

# HANNAH'S EXAMPLE (PART 1)

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In 1 Samuel 1:2-10, we read about an Israelite man named Elkanah, who “had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? 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. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.” We then have the account of the birth of the prophet Samuel and the faithfulness of his mother Hannah.

## **Hannah's vow and prayer**

Hannah “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” (1 Sam 1:11). Hannah vowed to make her son a Nazarite (see Numbers chapter 6). “And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 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. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief

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(continued)

have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him” (1 Sam 1:12-17). It is a sad commentary on the spiritual situation in Israel at that time for the High Priest to see a woman at the tabernacle, and to have his first thought be that she was drunk rather than praying. But that was the reality then, primarily because of Eli’s own sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They were “sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord” (1 Sam 2:12). They corrupted the sacrifices of the people. “Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord: for men abhorred the offering of the Lord” (1 Sam 2:17). Verse 22 also says that Hophni and Phinehas “lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” From this, we can see why Eli assumed Hannah was drunk. The presence of a young woman at the tabernacle who was sincere and godly was obviously unusual during those days.

## **God’s authority and power**

Yet God knew Hannah, and responded to her plea. God has all power (Matt 28:18; Rev 19:6). He is the Creator of all things (Gen 1:1), and all things belong to Him (Psa 24:1-2; 100:3). God rules over all (Josh 3:13; Ezra 5:11; Psa 47:2,7-8; 83:18; 103:19; Acts 10:36), and rules in the kingdoms of men (2 Chr 20:6; Dan 4; Rom 13:1-7). God works all things after the counsel of His will (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11). He is in control of all things. This general truth is illustrated specifically in 1 Samuel chapter 1. God was in total control of the entire situation involving Hannah and the birth of Samuel. God is the one who prevented Hannah from having children in the first place: “the Lord had shut up her womb” (1 Sam 1:5-6). God had His reasons for this, and Hannah certainly had the opportunity to grow spiritually by enduring Peninnah’s persecutions (1 Sam 1:6-11; Jas 1:2-4). After Hannah prayed to the Lord for a son and made her vow (1 Sam 1:10-11), “the Lord remembered her” (1 Sam 1:19) and Hannah conceived and bare a son whom she named Samuel (1 Sam 1:20). God is the one who at first kept Hannah from having children, and God is the one who eventually gave her a son (and later gave her five more children, 1 Sam 2:21). Thus, God had complete control over the events in 1 Samuel chapter 1.