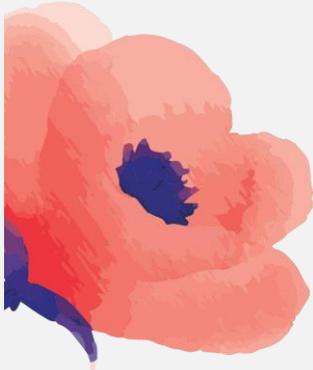




# Hannah



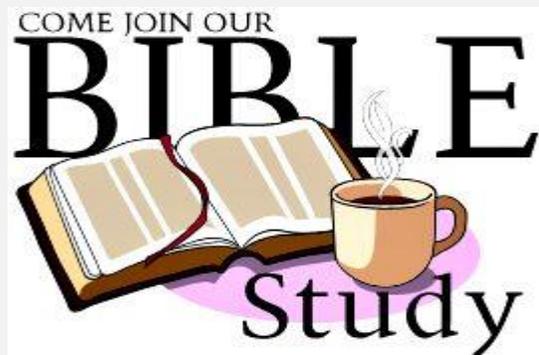
When we read stories from the Bible, we are reading part of the true story about God as He revealed Himself to us over the centuries.

However, not every story of Israel's history is meant to teach us a moral lesson and no story is full or complete. Stories record what happened, not always what **should have** happened.

But since God is the main character of all the Bible stories, we have much to learn! Come along!

We need to keep in mind some guidelines as we read Hannah's story in the Old Testament:

- ✚ What some people do in Bible stories is not always a good example to us!
- ✚ The people in these Bible stories were real people and were imperfect, like you and me.
- ✚ We are not always told in a Bible story if the events that occurred were "good" or "bad". We must decide based on what God has taught us elsewhere in Scripture.
- ✚ In cases where God is speaking to and dealing directly with a particular person, we should not think those directives are meant specifically for us.
- ✚ If God's Word illustrates a principle that the New Testament would uphold, then we can apply the principle to our own lives.



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## Judges 21:25

“In those days Israel had no king.

Each man did what he considered to be right”.

**Hannah lived three thousand years ago, but she served the same God we worship. Samuel worshipped at the tabernacle, instead of a local church, but he longed for redemption and the coming of Messiah, as we do. This is part of the history of God with His people, which we continue in today.**

### 1 Samuel 1:1

“There was a man from Ramathaim Zophim, from the hill country of Ephraim. His name was Elkanah. He was the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite”.

Our Bible story begins with the last verse of Judges. Samuel was the last of the judges of Israel at a time when each man did what was right in his own eyes. The people of Israel had allowed other belief systems to be incorporated into their worship, resulting in a patchwork, hodge-podge, gumbo kind of religion.

**Do we do this today? Do we mix in other things – non-essential things – to our understanding of God? Why is this bad? The Bible strongly warns us against watered-down religion and false teachers!**

Originally, 1 & 2 Samuel were one book and were considered history. In 1 Samuel, the focus is narrowed to focus on specific people within the nation of Israel. It takes place in the central highlands of Israel, specifically Shiloh and Ramah, around the year 1105 BC.

The people of Israel had occupied the Promised Land and the tabernacle was situated at Shiloh. We are given the details of Elkanah’s lineage because it is important to Samuel and the Jewish people. This identifies Elkanah as being from the tribe of Levi, and responsible for assisting with worship in the tabernacle. Scripture portrays Elkanah’s as a devout family living in a dismal time.

**When we become children of God, we become part of the kingdom of priests unto God. We are set apart and sanctified! Isn’t that awesome!**



### 1 Samuel 1:2-3

**“He had two wives; the name of the first was Hannah and the name of the second was Peninnah.**

**Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children”.**

**“This man would go up from his city year after year to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD at Shiloh.**

**(It was there that the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, served as the Lord’s priests.)**

**“Hannah”** means **“grace”** or **“beauty”**.

**“Peninnah”** means **“ruby”** or **“red pearl”**.

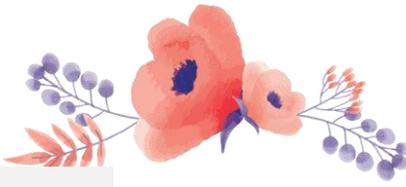
Hannah was the first wife, but she had no children.

She was in a difficult circumstance that she was powerless to change. In ancient Israel, children gave a woman’s life meaning.

Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were two of the **worst** priests we ever meet on the pages of Scripture! They were greedy men who illegally and sometimes forcibly took the best portions of people’s offerings for themselves. They seduced young women. The result was that the people of Israel began to abhor bringing their offerings to the tabernacle. All the people of Israel were aware of the situation, but Eli only lightly rebuked his sons, even though he was the high priest.

