

1st Samuel

Lesson 3

Like men are men, women are women, and they have not changed through the centuries. They are made by the LORD to be the way they are on purpose. Hannah experienced the same emotions and heartbreak that any woman would feel in the same circumstance. Plural marriages are not legal in the United States, yet they exist in the United States. But around the world, cultures still allow men to take many wives. In every plural marriage, these same envious provoking occur that break the hearts of some wives. It is not new to this world. And even though it appears worldwide, few men navigate the consolation of the wife well. Why? To do so will cause trouble with the other wife or wives. So, most husbands placate instead of solving the problem.

(2) His Mother

(a) His Mother's Prayer (1:9-11)

Samuel records the action of his mother following his father's attempt to console her. He even tells us of his mother's prayer. Verse 9. *"Then Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli, the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. ¹⁰ She, greatly distressed, prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. ¹¹ She made a vow and said, 'O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head.'"* (1:9-11)

Even though this verse says that *"Hannah rose after eating and drinking in Shiloh,"* Samuel probably means that *she rose when the time of eating and drinking was over.* It does not mean that she ate and drank because, in verse 8, we learned that Elkanah noticed that Hannah was not eating, and it was then that he tried to console her. Here, in verse 10, we learn that Elkanah was not successful in his efforts to console her, and she was still crying and distressed when she spoke this prayer to LORD and made the promise that if she were privileged enough to have a son, she would give him back to the LORD to serve Him. Samuel does not use the word *Nazerite* in this passage as he did in the story of Samson, but the vow that *"a razor shall never come on his head"* indicated her promise that he would be under the Nazerite vow all his life. The LORD surely did not ask for this vow, nor would Samuel hold to that vow as will be evident in the things the LORD will lead Samuel to do in his life and ministry. Yet, it was Hannah's sincere vow. As we will learn soon, the LORD heard Hannah's prayer and granted her with the son she asked for – she named him Samuel, the writer of this portion of the Bible.

The story of Eli, the High Priest, continues at this time with his notice of Hannah as when is crying. He is seated *"by the doorpost of the temple."* The word *temple* is a mistranslation in the English Bible. It should have been called the *Tabernacle* instead. At this time in the story, the temple would not be built for more than a hundred and forty years. The purpose of the mention of Eli at this place is to set up the next part of the story.

(b) His Mother's Petition

Eli, seated by the doorpost of the Tabernacle, was watching Hannah. Samuel tells us of his mother's petition to the LORD and Eli's misinterpretation of her actions. Verse 12.

"Now it came about, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli was watching her mouth. ¹³ As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk. ¹⁴ Then Eli said to her, 'How long will you make yourself drunk? Put away your wine from you.' ¹⁵ But Hannah replied, 'No, my lord, I am a woman oppressed in spirit; I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶ Do not consider your maidservant as a worthless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation.' ¹⁷ Then Eli answered and said, 'Go in peace; and may

the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him.”¹⁸ She said, “Let your maid servant find favor in your sight.” So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.” (1:12-18)

Now we know that Hannah had not eaten the double portion that Elkanah had placed in front of her. More than that, we must recognize two things. First, even ministers must be careful not to assume the worst of a person before questioning the person. Clearly, Eli thought the worst of Hannah before he knew her life’s story. Second, even ministers must realize the power of their words. When Eli said, “*Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him,*” it brought great comfort to Hannah. Her appetite returned. She did eat. Her sadness departed.

We must also notice Hannah’s request. “*Let your maid servant find favor in your sight.*” Eli could not guarantee that the LORD would grant Hannah’s petition? No. But, be that as it may, Eli was the High Priest in the LORD’s system, and surely, the LORD heard Eli’s prayer that day as he asked the LORD to grant Hannah’s request. This statement by Eli brought great encouragement to Hannah. It is a perfect example of how a person should feel after hearing the words of a minister.

b) Samuel’s Birth

(1) His Mother’s Conception (1:19-20)

Continuing the story, Elkanah and his family spent the night in Shiloh. On the following morning, they participated in the morning worship and then returned to their home in Ramah, in the tribal area. Once home, we learn of Samuel’s birth after his mother’s conception. Verse 19.

“Then they arose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned again to their house in Ramah. And Elkanah had relations with Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her.²⁰ It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son; and she named him Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked him of the LORD.” (1:19-20)

When Samuel was born, Hannah said she gave him his name, “*Because I have asked him of the LORD.*” This statement is not the meaning of the name Samuel; it was the reason why she gave him the name Samuel. Samuel’s name does not mean that *she asked God* for her son, but it means she was *heard by God*. God heard her prayer, and He answered her prayer. So, she named him Samuel.

(2) His Mother’s Caution (1:21-23)

Remembering the story which he had heard about his birth and first years of life, Samuel tells us of his mother’s caution in verse 21. *“Then the man Elkanah went up with all his household to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and pay his vow.²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “I will not go up until the child is weaned; then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and stay there forever.”²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you. Remain until you have weaned him; only may the LORD confirm His word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him.”* (1:21-23)

Hannah was extremely cautious with Samuel. She had made the vow to present him to the LORD in the service of the Tabernacle once he was weaned, and she knew that she would only see him once a year after she left him with the priests. See her words. “*... then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD and stay there forever.*” Forever is a long time. Hannah wanted to guard those early years of Samuel’s life, to enjoy them, every moment of every day.

