

# HANNAH'S GIFT—SAMUEL

Hannah cried out to God. She made a promise.  
What would God do? And would she keep her promise?

by Shelby Faith

*This is a story about a woman who was not able to have children. Others made her feel like she was no good because of this. She promised God that if He would make it possible for her to have a son, she would give him to God. She is an example of love, sacrifice and being faithful and thankful to God.*

## QUIZ TIME

Why was Hannah sad?

Every year Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, went to Shiloh to worship and offer sacrifices to the Lord. This was at the time of one of the annual feasts of God.

But theirs was a divided marriage. Elkanah had married two wives, which was against God's original purpose for marriage. The Bible doesn't say, but it may be that Elkanah married Hannah first. Then, perhaps because he had no children by her, he married Peninnah, who was able to have many children.

Peninnah was always being mean to Hannah. She made Hannah feel sad and miserable. Peninnah was especially mean when they went to Shiloh. She might have been jealous because Elkanah loved Hannah.

This year as they made their way to Shiloh, Hannah was even sadder than she had been other years. She had not been able to have a child for her husband. At that time, women who could not have children were looked down on.

Hannah cried openly. She was unable to eat. Elkanah loved her greatly, but he could not comfort her this time. "Why is your heart grieved? Am I not better to you than ten sons?" he asked (1 Samuel 1:8). He wanted her to know how much he loved her. He was hoping that would comfort her.

Hannah just sat by him, apparently not answering.

## A PROMISE TO GOD

Elkanah and the rest of their family finished their meal. Hannah slipped away and made her way to the tabernacle. Eli, the priest, was sitting nearby. She didn't speak to him. She just knelt down and began praying and weeping bitterly. She was only speaking within her heart. Her lips moved, but she didn't make a sound.

She promised God, "If You will give me a son, then I will give him to You all the days of his life."

Eli saw her lips moving but heard no voice. He thought she had drunk too much wine. He said, "How long will you be drunk?"

"No, I am not drunk. I'm a woman of sorrow. I poured out my heart to the Lord," Hannah answered.

Eli said, "Go in peace. God will give you what you have asked."

## QUIZ TIME

What did Hannah promise to God?

## GOD ANSWERS

Hannah immediately felt better. She returned to her husband. She felt happy now. Her appetite returned. She was sure God had heard her prayer, and she would have a son.

They left the next morning and returned to their home in Ramah.

God remembered Hannah's prayer. He gave her a son named Samuel, which means "heard by God." Hannah was full of happiness and thankfulness. She remembered her promise to God. She knew the time would come when she would have to give up Samuel and take him to live with Eli's family at the tabernacle. She loved the baby Samuel and took care of him until he was a young child.

Elkanah continued to go to Shiloh every year. But Hannah did not go up with him those years. She said, "I will not go until the child is weaned. Then I will bring him, so he may serve God."

Elkanah told her, "Do what seems best to you. Wait until you have weaned him."

Hannah stayed home and nursed her son until she had weaned him. Elkanah also loved his son, but he knew about Hannah's promise. He knew that Samuel would have to be given to God when he was old enough. Then Eli would teach and train him in the service of the Lord.

## SAMUEL SERVES GOD

At the right time, Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh to give the child into the service of the Lord. Hannah knew she had to keep her vow to God. (This was a very unusual event. God does not want parents to make such vows today. What God really wants is for us to always obey Him.)

She brought Samuel to Eli. Hannah told Eli that she was the woman who had prayed for a child, and the Lord had answered her prayer. She said, "I am giving him to the Lord as I vowed in my prayer."

Hannah then praised God. She was thankful God had blessed her with this son.

Samuel continued to grow in favor with God and men. He began serving before the Lord even though he was still a child.

Hannah was very happy to see Samuel when she came to the annual feasts. She brought him a little coat each year. Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah. He told them they would have other sons and daughters. They had three more sons and two daughters over the years. Hannah was blessed for her faithfulness to God.

The Lord talked to Samuel. All Israel knew that Samuel was chosen to be a prophet of the Lord. He served the Lord well and became one of the great prophets of Israel. Samuel judged Israel and taught the Lord's ways all the days of his life (1 Samuel 7:15).

## QUESTIONS

Here are some questions to think about or talk about as a family:

1. Is God happy when we pray to Him and trust Him?
2. A vow is a promise. Have you ever made a promise and didn't keep it? Is this right or wrong?
3. Does God tell us to promise to do something extraordinary for Him? Or does He want us to always obey Him but be very careful about what we promise?
4. Was God happy that Hannah trusted Him and was thankful to Him?

(This story is from 1 Samuel 1 and 2. For more of the story of Samuel's life as a prophet and judge, see the article "[Samuel the Prophet](#).")

### QUIZ TIME

How did God bless Hannah for her faithfulness?



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