The visible manifestation of God’s glory that had once resided over the ark of the covenant was long gone. It would be just a few years later that the ark would be captured by the Philistines and the sons of Eli were killed. Eli would fall over from the shock when he heard the news, and he would die from his injuries.

**The cycle of worship in the tabernacle was important. God had established it very specifically. While we do not continue sacrifices in the New Testament era, a cycle of worship is still important to God.**



## 1 Samuel 1:4-7

“The day came, and Elkanah sacrificed. (Now he used to give meat portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.

But to Hannah he would give a double portion because he loved Hannah, although the Lord had not enabled her to have children.

Her rival used to aggravate her to the point of exasperation, just to irritate her, since the LORD had not enabled her to have children.

This is how it would go year after year. As often as she went up to the LORD’s house, Peninnah would offend her in that way). So she cried and refused to eat.

Elkanah’s double-portion to Hannah was a very public display of honor and favor. The Hebrew word for “love” in v.5 is “**a-Hab**” which indicates a **strong love**. Elkanah did his duty to both wives, but it was to Hannah that he showed his love. Hannah’s most important characteristic is her relationship with her mate.

**Was a double-portion enough for Hannah? How do we show love to our families? Just receiving things was not enough for Hannah.**

The distance that Elkanah and his family would travel to Shiloh was about 25 miles from their home. The trip would take 2-3 days. All Israelite men were required to attend the three annual feasts (Deuteronomy 16:1-17).

Notice the strong words “**rival**”, “**aggravate**”, “**exasperation**”, “**irritate**”. The Hebrew word for “**rival**” is “**tsarah**” and means **adversary** or **enemy**. It has a literal meaning of “**thundering against**” someone! We do not know the exact words Peninnah used, but they were deliberate and derogatory!

**I cannot imagine how Hannah endured Peninnah’s “thundering” year after year. No wonder she cried and refused to eat. The meal referred to would possibly have been the Passover meal, a happy festive time for Israel.**



## 1 Samuel 1:8-11

“Then her husband Elkanah said to her, ‘Hannah, why are you crying and why won’t you eat? Why are you so upset? Am I not better to you than 10 sons?’

So Hannah got up after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. At the time Eli the priest was sitting in his chair by the doorpost of the LORD’s sanctuary.

As for Hannah, she was very distressed. She prayed to the Lord and was, in fact, weeping.

She made a vow saying, ‘O Lord, if you would truly look on the suffering of your servant, and would keep me in mind and not neglect your servant, and give your servant a male child, then I will dedicate him to the LORD all the days of his life. His hair will never be cut.’”

Poor Elkanah – I do not think he understood Hannah! He loved her, but this situation was threatening to overwhelm their relationship! He asks four questions and each one is harder to answer:

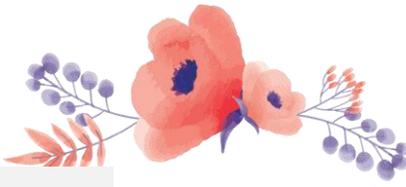
- ✚ Why are you crying?
- ✚ Why are you not eating?
- ✚ Why are you upset (sad, angry)?
- ✚ Aren’t I better than 10 sons (don’t I take care of your needs and welfare)?

**Poor Hannah. Sometimes there just are no words you can say in response. Why does God allow us to cry? Does crying help?**

Eli was sitting at the door of the tabernacle, a position of authority, as opposed to sitting on the ground. Hannah’s posture is not noted, but can’t you imagine that she is bowed over in grief? She only prayed for **one son!** She begged for a son who would be fit for service in the tabernacle – she was referring to the Nazarite vow (Num. 6:1-9).

**Despite her disappointment and heartache, Hannah remained faithful to God. She turned more and more TO God and not AWAY from Him! What a good lesson for us!**

The words “**truly look**” in v.11 in the Hebrew mean to “**investigate, examine, fully perceive**”. She had nothing to hide from God.



## 1 Samuel 1:12-16

And she continued praying before the LORD. Meanwhile Eli was watching her mouth.

As for Hannah, she was speaking in her mind. Only her lips were moving;; her voice could not be heard. So Eli thought she was a drunkard.

Then he said to her, “How much longer do you intend to get drunk? Put away your wine!”

But Hannah replied, “Not so, my lord! I am a woman under a great deal of stress. I haven’t drunk wine or beer. But I have poured out my soul before the LORD.

Don’t consider your servant wicked woman. It’s just that, to this point, I have spoken from my deep pain and anguish”.

Eli’s response was typical of his attitude of the time and showed his incompetence as high priest to the nation and father to his own sons.

