

BRYAN STATION BAPTIST CHURCH

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## HANNAH

### *The Woman Who Kept Her Promise*

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**Text:** I Samuel 1:1-2:11, "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: 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. 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. 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. 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 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. 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. 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. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and

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called his name Samuel, saying, *Because I have asked him of the LORD. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 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. 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. 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. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 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. 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. And he worshipped the LORD there. And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation. There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that*

*were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's and he hath set the world upon them. He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed. And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the LORD before Eli the priest."*

**INTRODUCTION:** In the lesson before us we have a family in worship; a family at church. And there is a scene created every time this family goes to church. We usually put our best foot first in church. We are usually on our good behavior in the house of God. There may be turmoil and strife at home, but there is the appearance of peace when the family is at church.

The period of Judges was a sad time in the history of Israel. It was marked by backsliding and repentance on the part of Israel; and deliverance from oppression on the part of God. Israel would go off into idolatry and God would turn them over to their enemies

who would oppress them; Israel would repent and God would raise up a deliverer who would be called a judge. The time of our lesson was near the end of the period of judges and religion was at a very low ebb. Eli the priest was old and weak and his sons Hophni and Phinehas conducted the services in the house of God. They were sons of Belial; children of the devil. They did not know God and yet officiated at the sacred altar. External holiness is the worst unholy-ness. These men stole from off the altar. They committed unspeakable sins. Eli was pious but weak. He only faintly remonstrated with his sons about their wickedness.

Elkanah, a Levite of Ramathaimzophim of the country of Ephraim, goes with his two wives and several children up to Shiloh to worship and to offer the sacrifices according to the law. The wives were Hannah and Peninnah. Hannah was childless, while Peninnah had a brood of children. Someone has said that Elkanah married Hannah for love and Peninnah for children. Polygamy is always a source of irritation, for no man can love two women at the same time. God did not originate or approve polygamy, but recognized and tolerated it. Deuteronomy 21:15-17, *"If a man have two*

*wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to*

*inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-*

**Observe Hannah's distress, prayer, faithfulness, and praise.**

*born, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his."*

Building the lesson around Hannah, we shall observe:

1. Hannah's Distress.
2. Hannah's Prayer.
3. Hannah's Faithfulness.
4. Hannah's Praise.

### **Hannah's Distress**

Hannah's distress was occasioned by being:

- a. Childless. She considered this a great affliction from the Lord.
- b. Provoked by Peninnah. Hannah was treated with contempt and made to fret by Peninnah.
- c. Loved by Elkanah. It was the custom that when a man made his peace offering to the Lord, a portion of it was returned to him, and this was a family feast. Hannah was so sad that she wept and refused to eat her portion - a double portion. And every time this family went to Shiloh, Elkanah would show his love to Hannah; this would cause Peninnah to provoke Hannah, who in turn would fret and cry and refuse to eat. What a scene in church!

### **Hannah's Prayer**

Hannah's prayer was characterized by:

- a. Importunity. She kept on praying. She would not give up calling on the Lord. Her crying was not so bad while she kept on praying.
- b. Sincerity. She spoke with her heart; her lips moved silently. Eli thought she was drunk and rebuked her. She convinces him she is not a bad woman and he wishes her success in her prayers.
- c. Making a vow. She promised God that if he would give her a son, she would give him back to

God for full time service. Conventional prayers usually say that God may have the glory, or that we will be grateful for His mercies, but Hannah promised to give her son to God. Ecclesiastes 5:5, "*Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*" But refusing to make a vow does not release from responsibility.

### **Hannah's Faithfulness**

She kept her promise to God. She paid her vow. She did not pay it with talk but in deed. After Samuel was born, Elkanah made his usual trip to Shiloh. Hannah did not go because she wanted to wait until she could literally redeem her pledge. She waited until Samuel was weaned and then she went up to Shiloh and delivered him to Eli to be reared in the house of God, and to do whatever his age and talents would permit.

### **Hannah's Praise**

Hannah's praise; it was a song of thanksgiving. We have:

- a. Her experience related in 2:1. "*...My heart rejoiceth in the LORD...*" Paul echoes this in Philippians 3:1, 4:4, "*Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord... Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice,*" "*mine horn is exalted in the LORD.*" The allusion seems to be the head dress in which maternal condition of women was indicated. Childless wives would wear a tin or silver horn on her head from which the veil was suspended. If a wife was childless she would wear the horn in a slanting or oblique position, but when she became a mother she would raise it to a higher or more perpendicular position. "*My mouth is enlarged over mine enemies.*" God's salvation opened her mouth. While childless she could do nothing but cry, but now she can praise God.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

b. God is exalted in His various attributes. He is recognized as holy and almighty and sovereign. He is pictured as victorious over His enemies and as the protector of His saints. Here is the first mention of the coming Messiah as the anointed one. In 2:10, "*he shall give strength unto his king, and exhalt the horn of his anointed.*"

Some lessons we should learn:

1. The evils of polygamy. God's approving will calls for monogamy; one man and one woman living in holy wedlock until death separates them.
2. The privilege of prayer. Philippians 4:6, "*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*"
3. The blessedness of motherhood. "*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb reward,*" Psalm 127:3.
4. The joy of faithfulness. We have Hannah's song of praise after she had fulfilled her vow and had presented Samuel to God. There is no real joy in disobedience.