

THE PRAYER OF HANNAH ANSWERED: A LESSON ON TOTAL DEDICATION 1 SAMUEL 01:19–28

Introduction

Society had become a cesspool, a pit of depravity and corruption, when Samuel was born. His day was a time when people had slipped into an immoral, lawless, abusive, violent, compromising and permissive lifestyle. The depth of their moral decay was seen in cases such as gang rape, homosexuality, wife abuse, child abuse, murder, kidnapping, widespread polygamy, greed, injustice, idolatry and civil war (see notes, Jud 17-21).

But in the midst of such an immoral and lawless society, there were a few persons who lived for God. Their lives demonstrated the light of God's Holy Word. They loved the LORD and obeyed Him, keeping His commandments. Such a person was Hannah, Samuel's mother. This chapter begins the story of Hannah and her son Samuel. This is: *The Prayer of Hannah and the Birth of Samuel: A Lesson on Total Dedication*, 1 Samuel 1:1-28.

- I. The family into which Samuel was born: carnal, bigamist parents who conformed to the culture of their day (vv. 1-2).
- II. The deep sorrow and broken heart of Samuel's mother, Hannah: a picture of anguish, agony, helplessness and hopelessness (vv. 3-8).
- III. The answer to the distressful circumstances of Samuel's mother: prayer and trust in God (vv. 9-18).
- IV. The result of the prayer and faith of Samuel's mother: God heard and healed her affliction — gave her a son, Samuel (vv. 19-20).
- V. The faithfulness of Samuel's mother: she nursed the child and kept her promise to dedicate Samuel to the LORD (w. 21-28).

I. 1 Samuel 01:19–20 *The Results of Prayer: Hannah's Deliverance*

There were the results of Hannah's prayer. God heard and healed her affliction (vv. 19-20). He remembered Hannah's prayer and quickened, empowered her body to conceive. Hannah bore a son and named him Samuel, which means God heard. Why this name? Because Hannah asked and God heard her prayer. And through the experience, Hannah learned a wonderful truth: God answers prayer. Samuel was a gift from the Lord: the LORD had given Samuel because she had prayed (v. 20).

Thought 1. God answers prayer! From the beginning of human history, no matter what the distressful circumstance — sorrow, agony, anguish, discouragement, grief, sorrow, hurt, pain — no matter what the problem or trouble, God has always answered the prayers and met the needs of His dear people. And he will meet our needs when we are gripped by sorrow or a broken heart. No matter what trials or temptations we may face, God will answer our prayers and meet our needs.

Mark 11:24 “Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.”

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

2 Chr 7:14 If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Psa 28:7 The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

Psa 40:17 Yet I am poor and needy; may the LORD think of me. You are my help and my deliverer: O my God, do not delay.

Psa 91:15 He will call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honour him.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isa 65:24 Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.

Zec 13:9 This third I will bring into the fire; I will refine them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are my people,’ and they will say, ‘The LORD is our God.’

II. **1 Samuel 01:21–28 Faithfulness of Samuel’s Mother, Hannah**

There was the faithfulness of Samuel’s mother. She nursed her child and kept her promise to dedicate him to the LORD.

1. Hannah was committed to weaning the child above all else, even above attending the annual festival (vv. 21-22). When it came time to make the annual sacrifice to the LORD, Elkanah set out for the Tabernacle, but Hannah remained behind because she had not yet weaned the child.
2. But Hannah was committed to fulfilling her promise to the LORD. This is seen in her promise to dedicate the child right after he had been weaned.
3. Note that Hannah was totally supported by her husband in the decision to dedicate Samuel to the Lord. This is significant, for by law a husband’s support was not required when a wife made a voluntary vow. The husband had the right to nullify the wife’s vow (see note, Num 30:10-15). But not Elkanah: he was committed to the LORD and loved his wife too much to refuse her desire. Thus, he supported his wife even though it meant giving up the first-born son of his beloved wife. (Robert D. Bergen. *1, 2 Samuel*. ‘The New American Commentary,’ Vol. 7. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), p. 72). After Samuel had been weaned, they took the baby to the Tabernacle along with a bull, a half-bushel of flour and some

wine for the dedication service (v. 24). Upon arriving, they had the bull presented in sacrifice to the Lord (v. 25).

4. Then the momentous event took place: she and her husband dedicated Samuel to the LORD's service. Taking Samuel to Eli, Hannah reminded the High Priest of her agonizing prayer for a child some years earlier. And she proclaimed the glorious answer to her prayer: the LORD had given her what she had asked for, a son.

Hannah then demonstrated a strong, selfless devotion: she gave Samuel to the LORD, to serve the LORD during his whole life. She had promised to present Samuel "before the LORD" so that he could live in the sanctuary and in the presence of the LORD forever (see v. 22). This phrase, "before the LORD," is one of the most prominent statements made about the life of Samuel. Samuel was to live "before the LORD" forever (2:11, 18, 21; 7:6; 10:19; 11:15; 12:3, 7; 15:33).

Thought 1. Hannah, Samuel's mother, is a dynamic example of faithfulness to God. She was faithful to her commitments. When she made a promise to God, she kept her promise. She did exactly what she said. Her word was her bond. She was faithful to the LORD, and her faithfulness speaks volumes to us.

When we make a promise to God, we must fulfil our promise. We must keep our word, do exactly what we say. Often during a crisis, we will make some vow to God, a promise...

- to give up something
- to change our lives
- to make some gift to the church
- to repent and return to the LORD
- to receive Christ as our Saviour
- to serve the LORD in the ministry

The example of Hannah is a strong example for us: we must be faithful to the LORD. We must keep our vows, our promises to the LORD. We must be faithful in following through for the LORD.

Luke 19:17 "Well done, my good servant!" his master replied. "Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities."

1 Cor 4:2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.

Heb 3:6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Rev 2:10 Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Deut 23:21-23 *If you make a vow to the Lord your God, do not be slow to pay it, for the Lord your God will certainly demand it of you and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from making a vow, you will not be guilty. Whatever your lips utter you must be sure to do, because you made your vow freely to the LORD your God with your own mouth.*

Psa 103:17-18 *But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children, with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts.*

Eccl 5:4-6 *When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfil your vow. It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfil it. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? ■*