It was customary in Israel to pray aloud, not silently. Eli knew these were feast days with much food and drink. That may have been why Eli had not recognized that Hannah was praying. Hannah understood that God could see into her heart and did not need to hear her words. **We are taught in Romans 8:26 that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. I imagine that was how Hannah prayed.**

Hannah’s used of “**poured out my soul**” before the LORD is symbolic of sacrifice.

She did not want Eli to think of her as a wicked woman – some versions of the Bible may say “worthless woman” or “daughter of Belial”. The Hebrew word “**Belial**” meant “**without value**”. In the New Testament, Belial had become associated with Satan.



## 1 Samuel 1:17-20

Eli replied, “Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant the request that you have asked of Him”.

She said, “May I, your servant, find favor in your sight”. So, she went her way and got something to eat. Her face no longer looked sad.

They got up early the next morning. Then they worshipped the LORD and returned to their home at Ramathaim.

Elkanah was intimate with his wife Hannah, and the LORD called her to mind.

Then Hannah became pregnant. In the course of time she gave birth to a son. And she named him Samuel, thinking, “I asked the LORD for him”.



1 Samuel 1:10-18 is written in a style called “**chiastic**” like the Greek letter **Chi** or **X-shaped**. It is a literary style which puts events in order and then reverses the order. Hannah’s prayer and actions are in this style.

Hannah’s attitude	v. 10	<b>bitterness</b>
Hannah’s action	v. 11	<b>prayed, crying</b>
Hannah’s speech	v. 11	<b>vow</b>
“	v. 15	<b>explanation</b>
“	v. 18	<b>request</b>
Hannah’s action	v. 18	<b>went her way</b>
Hannah’s attitude	v. 18	<b>no longer sad</b>

We get the sense that Eli was aware that he had misjudged Hannah, because he gives his blessing to her request.

The words “**the LORD called her to mind**” can be misleading. We are constantly on her mind, but God answers prayers in His time and in His way.

Naming a child in the Hebrew culture was a profound moment. A child’s name called forth their character and even, their destiny. The name **Samuel** means “**name of God**”, “**asked from God**”, “**heard by God**” and is close to the name **Ishmael** meaning “**God shall hear**”.



## 1 Samuel 1:21-25

Then the man Elkanah and all his family went up to make the yearly sacrifice to the LORD and to keep his vow. But Hannah did not go up with them, because she had told her husband, “Not until the boy is weaned. Then I will bring him so that he may appear before the LORD. And he will remain there from then on”.

Then her husband Elkanah said to her, “Do what you think best. Stay until you have weaned him. Only may the LORD fulfill His promise”. So, the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

Then she took him up with her as soon as she had weaned him, along with three bulls, an ephah of flour and a container of wine. She came to the LORD’s house at Shiloh and the boy was with them. They slaughtered the bull, then brought the boy to Eli.

Hannah had every intention of keeping her promise. She waited until the boy was weaned, probably around 3 years of age. She is doing her best to ensure Samuel’s early nurturing. She tells her husband, Elkanah, exactly what she planned to do for Samuel’s future. Legally, as her husband he could have changed it, but he acquiesced to her plan.

**Typically, a young man would begin service in the tabernacle at the age of 25. Samuel would still be a small child when he began his service! Remember, all of Israel was praying for a leader and Samuel was the answer to the nation’s prayer!**

Three years pass and Hannah is ready to present Samuel to the LORD at the tabernacle in Shiloh. She brings the prescribed amounts for a sacrifice. These would be considered provisions for the priests. Hannah actually brought **more** flour and wine than was needed for the sacrifice, but the central truth is not the amount she brought for worship, but **how** she worshipped.



## 1 Samuel 1:26-28

She said, “My lord. Just as surely as you are alive, my lord, I am the woman who previously stood here with you in order to pray to the LORD.

For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me the request that I asked of him.

So I also dedicate him to the LORD. For all the days of his life he is dedicated to the LORD.”

Then Samuel bowed down there in worship to the LORD.

## 1 Samuel 2:1-2

Hannah prayed, “My heart has rejoiced in the Lord; my horn has been raised high because of the LORD.

I have loudly denounced my enemies. Indeed I rejoice in Your deliverance.

No one is holy like the LORD! There is no one other than You! There is no rock like our God!

Hannah’s words to Eli were her testimony! The word for “**asked**” in Hebrew comes from the root word for “**lent**” or “**dedicate**”

While Hannah’s original prayer of anguish earlier had been in silence, she is now openly speaking or exhorting. Her attitude and speech is now opposite to how she was before.

