

Samuel's Birth and Dedication

1 Samuel 1:19-28

1 Samuel 1:19-28 – *“Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. ²⁰ So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him from the LORD.” ²¹ Now the man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “Not until the child is weaned; then I will take him, that he may appear before the LORD and remain there forever.”*

²³ So Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD establish His word.” Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him. ²⁴ Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, “O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. ²⁸ Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD.” So they worshiped the LORD there.”

Background Notes

Hannah had vowed before the Lord that if God would give her a son, she would present him to the Lord as a Nazirite. *“Then she made a vow and said, “O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head” (v11).* In other words, Samuel would be a Nazirite for life. The Nazirite vow could be taken for a set period of time or for life (Numbers 6). In Samuel's case, it was for life. So we begin to notice Samuel's godly character in that he never tried to undo or escape from the lifelong vow that his mother made for him before he was born. Would you have accepted this lifelong vow, as Samuel did, or would you have tried to have it annulled?

After Samuel was born, Hannah didn't go up to the Tabernacle until after he was weaned. In those days, a child was often nursed for three years, so when Samuel was presented before the Lord, he was probably around three years old. Elkanah supported Hannah in this -- in fact, Elkanah's desire was that the Lord establish His Word (v23). The fact that Hannah took a bull -- or possibly three bulls -- to the Tabernacle for sacrifice shows how important this event was for her. This was no small sacrifice!

Notice the last verse of the chapter – “*So they worshiped the LORD there.*” This is a great example of family worship -- even little Samuel, at three years of age, worshiped the Lord. I trust that you parents and grandparents are equipping and encouraging your young children or grandchildren to worship the Lord!

Doctrinal Points

1. The prayers of godly mothers are answered in God’s way.

Hannah had prayed for a child, and God answered her prayers. Was this a miracle? Yes! God “opened her womb.” But notice that God used natural, normal means to bring about the birth of Samuel: “*And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him from the LORD” (v19-20).* God generally answers prayer in normal ways, using natural, normal means.

Don’t expect that God will answer your prayers in some dramatic, out-of-the-ordinary way! Although God sometimes answers prayer in dramatic ways, normally He just controls and times normal, natural events and circumstances to bring about answers to our prayers. For example, to answer prayers for healing, God normally uses the body’s natural healing functions. Even when God moves the hearts of people, it is often done through their response and reaction to normal and natural events. But here’s the point -- God answers our prayers in His way!

God answers the prayers of godly mothers, and He answers the prayers of other godly people as well. James 5:16 says, “*The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*” The fact that Hannah called her child Samuel shows that she recognized that his birth was an answer to her prayers. The name *Samuel* means “*heard of God.*”

Notice that our doctrinal point is: The prayers of godly mothers are answered in God’s way. God knows what is best for us; we may not. God has the big picture; we often do not. In Isaiah 55:8-9, God says, “*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.*” In this case, Hannah’s dedicated desires for a child lined up with God’s perfect ways, and her prayers were answered accordingly. But it’s not always that way. Sometimes God doesn’t answer our prayers the way that we hope or expect -- even when we pray with godly motives!

Here’s an illustration. Right now, I’m praying that the Lord will enable me to teach and record all the way through the entire Bible, in 15-minute expository teaching segments. It’s a big project – and at my present rate, it looks like I have about 25 more years to go! Now I believe that this is a godly desire, and that the Lord has given me this desire, and I trust that my prayers for strength and a life that’s long enough to finish the job are not prayed from selfish motives! But God’s ways and thoughts are higher than my ways and thoughts. Maybe the Rapture will be this year! And there are all kinds of other possibilities, right?

As we continue to pray for our desires, the Lord gives us insight as to His answer. I believe that the Lord brings us into tune with His mind as we pray, and that's why we should continue in prayer. We can be sure that God hears our prayers, and He will answer our prayers in **His** way and in **His** time – and that's always the best way in the long run! We may not fully realize His answers to our prayers until we get to heaven, but the prayers of godly people are answered in God's way.

2. The children of godly mothers are blessed in God's way.

We can be sure that Hannah, as a godly mother, continued to pray for her son Samuel -- and God blessed Samuel in God's way. Samuel didn't become a wealthy landowner in Israel -- not that kind of blessing! Look at 1 Samuel 3:21 and 4:1 - *"Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh, for the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD. And the word of Samuel came to all Israel."* Samuel was a prophet, and he was greatly used by God to turn the nation of Israel back to the Lord after the dark days of the Judges. What better blessing could a godly mother ask for?

"The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." That's not a verse in the Bible, so don't try to find it in your concordance! However, that saying does contain a biblical principle. We see it that principle in operation right here. Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord, and the course of Israel was changed as a result. Talk about blessing! Children of godly mothers are blessed in God's way.

Mothers -- pray for God's blessing on your children! Your children can bring great glory to God as a result of your prayers. Don't just pray for their health and their mental and social development. Those things are important, but pray especially for their spiritual development! Pray that God would save them at a young age. Pray that the Lord would help you to raise them in the ways of God. Pray that the Lord would develop their spiritual gifts, the gifts that are already there. When a person receives Christ, even at an early age, their spiritual gifts are there, and they need to be developed. Pray that your children would affect the world around them for the glory of God.

If your child rebels against you and the Lord, even the discipline the Lord brings into his or her life is the blessing of God in response to your prayers as a godly mother. I'm convinced that a major factor in every blessing of God in my life is related in some way to the prayers of my godly mother and my godly grandmothers. The children of godly mothers are blessed in God's way.

Practical Application

Mothers, are you willing to give up your children to the Lord?

Hannah didn't change her vow once Samuel was born. Her vow was not a "foxhole" commitment! When the child was born, she kept the vow, and she gave Samuel to the Lord. Notice that some translations use the phrase "loaned" in verse 28: *"Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be lent to the LORD."* That's really the right

and biblical concept. Mothers, when you give your children to the Lord, you don't lose them -- you loan them to the Lord! Would you rather loan your children to the Lord, or lose them to the world? I think the answer is obvious!

Some Christian mothers are not willing to give their children to the Lord. I know of a Christian mother who didn't want her daughter to leave home and serve the Lord as a missionary in a foreign country. She was unwilling to give up her child to the Lord. I know of another situation in which Christian parents discouraged their children from coming to Emmaus Bible College to study the Bible. Why? Because the world's colleges would better prepare their children for getting a good job and having a good career! Their attitude was, "You can study the Bible later, but right now you've got to get on with your life." What kind of "Christian worldview" is that -- "you've got to get on with your life!?" What better foundation for life than to get some solid training in the Word of God? Those parents were not ready to give up their children to the Lord.

I also know of a godly mother and father who wanted their son to take over the family business, but they gave him up to the Lord, and encouraged him in his desire to serve the Lord full time. This was quite a sacrifice on their part, because their business suffered by not having the input of their very capable and knowledgeable son. But they gave him up to the Lord.

It wasn't easy for Hannah to walk away and leave her little son at the Tabernacle, but Hannah has a place of honor in Scripture forever because she gave her son to the Lord! Mothers -- are **you** willing to give up your children to the Lord?