

Most of our prayers tend to be selfish but Hannah's was not, for she wanted to show her gratitude to the LORD for answering her prayer by giving that answer back to Him. The LORD answered her prayer, not only because she promised to give her son Samuel back to the LORD, but also because He had a purpose for Samuel and would use him to influence Israel for many years to come.

Verses 1-8: We are introduced to an Israelite named Elkanah who had two wives named Hannah and Peninnah. Commentators point out that 1 Chron. 6:27 identifies Elkanah as a member of the Kohathite branch of the tribe of Levi. Peninnah had children but she constantly taunted Hannah over her lack of children mercilessly. In those days women felt that they were a failure if they could not bear a child for their husband and Peninnah apparently used Hannah's lack of children to boast of her own supposed superiority. The apparent jealousy between these two women is another example of why polygamy is a bad idea. All Israelite men were required to attend 3 annual feasts at the tabernacle and Elkanah would attend these feasts with his wives and children at Shiloh (the location of the tabernacle in that day). We find Hannah during one of these worship feasts and she is broken hearted because she has not been able to have children.

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

“So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk” – Hannah had no appetite to eat at the feast (vs. 7-8) due to the sorrow of her heart. After her family had finished eating she decided to take advantage of being near the tabernacle and goes there to pray to the LORD about her need.

“Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat [throne; seat of honor] by a post of the temple of the LORD” – Eli is sitting on a seat befitting his position as high priest and possibly as judge over Israel.

10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

Hannah is broken hearted over her childlessness and she pours her heart out in prayer to the LORD. Hannah was not wasting her time like those who prayed to idols made of wood, stone or metal. She was pleading her case before the God Who hears.

11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head.

Hannah's request is humble and unselfish, because she promises to give the son that the LORD gives her back to him. She refers to herself as the LORD's handmaid, submitting herself and her request to the will of the LORD to answer as He sees fit. If the LORD grants her request, then she will give the son back to the LORD for his entire life. She states that “there shall no razor come upon his head,” indicating that this son will be dedicated to the LORD under a life-long Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-8).

12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

“And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked [watched] her mouth” – When Eli saw Hannah come to pray he happened to notice that her mouth was moving without making any sound and so he began to watch it. Hannah's prayer was apparently longer and more involved than the short synopsis that v. 11 gives us.

“Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard” – The writer explains what caught Eli's notice. As Hannah pours out her heart before the LORD, she is so overcome with emotion that she is unable to speak or neglects to do so because she is preoccupied with telling the LORD what is on her heart.

“therefore Eli thought she had been drunken” – Eli though she was out of head in an alcoholic stupor, speaking to herself or to someone that was not there. Commentators suggest that public drunkenness, even among women, must not have been unusual in Eli's day since he immediately assumed that Hannah had been drinking. What a sad commentary that drunkards did not have enough respect for God's house to refrain from coming to the tabernacle while intoxicated!

“And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee” – Eli mistakenly rebukes Hannah and urges her to repent of her drunkenness.

15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

“And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit” – The reason for Hannah's behavior is not intoxication but the sorrow of her broken heart.

“I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD” – The behavior Eli was observing was not that of a woman who was drunk but that of a broken hearted woman pouring her heart out to the LORD.

“Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial [wicked; worthless]” – In Hebrew thinking, to be a son or daughter of something meant that you inherited the nature of your “parent.” Eli should not consider Hannah to be a woman having the nature of being a wicked or worthless person.

“for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto” – The driving force behind Hannah's behavior is the magnitude of the need that she is bringing to the LORD.

17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*.

“Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace” – Hannah’s answer satisfied Eli, and he urges her to “go in peace.” She should no longer be concerned that Eli believes her to be drunk. She should also be at peace concerning the petition that she had brought to the LORD.

“and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him” – Eli is either saying that he would pray that the LORD would answer Hannah’s prayer or else he is giving his assurance as a priest that the LORD would indeed answer her prayer.

“And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace [favor] in thy sight” – We see Hannah’s humble gratitude for Eli’s words and assurances. She asks that Eli would continue to favor her with his prayers on her behalf.

“So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*” – Hannah’s faith that the LORD would answer her prayer and Eli’s words helped to cheer her up so that she once again felt like eating.

19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her.

“And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD” – Hannah worshiped the LORD, not merely because she believed that He would answer her prayer but because she humbly left the answer in His hands. We should always remember that we are His servants and not the other way around. God encourages us to ask Him to meet our needs, but the answer is still His decision. Too many people pray and then get angry at God if He doesn’t give them what they want. We ought to be like Hannah and humbly submit myself to His will, knowing that He knows best. Even though He was hungry and had the power to provide His own food, Jesus submitted Himself to His Father’s will when Satan was tempting Him in the wilderness (**Matt. 4:4** “*But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God*”). Jesus would not eat until it was His Father’s will that He end His 40 day fast.

“and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife” – Hannah and her family return home and life goes on, including Elkanah and Hannah having marital relations.

“and the LORD remembered her” – Verse 5 says that the LORD had “shut up” the womb of Hannah, indicating that it was His plan to do so in order to provide the catalyst for her to pray as earnestly as she did. Apparently it was the LORD’s plan to raise up Samuel in this way. Now, as Elkanah and Hannah are having marital relations, the LORD remembers the humble and earnest prayer that Hannah had made and grants her request. **1 John 5:14** “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:*” **James 4:6** “*But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*”

20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD.

“Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son” – Some commentators interpret this line as saying that Hannah eventually conceived and bore a son, implying that she may not have conceived the first time they engaged in marital relations. However, the way the KJV translation reads it seems that the phrase “when the time was come about” refers to the nine months of pregnancy after the conception of the child. After that time had “come about,” Hannah’s son was born.

“and called his name Samuel [name of God; heard of God], saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD” – One commentator pointed out that the name Samuel had the literal meaning of “name of God” but the Hebrew pronunciation of it sounded like “heard of God.” Hannah obviously chose that name because the LORD had heard her prayer and had given her the son that she asked for.

Verses 21-28: Hannah waited until her son was weaned and no longer depended on her before she accompanied her husband Elkanah to Shiloh once again to offer an annual sacrifice to the LORD. She made the offering in Shiloh prescribed by Num. 15:8-10 when performing a vow unto the LORD, but she offered above what was required to in order to express her gratitude to the LORD. She then brought her son to Eli, reminding him that she was the one that he had previously seen earnestly praying. She revealed that Samuel was the answer to her prayer and that she was now returning him to the LORD. The LORD blessed Hannah’s faithfulness and gave her three more sons and two daughters (1 Sam. 2:21).

1 Samuel 2:1-11: These verses record Hannah’s prayer after bringing Samuel to the LORD at Shiloh. Her earlier prayer was one of heartache and sorrow but this prayer is one of joy in the LORD’s faithfulness to His children. After the prayer, verse 11 states that Elkanah returned to his home (no doubt accompanied by his wives and children) but Samuel remained in Shiloh, ministering to the LORD by the side of Eli.

We typically don’t give credit to Elkanah for his faithfulness to the LORD, but he also was willing to honor Hannah’s vow to return Samuel to the LORD.