When was a child weaned? According to Easton’s Bible Dictionary, “Among the Hebrew children (whom it was customary for the mothers to nurse, Exodus 2:7-9; 1 Samuel. 1:23; Song of Solomon 8:1) were not generally weaned till they were three or four years old.”¹ At that age, the child could eat on his own; therefore, the child could be entrusted to a stranger who would care for the normal daily things of life. The mother was not needed to feed the child any longer. In many aspects, once a child is weaned, the most critical part of a child’s ability to sustain his life is

¹ Easton, M. G. (1893). In *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Geography, Doctrine, and Literature* (p. 689). New York: Harper & Brothers.

complete. That does not imply that his needs would be met for all the other things that adults are needed for in a child's life.

c) *Samuel's Dedication*

(1) *His Mother's Presentation (1:24-26)*

Samuel's dedication came when he was weaned from his mother's breast. At that age, Samuel was old enough to remember his mother's presentation of him to Eli at the Tabernacle complex in Shiloh. Verse 24. *'Now, when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull and one ephah of flour and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh, although the child was young.'* ²⁵ *'Then they slaughtered the bull, and brought the boy to Eli. ²⁶ She said, "Oh, my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the LORD."* (1:24-26)

May we first deal with the thing this verse does not say. It does not tell us that this visit to the Tabernacle was at the regular time that Elkanah and his family visited Shiloh each year. What it does tell us is that when Samuel was weaned, the child was taken to Shiloh. No doubt this was not the regular season for the visit because only one three-year-old bull was taken. From this description, and the inclusion of the flour (grain) offering, and the wine (drink) offering, this was to fulfill her vow with a sacrifice of peace offering (Leviticus 22:21). This offering did not have to be a bull (male), it could have been a cow (female) according to Leviticus 3:1-6, but it had to be without defect.

Here is how the sacrifice of peace offering was prepared as we find recorded in Leviticus 3. Because we rarely read the book of Leviticus, we will read the passage in full concerning this bull offering.

He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar. ³ From the sacrifice of the peace offerings he shall present an offering by fire to the LORD, the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ⁴ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ⁵ Then Aaron's sons shall offer it up in smoke on the altar on the burnt offering, which is on the wood that is on the fire; it is an offering by fire of a soothing aroma to the LORD. ⁶ But if his offering for a sacrifice of peace offerings to the LORD is from the flock, he shall offer it, male or female, without defect. ⁷ If he is going to offer a lamb for his offering, then he shall offer it before the LORD, ⁸ and he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it before the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood around on the altar. ⁹ From the sacrifice of peace offerings he shall bring as an offering by fire to the LORD, its fat, the entire fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone, and the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that is on the entrails, ¹⁰ and the two kidneys with the fat that is on them, which is on the loins, and the lobe of the liver, which he shall remove with the kidneys. ¹¹ Then the priest shall offer it up in smoke on the altar as food, an offering by fire to the LORD. (Leviticus 3:2-11)

The grain offering was one ephah of flour. This volume of flour was more than anything required with any offering. In most cases, a tenth of an ephah was all that was required (Leviticus 14:21). In the case of the religious festival grain offering, two-tenths of an ephah was required (Leviticus 23:13). In the case of a leper's cleansing, three-tenths of an ephah was required (Leviticus 14:10). A full ephah was never required. A full ephah weighed a little more than four pounds.

As for the "jug of wine," the jug would have been a skin bag. As such, it could have easily held a gallon or two of wine for the drink offering required for the sacrifice of peace offering for a fulfillment of a vow. In the book of Numbers, Moses defines the grain and wine (drink) offerings for a vow as follows.

“...then make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice [of peace] to fulfill a special vow, or as a freewill offering or in your appointed times, to make a soothing aroma to the LORD, from the herd or from the flock. ⁴ The one who presents his offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of oil,⁵ and you shall prepare wine for the drink offering, one-fourth of a hin, with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice ...” (Numbers 15:3-5).

In the case of the wine, it would be “one-fourth of a hin.” A *hin* of wine was about six pints; 7.999 pints equal a gallon. Therefore, *one-fourth of a hin* would be about two pints. No doubt, the jug of wine that Hannah brought was much more than two pints.

After the sacrifice of peace offering for the vow, Hannah revealed herself to Eli as the one who stood beside him at the doorpost of the Tabernacle complex and made the vow concerning her son if the LORD would hear her prayer. The LORD indeed heard her prayer, and she was there with Eli to fulfill her vow to the LORD by leaving Samuel with Eli.

(2) His Mother’s Perseverance (1:27-28)

Samuel then tells of his mother’s perseverance because the LORD had heard her petition and given her a son. Verse 27. *“For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him.²⁸ So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD.”* *And he worshiped the LORD there.*” (1:27-28)

Hannah dedicated Samuel, delivered him to Eli, and left him there. Eli worshiped the LORD there. Samuel worshiped the LORD there. No doubt, Hannah also worshiped the LORD there with her dedication and sacrifice of peace offering, a thank offering, for the completion of her vow to the LORD. We know this because Hannah prayed in worship before the LORD in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

(a) His Mother’s Praise (2:1a)

As chapter 2 begins, Hannah is still at the Tabernacle with Eli. She has just completed her vow and delivered Samuel to Eli. Now she spent a time of worship on prayer. Hannah knew how to praise the LORD, and Samuel heard his mother’s praise. Chapter 2, verse 1a. *“Then Hannah prayed and said,”* (2:1a)

Hannah’s prayer is her praise. She knew how to praise. She knew how to praise. I want you to notice one crucial thing in Hannah’s prayer – she asks for nothing. She had already been granted the full measure of her previous prayer for a son. Her prayer is one of thanksgiving. Every bit of this prayer is about the LORD. His salvation, steadfastness, sovereignty, supremacy, sustenance, solution, selections, shield, statute, and strength. What a list of characteristics that she understood about the LORD God Almighty!