



# Church of God Sunday School

## HANNAH PRAYS FOR A SON: THE BOY SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1:1 — 3:21

There was a certain man named Elkanah (*el-KAY-nah*) who had two wives: Peninnah (*pih-NIN-ah*) and Hannah. (This was not God's will, and it caused Elkanah much trouble.)

Every year Elkanah would go to Shiloh (where the Ark of the Covenant was) to worship the Lord and offer sacrifices to Him. When Elkanah made his offering, he always gave Peninnah and her children a share of the meat, but to Hannah he gave a double portion, because Elkanah loved Hannah, even though she could not have children.

Hannah felt sad enough, in herself, that she could not have children, but every year, when they went to the house of God, Peninnah would purposely say things to upset her. Then Hannah would cry and not eat. This happened year after year.

One year Elkanah asked, "Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons?" And he was, but she wanted children, especially a son.

After the family "had eaten in Shiloh," Hannah rose up and went to pray. She was deeply troubled and very sad. She wept much and vowed a vow to the Lord, saying, "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 [the Nazarite law; see Numbers 6:5]."

Now Eli (*EE-lie*), the priest, was sitting "by a post of the temple." He saw Hannah praying and thought she had been drinking because her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. He did not realize that Hannah was praying in her heart to God, in deep earnestness. Eli said, "How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee."

Hannah told Eli that she was not drunk but with a "sorrowful spirit" was pouring out her soul to God. Eli told her, "Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him." Hannah was not sad anymore. She went away trusting that God would answer her prayer.

In the morning, after worshiping before the Lord, Elkanah and his family returned to their home. The Lord remembered Hannah, and in time she had a baby boy. Hannah called him Samuel, saying, "Because I have asked him of the LORD."

The next year, when Elkanah and his family were preparing to go to Shiloh for the yearly sacrifice, Hannah said, "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." Hannah was preparing to carry out her promise to the Lord. Elkanah told her to do as she wanted. So Hannah stayed at home until Samuel was weaned.

The day came when Samuel was entirely weaned; he was a very young child. When it came time for the yearly sacrifice, Hannah took Samuel, three bullocks, some flour, and a bottle of wine along with the rest of the things they were taking to sacrifice in Shiloh.

When they got there, they killed a bullock and presented Samuel to Eli, the priest.

Hannah said to Eli: "I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD." Hannah was so thankful to the Lord for answering her prayer! She offered up a song of thanksgiving, saying, "My heart rejoiceth in the LORD . . . ."

Samuel stayed there with Eli and "ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod [a priestly garment]." Every year after that, when Hannah came to Shiloh for the sacrifice, she

brought a new coat for Samuel.

God continued to bless Hannah for giving Samuel to Him, to do His work. She and Elkanah had three more sons and two daughters, but Samuel grew up before God in the temple.

Eli was very old, and his sons were wicked men. They committed terrible sins and demanded unlawful things of God's people. Eli knew of their wickedness. He had spoken to his sons about their wickedness and told them they should not do the things they did. But Eli's sons did not listen to their father, and Eli did not honor God enough to stop them from doing evil. Meanwhile, Samuel helped Eli every day, and Samuel had the favor of both God and man.

There came a day, however, when a man of God came to Eli. He told Eli that God was going to cut off him and his sons from the priesthood, for their evil ways. The man of God gave Eli a sign as to when his removal from the priesthood would happen. The sign was that both of Eli's sons would die in one day. God said, "Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." God was going to raise up a "faithful priest," a man after God's own heart.

One night, when Eli and Samuel were in their beds, the Lord called to Samuel. Samuel did not know that it was God calling him, for Samuel "did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him." So he ran to Eli, thinking Eli had called him, and said, "Here am I."

Eli said, "I called not; lie down again." Samuel went back to bed, but again, the Lord called, "Samuel." Samuel returned to Eli, saying, "Here am I; for thou didst call me." Samuel thought to himself that surely Eli must realize that he had called for him, but

Eli said, "I called not, my son; lie down again."

When the Lord had called to Samuel for the third time, Eli finally realized that God was the One calling the boy. Eli told Samuel to lie down, one more time, and when he heard the call again, he was to say, "Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth." So Samuel went and lay down, waiting. (What would you have been thinking if you were Samuel?)

The Lord did come again. He stood by Samuel and said, "Samuel, Samuel."

Samuel replied, "Speak; for thy servant heareth."

God began to tell Samuel of all the sad things that were going to come on Eli, Eli's sons, and Eli's family, because Eli knew about his sons' wickedness but would not keep them from doing it. Samuel lay on his bed until the morning, no doubt thinking of all that God had said. He was afraid to tell Eli.

In the morning, Samuel opened the doors of the temple; then Eli called for him. Eli wanted to know everything God had told Samuel. As frightened as Samuel was, he told Eli all that God had said. He hid nothing. Eli listened, and then he said, "It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good."

As Samuel grew, the Lord was with him. Samuel listened to God and did all that God told him to do.

"And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD."

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**MEMORY VERSE:**

*... and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth."*

*—1 Samuel 3:9*  
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