

1 Now there was a certain man of Ramathaimzophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name [was] Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: 2 And he 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.

First, we meet Elkanah. We are given his genealogy, which is also listed in the book of Chronicles. In Chronicles it follows Elkahan back to Zuph, who is a Levite. Zuph was Elkanah's great great grandfather. Elkahan's tribe is named after the man, Elkahan was a Zuphitee. This verse list Zuph as an Ephraimite. Levites were not assigned to live with the Levite tribe. Levites were divided among the other tribes, so every tribe had a priest. Zuph was assigned to live and serve among the tribe of Ephraim. Zuph is identified as an Ephraimite.

The next thing we are told is Elkanah has two wives. This was not common practice among the people. Maintaining a family was costly. Maintaining two families was very costly. Elkanah's first wife listed is Hannah. We are told Hannah had no children. The culture, at that time, was very strong toward families. If a woman had no children, it was considered a bad sign from God. Everything that happened in the lives of this people was based on God's will. Elkanah married Hannah, because he loved her and wanted a family through her. She was the love of his life. There was a problem, Hannah could not have children. After several years, Elkanah took on another wife, Peninnah, who gave him children.

3 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.

The men of Israel were required to visit Shiloh, three times a year, when there was a feast day. Each year Elkanah took his family to Shiloh for one of the feast days, probably the Passover. This was considered the annual family vacation, the trip to Shiloh. There was no permanent structure, like a temple. The worship service was held outside the tabernacle. This was a tent structure that Israel had carried across the land, since leaving Egypt. It was the place which contained the Ark of the Covenant. This is where Israel had witnessed the shekinah glory of God's presence, while traveling throughout the wilderness for forty years.

Eli was the high priest and the judge of the land. His two sons were the priest assigned to collect the offerings and present them to God.

4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: 5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

Elkanah, as his custom, gave Hannah a double portion because he loved her. Normally, only the oldest son would receive a double portion. Elkanah loved Hannah so much he wanted her to know, she was still the love of his life. It is clear here that Hannah had given Elkanah no children, because God had closed her womb. Hannah would know how Sarah felt with Isaac, Rachel with Joseph and Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist. God wanted these to know their first born were miracle babies, given by him to a special mother.

6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

Hannah's adversary was Peninnah, Elkanah's childbearing wife. She was not just an adversary, Peninnah was a bully, she provoked Hannah to make her life miserable. She wanted Hannah to die and be out of her life. She hated Hannah and wanted something terrible to happen to Hannah. Peninnah would constantly ridicule Hannah, reminding her she was unfit to be a mother because God had made her childless. This is the problem with having more than one wife. This wasn't a one-time event; it was something that went on continually.

7 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. 8 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?

Elkanah continued his annual family trip to Shiloh. Every trip Peninnah would provoke Hannah. She would remind Hannah she was cursed and could not bear children. Hannah believed she had been cursed and continually wept. Hannah did not like the annual trips to Shiloh, because of evil Peninnah. Hannah was so upset she could not eat. Elkanah would ask her what was wrong, why do you weep and not eat? Why are you so upset? Elkanah was so busy with his priestly work; preparing the sacrifice; cutting it up in proper portions and teaching his son's how to do it, that he didn't have a clue about the hateful relationship between his two wives. Hannah wouldn't say anything to him, because of the children. It would just create more of a problem in the home. Elkanah really doesn't know what's going on. He thinks his kindness and great love for Hannah should make everything alright. Hannah knows the only thing that will make everything alright is for her to give birth to a son.

9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk.

This was probably the observance of a special day, such as the Passover. Everyone had eaten except Hannah. She was too upset to eat and drink.

Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD.

Eli was priest and judge of Israel and sat at the entry to the tabernacle.

10 And she [was] in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 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 stood outside the tabernacle and prayed and wept, with a broken heart. She made a vow to God, if He would give her a son, she would give the son back to him. Not only was she returning him to God but was committing him to a Nazarite vow. This is the same vow observed by Sampson and John the Baptist.

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.

Hannah poured her heart out to the Lord in prayer. Usually persons would stand outside the tabernacle and pray out loud. They wanted to be heard. Hannah prayed silently, but her lips were moving, her body was moving, her head was moving, because she was praying and crying with a broken heart.

Now Eli had seen many times where people would come to the temple area drunk. For some reason, when people are drunk, they do a lot of stupid things. He knew his two sons were doing bad things and sometimes women would show up for the wrong reasons, sometimes drunk. This was to the shame of Israel and Eli who was the judge and person of authority for Israel.

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. 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].

Hannah wanted Elie, the priest, to know she was not a daughter of Belial. Which means a worthless woman who worships idols and has no morals. She wants the priest to know she was crying out to God and had made a vow if God would grant her petition. Eli the priest apologized and asked the God of Israel to grant her request. So Hannah went away, believing God would grant her prayer. Hannah believed in faith. You could see her faith. Many times people will pray, but do not pray in faith. Most people pray, but don't expect an answer and are surprised if the prayer request is received.

There was a time when the apostle Peter was put in jail for preaching the gospel. Many Christians were in a home together having a prayer meeting, for his release. There is a knock at the door. A servant girl goes to the door and ask who it is and is told it's Peter. She goes to the people and tells them; Peter is at the door. The people know Peters not there, he's in jail. We're praying for him to be released. The servant is not able to convince them Peter is at the door. Peter continues to knock, and someone finally opens the door and Peter is free from jail and is in the house. This was a group of people who were praying, but not praying in faith.

There was a town in west Texas where people were praying for rain. They had been in a drought and had no rain for a long time. A group of people came together to pray for rain. None in the group were praying in faith, except on little girl. You could see her faith. She came to pray for rain and brought her umbrella so she wouldn't get wet. That's praying in faith.

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.

They rose up and they worshipped, even Hannah. They returned home and the LORD remembered her. Elkanah made love to his wife. When a man makes love to his wife, it is a gift from God. God created sex. Sex is not dirty, unless man makes it dirty. The love between a man and woman is a beautiful thing. Elkanah making love to his wife Hannah was the first step of her prayer. It had probably been a while since Elkanah made love to Hannah. Up to this time, Hannah had been depressed, because she had no children and Peninnah constantly bullied her about it. Now Hannah comes home, she is expecting to have a child. She has faith God will give her a son. Her whole mood changed, and she was happy. Now for a man who loves a woman, happy is sexy. She's not only happy, she's flirting with him. The LORD remembers and she pregnant.

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.

Hannah's prayer is answered.

21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, [I will not go up] until the child be weaned, and [then] I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. 23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him.

Elkanah, Peninnah and her children go on their yearly trip to Shiloh to worship at the tabernacle. The child Samuel is almost three months old. Hannah has made a vow to give him to God, but not until after he is weaned. Hannah has shared her vow with her husband, about their son, and he supports her in keeping her vow. The custom of the land is a child is weaned at about three and sometimes five years old. The child develops a strong bond with his mother, at that time.

24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child [was] young.

He was probably just shy of three or five years old. She and her husband Elkanah brought the sacrifices for a first-born son.

25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, Oh my lord, [as] thy soul liveth, my lord, I [am] the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: 28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

After they offer their sacrifice, Hannah and Elkanah bring Samuel to Eli. She identifies herself to Eli and he remembers. She lets Eli know that the child was the answer to her prayer and that she vowed to lend her child to the LORD, all the days of his life. And the child worshipped the LORD there at the tabernacle.

12 Now the sons of Eli [were] sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

Eli's sons were the priest of the tabernacle, but they were evil and the sons of wickedness. They violated the laws of the sacrifices and made the sacrifices worthless, before the LORD. Eli is too old and weak to do the work required in the tabernacle and his sons are evil, before the LORD. Israel needs a priest who honors and fears God.

We have the same problem today. There are men standing in the pulpits of many churches today who don't believe in miracles. They don't accept the virgin birth of Jesus but teach God will accept you if you love your neighbor. They don't believe the miracles of the plagues against Egypt. They don't believe Moses and Israel walked across the Red sea and didn't even get their feet wet. They don't believe God created the heavens and the Earth. Many don't believe in Hell and a few don't believe in Heaven.

Israel was at a time it needed a man to stand for the LORDS truth. They needed a man that feared the LORD. Just in time, God had a plan in place, he was just waiting on Hannah.

18 But Samuel ministered before the LORD, [being] a child, girded with a linen ephod.

Just in time, Samuel ministered before the LORD. Samuel was not even a man, but only a child, but Eli clothed him with the linen ephod of a priest. Samuel was faithful and true, to the LORD.

19 Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought [it] to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

Hannah would come every year and bring him a coat. Each year he got a new coat, because he had outgrown the old one.

20 And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife, and said, The LORD give thee seed of this woman for the loan which is lent to the LORD. And they went unto their own home. 21 And the LORD visited Hannah, so that she conceived, and bare three sons and two daughters. And the child Samuel grew before the LORD.

Hannah's prayer was answered in greater ways than she had ever hoped. God gave her five more children, three sons and two daughters. She now had six children. Her eldest Samuel would become the priest and a judge of all the land. Later her son would anoint two separate kings. All this happened because of the prayers of a mother named Hannah.