We move to the next chapter where Hannah will pour out her praise to God, pointing out:

- ✚ God’s holiness
- ✚ God’s goodness
- ✚ God’s sovereignty
- ✚ God’s power
- ✚ God’s wisdom
- ✚ God as Savior
- ✚ God as Creator
- ✚ God as Judge

Hannah’s psalm of praise begins with rejoicing in God’s strength, especially on her behalf. It is a foreshadowing of Mary’s Magnificat in Luke!

The reference to “**horns**” was to signify **strength**, as is the mention of “**there is no rock like our God**”.



## 1 Samuel 2:3-8

Don't keep speaking so arrogantly. Proud talk should not come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God who knows; He evaluates what people do.

The bows of warriors are shattered, but those who stumbled have taken on strength. The well fed hire themselves out to earn food, but the hungry no longer lack. Even the barren woman has given birth to seven, but the one with many children has declined.

The LORD both kills and gives life; He brings down to the grave and raises up. The LORD impoverishes and makes wealthy; He humbles and He exalts. He lifts the weak from the dust; He raises the poor from the ash heap to seat them with princes – He bestows on them an honored position.

The foundations of the earth belong to the LORD – He placed the world on them.

Hannah's entire psalm of praise is a warning to those who would boast in their self-sufficiency!

It is a song of opposites and contrasts.

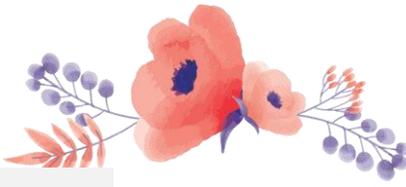
**When Hannah mentions “speaking so arrogantly” in verse 3, I just wonder if she was thinking of Peninnah? For all those years, Hannah had kept silent before her rival, her enemy, and now she can rejoice!**

The Hebrew word in verse 3 for “knows” is “yada” and means “**knowledge through experience**”. It was the kind of knowledge that a skilled craftsman or a skilled musician has.

Since God is always watching and weighing our actions and attitudes, we should never act or speak from an arrogant heart.

In verse 5, Hannah mentions giving birth to seven. By that she meant seven as a perfect number. She eventually gave birth to six children. There is the supposition that something may have happened to some of Peninnah's children, but we are not told.

Some of Hannah's wording puts us in mind of Job, when she tells that the foundations of the earth belong to the LORD.



## 1 Samuel 2:9-11

He watches over His holy ones, but the wicked are made speechless in the darkness, for it is not by one's own strength that one prevails.

The LORD shatters His adversaries; He thunders against them from the heavens. The LORD executes judgment to the ends of the earth. He will strengthen His king and exalt the power of His anointed One”.

And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest.

The key verses in Hannah's psalm of praise are verses 9-10. Here they are from the ESV:

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**9** He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail.

**10** The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them He will thunder in heaven.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; He will give strength to His king and exalt the power of His Anointed.

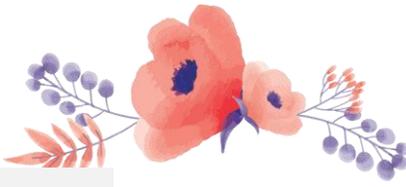
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It is not by our own strength that we prevail! How true that is! Did you remember that the word used for Peninnah's taunting of Hannah was Hebrew word “**tsarah**” which meant “**thundering**” – it is the same meaning in v.10!

The king spoken of in v.10 is probably David, for Samuel will be the prophet who will appoint and anoint Israel's first two kings: Saul and David.

And the mention of “**His Anointed**” is the first Old Testament reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ!

**How wonderful that God, through His Spirit, gives Hannah such wonderful words of praise that we can read today! Thank you, LORD!**



## 1 Samuel 2:18-21

Now Samuel was ministering with the favor of the LORD. The boy was dressed in a linen ephod.

His mother used to make him a small robe and bring it to him from time to time when she would go up with her husband to make the annual sacrifice.

And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, “The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the load which is lent to the LORD”. And they went unto their own home.

And indeed the LORD attended to Hannah. She got pregnant and gave birth to three sons and two daughters.

But the boy Samuel grew up before the LORD.

I am so grateful that God gave us the rest of the story! The picture of Hannah bringing a little robe to Samuel every year is the picture we fondly remember from Sunday School and VBS!

The wording in v.21, “**the boy Samuel grew up before the LORD**”, foreshadows the boyhood of Jesus.

**As we come to the end of Hannah’s story, we can ask ourselves three questions:**

- 1. Is there an example to follow?**
- 2. Is there a sin to avoid?**
- 3. Is there a principle to apply?**

**I think the example of Hannah asking in faith and fighting her battle on her knees is one that we must follow.**

**The sin to avoid is arrogance and pride in our self-sufficiency.**

**The principle to apply is the sovereignty of God – His Will, His Purpose, and His Timing.**

**I hope you have enjoyed learning about Hannah.**