering to God under the supervision and training of Eli.

### FOR NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANS

***Effective prayer calms the soul.*** Hannah carried a heavy burden each day knowing that she could not provide a child for her husband. The yearly trip to Shiloh and constant harassing by Peninnah only made matters worse. Things got so bad for Hannah that she could not eat. She decides to take the matter to God in prayer. Chapter 1:11 teaches that she completely opened her heart to God. She held nothing back. After Eli realized Hannah was praying and not drunk, he encouraged her by verbalizing his desire for God to grant her petition, 1:17. Once Hannah opened her heart to God, she left the matter at His feet and trusted completely in Him. This is seen in how she returned to her family after prayer and was able to eat a meal. Now she was calm and resolute, knowing that the matter was in the hands of God. Prayer certainly brings peace. This is one of the greatest blessings of being a child of God. Paul wrote:

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The result of Hannah's prayer? God heard and answered her prayer in a positive manner.

***Don't let discouragement conquer you.*** Hannah had a number of things that could have contributed to her being down and having low self-esteem. She was unable to bear children. Her husband was in a relationship with another woman who constantly treated her with contempt. In human terms, her situation could not be changed. Elkanah was powerless to change her inability to bear children. After Hannah decided to take the matter to God, the high priest accused her of being drunk. She could have given up at that point. She did not. Instead she continued on and turned the matter over to God.

***Don't be too quick to judge.*** Eli assumed Hannah was drunk when he saw Hannah praying. Instead of inquiring as to why Hannah was so emotional, Eli made a quick judgment and assumed the worst. Since we do not know what is in someone else's heart, we must guard against the danger of judging their heart and motives. Before we assume anything, we need to communicate and listen to them. The Bible says,

God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7 NASU

***Follow through on your vows.*** When Hannah petitioned God, she made a deal with Him. She was not required to do so, but did so anyway. When God answered her prayer, she followed through. How tough it must have been to leave her child with Eli in the sanctuary when the time came. When we make a vow to God, we must pay it.

**Questions:**

1. Who was Elkanah and his two wives?
2. Why did Peninnah constantly torment Hannah?

3. Do you think Elkanah did a good job in comforting his wife? (1:8)
4. What did Hannah do at the tabernacle in order to resolve her problem?
5. What was Eli's reaction to Hannah's prayer?
6. What are your thoughts to the way Eli reacted?
7. How did God answer Hannah's prayer?
8. What was the vow Hannah made? Was Hannah required to follow through?
9. What stands out most to you as you read Hannah's prayer in 2:1-10?
10. How does this lesson testify to the effectiveness of prayer?
11. This lesson helped my spiritual life by: