

**A PERSONAL
VERSE-BY-VERSE COMMENTARY**

1 SAMUEL

**by
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1Samuel 1:1 ¶ 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:

1Samuel 1:2 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.

As the book of Samuel opens, we are introduced to Elkanah, son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, a man from the tribe of Ephraim. The man had two wives—Hannah, who was barren, and Peninnah, who had children. In the culture of that day, it was a mark of shame to be barren.

Psalms 127:3 "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward."

1Samuel 1:3 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.

1Samuel 1:4 And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:

1Samuel 1:5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb.

Elkanah was faithful to take his family to Shiloh every year to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts. Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, were in charge at that time.

Elkanah shared portions of the meat from the sacrifice with Peninnah and all her children, but he gave Hannah a greater portion because he loved her so much even though she was barren. It was acknowledged that it was the LORD that opened and closed wombs; and, for some reason, he had closed Hannah's.

This actually seems to support the conclusion by many commentators that Elkanah probably took an additional wife because Hannah was barren.

1Samuel 1:6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.

1Samuel 1:7 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.

1Samuel 1:8 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?

The second wife didn't hesitate to taunt Hannah for being barren; she probably really resented the fact that Elkanah obviously loved Hannah more than her. Hannah would get so depressed that she couldn't eat. Elkanah didn't understand why she was so sad and wouldn't eat. He thought that his love for her should make her happier than ten sons could.

1Samuel 1:9 ¶ 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.

1Samuel 1:10 And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore.

1Samuel 1:11 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.

One year, after they had partaken of the meal in Shiloh, Hannah headed to the temple of the LORD. Eli the priest was sitting outside by one of the temple posts. The Hebrew for “temple” states, “a large public building, such as a **palace** or temple.” We know it was the tabernacle, the place of God’s presence among the people; and God was their rightful King.

Hannah poured out her heart in prayer to the LORD. She vowed that if He gave her a son, she would give the boy back to the LORD to serve Him all the days of his life. She promised never to cut his hair. She was basically dedicating him as a Nazarite for life.

1Samuel 1:12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth.

1Samuel 1:13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken.

1Samuel 1:14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.

Eli noticed that Hannah’s lips were moving but was making no sound, and he thought she was drunk. She was just praying silently in her heart. Eli confronted her and asked her how long she had been drunk and told her to stop drinking.

I find that I pray more often silently than out loud. I learned long ago that Satan will use everything he can against us; and when I pray out loud, I am giving him access to best determine how to attack me or those I love based on those prayers. I take great comfort in knowing that the LORD hears the prayers of my heart.

1Samuel 1:15 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.

1Samuel 1:16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.

Hannah assured Eli that she was not drunk. She explained that she was filled with sorrow and had poured out her soul before the LORD. She begged him not to think of her as a wicked woman for privately sharing her great sorrow and grief with the LORD.

1Samuel 1:17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him.

1Samuel 1:18 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*.

Eli took pity on the woman and bid her go in peace; he also expressed his desire that the "God of Israel" grant her request. Hannah thanked Eli and left evidently considering the words of Eli as coming from the LORD. She once again began to eat and no longer displayed a sad countenance.

I liked Chuck Smith's comment about Hannah: "Herein is of course one of the marks of faith, acting as though you have it, before you actually have it....If I really believe the promises of God....my actions are gonna be in harmony with what I actually believe."

1Samuel 1:19 ¶ 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.

1Samuel 1:20 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.

After getting up early the next morning and going to worship the LORD (at the tabernacle seems to be implied), Elkanah and his family returned home. "The LORD remembered" Hannah, and she became pregnant. She eventually gave birth to a son, whom she named "Samuel," meaning "heard of God," because he was an answer to prayer.

Guzik offers this insight on God remembering Hannah: "To use the term **remembered** is an *anthropomorphism*, a way of explaining God's actions in human terms that *we* can understand, even if it doesn't perfectly describe God's action. It isn't as if God ever *forgot* Hannah, but it is proper to say He remembered her."

1Samuel 1:21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow.

1Samuel 1:22 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.

1Samuel 1:23 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 continued to take his family to make the yearly sacrifice in accordance with his vow, but Hannah stayed home with Samuel. She told her husband that she did not intend to go back to Shiloh until the boy was weaned. At that time she would take him to the tabernacle and present him for service as she had promised. Elkanah told her she could do as she thought right, and she did.

“only the LORD establish his word” – This sounds like Elkanah is asking the LORD to bless Samuel with health so that Hannah can fulfill her vow. The NLT takes the position, “may the LORD help you keep your promise,” implying that he knew it would be hard for her to give up her child.

1Samuel 1:24 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.

1Samuel 1:25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli.

1Samuel 1:26 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.

1Samuel 1:27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

1Samuel 1:28 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.

When Samuel had been weaned and still very young (probably 2-3 years old), she took him with her to the tabernacle in Shiloh. She also brought three bulls, one ephah of flour and a bottle of wine to offer in thanks for the gift of her child.

Guzik offers this insight on “three bulls” - “The fact that 1 Samuel 1:24 mentions three bulls brought to Shiloh but 1 Samuel 1:25 mentions only one being sacrificed (with some of the meat available for a fellowship meal) emphasizes that one of the bulls was specifically made as a burnt offering for the cleansing and consecration of little Samuel.”

They sacrificed one of the bulls and took the child to Eli. Hannah reminded Eli that she was the woman whom he had seen praying to the LORD. She then told him that her prayer had been to ask for this child, and God had answered that prayer. She continued by telling Eli that she had “lent” him to the LORD to serve Him for the rest of his life. So Samuel was left to serve the LORD at the tabernacle in Shiloh.