

**Message #4****I Samuel 1:19-28**

Over the years, I have read lots of books on many interesting subjects. I went through a period when I read books on western history. One of the stories that intrigued me was the gunfight that took place in Tombstone, Arizona. In fact, Mary and I have actually been there twice to see the place where the gun fight at the O.K. Corral took place. Now from seeing this place and from reading histories on it, I have concluded that when Wyatt Earp, his brother Morgan and Virgil and Doc Holliday got into that gunfight with the Clanton's, McLaury 's and Billy Claiborne, they had absolutely no idea as to the part of western history this would play. They were simply going to disarm a group of thugs in an alley and what happened is one of the most celebrated moments in western history.

I am totally and completely convinced that Elkanah and Hannah had no idea as to the magnitude of what was about to take place connected to the history of Israel.

There is no way that Elkanah or Hannah could realize the historical and theological significance of what was really happening here.

All Hannah knew when she traveled to Shiloh again is that she wanted a baby and she prayed and asked God for a baby. She had gone to the Temple to pray to ask God to give her a son and she promised God that if He would give her a son, she would give the boy back to Him to serve God. What she had no way of knowing is that this baby she will have will be "the" man who will become a man who will change Israel's history. He will become a priest of God, a prophet of God and he will appoint kings for Israel.

What we see here is this:

**GOD ANSWERED HANNAH'S PRAYER AND HANNAH FOLLOWED THROUGH ON WHAT SHE VOWED TO GOD AND, AS A RESULT, SAMUEL BECAME A GREAT LEADER FOR GOD.**

This is so important to see. When we are involved in something big for God, we probably will not realize it. All we will know is we are being faithful to God and it is in this very context that God blesses and accomplishes great things.

Now as we look at these verses, there are three key epoch moments that we see:

**EPOCH MOMENT #1 – Hannah's prayer is answered. 1:19-20**

The next morning after the prayer incident with Eli, the family got up early and worshipped the Lord and then they returned home. They made the twenty mile trip from Shiloh back to Ramah. Carefully observe that "Ramah" in **verse 19** is the same as "Ramathaim-zophim" in **verse 1**. Ramah is the most common name for this city.

According to **verse 19**, Elkanah was intimate with Hannah and the Lord remembered her prayer and she conceived and nine months later, she gave birth to a son, whom she named Samuel. So in the context of normal married life and intimacy between a man and wife, God answered the prayer.

When the text says, “the LORD remembered her,” it does not mean that He forgot them; it means He is specifically moving at this time to take action in view of her prayer. He was going to allow Hannah to have a baby.

Pregnancies and babies are from God. Abortion is murder and it is killing a life that has been sanctioned by God.

Shortly after Hannah gave birth “she named him.” She gave him the name Samuel (literally in Hebrew “Shimuel”). Usually a father was involved in picking the name, but in this case, Hannah gave the name.

Now the name Samuel has caused interpreters to carefully study the Hebrew. The problem is not with the end of his name “El” which means God; it is with the first part of his name.

The name Samuel (shimuel) sounds like a Hebrew verb that means “asked.” This explains why **verse 20** connects the name to “asked of the LORD.” But the actual word “ask” is “shi el” (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 798-799). Obviously there is no “m” in shi el.

On the other hand, a Hebrew word with the “m” in it is “Shem” which means name and “El” which means God. So when you combine these two words, the meaning of Samuel is one that means “a name from God.”

We suspect that both are true. Hannah gave Samuel this name because she had asked God to give her a son and God had done it and she is naming him this in honor of God. He will grow to serve the true God.

There are three observations we want to make from this:

**Observation #1** - Hannah was a woman who regularly went to worship God.

Prayer and worship go hand-in-hand. Going to worship services is a critical part of seeing God do great things with you and for you. Skip worship and you skip the will of God and when you skip the will of God, you will miss out on many things.

**Observation #2** - Hannah’s prayer request did not exclude human activity and responsibility.

God could give Hannah a baby, but she needed to have a physical relationship with her husband.

There is a saying that is true. It is our responsibility to do what is humanly possible and then leave the impossible to God (i.e. If you pray for a job, you must apply for a job; if you pray for a house; you must look for a house).

The way God answered her prayer was by the fact that she was intimate with her husband. This teaches us all a very important principle when it comes to the will of God. Robert Bergen, who is a Hebrew scholar, said, “In most miracles touching human lives, the Lord chooses to achieve his desired ends with the assistance of people” (*I & II Samuel*, p. 70).

**Observation #3** - Hannah gave all of the credit and glory to God for the answer to prayer.

Hannah knew God had done this for her and she gave God all of the glory and credit. She knew that God was the One who had done this and she testified of that.

**EPOCH MOMENT #2** – Hannah’s family continued to faithfully worship. **1:21-23**

Now we may assume that a year has passed and it is time once again for Elkanah to take his family to worship God (1:3). This was a family of integrity. When they promised to do something, they followed through with it.

We may make three observations about this:

**Observation #1** - Samuel’s father continued to faithfully worship God at Shiloh. **1:21**

We don’t exactly know what Samuel’s father’s vow was. It is possible that he promised God that if God gave a son to Hannah, he would go every year and sacrifice to the Lord. It is obvious that Elkanah was a man of his word.

**Observation #2** - Samuel’s mother did not go with him to worship God. **1:22**

The reason why Hannah did not go to worship was not because she didn’t feel like it. She promised God that she would bring her child and give him to the Lord to stay there forever. She had made this vow and she took that seriously (Eccl. 5:4-5).

She was not going to take Samuel to the sanctuary until she could leave him there, as she had promised. A child was not considered to be weaned until at least 2-3 years old.

Hannah knew that once she took Samuel to the Temple, he would live there forever. She had made a promise to God and she would follow through with it when the time was right.

I am certain that she would make trips to see him, but she knew that once she dropped him off in Shiloh, she would not take him home with her.

**Observation #3** - Samuel's father supported Samuel's mother. **1:23**

Elkanah knew his wife would not do anything contrary to the Word or will of God, so he supported her decision. We may recall that once he learned of a vow, he could overrule it. But he chose not to overrule it, even though it would mean he would lose one of his sons.

He stood beside his wife's decision and he realized that this had been God who had done this and he also realized his wife had a perspective of the will of God in this.

**EPOCH MOMENT #3** – Hannah keeps her promise. **1:24-28**

According to **verse 24**, as soon as Samuel was weaned, Hannah followed through on what she promised God. This certainly is the greatest sacrifice a mother could ever make. As soon as Samuel was weaned, she took him to Shiloh.

More than likely what is described here about the offering was it was an offering designed to cover the time that they had not gone to worship. She was taking Samuel to the tabernacle for the first time and she was not going to be stingy about the offering.

According to the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls, she took with her a three-year-old bull. The Masoretic Hebrew text says she took three bulls.

She also took an ephah of flour and a jug of wine. According to the O.T. law in Numbers 15:8-10, when a bull was offered, only 3/10ths of an ephah of flour (about 6 quarts) and half a hin of wine were required (about 1/2 of a gallon). Hannah is bringing one full ephah of flour (almost 20 quarts) and an entire jug of wine. This was a very large and very generous offering.

By the way, for those who deal honestly and with integrity with the Word of God, the word "wine" (yayin) is the same word used in verses 14-15. It is a fermented wine that could get you drunk if you drank too much. Certainly we have a right to our own convictions about these things, but we do not have a right to tamper with the Word of God about them.

According to **verse 25**, they slaughtered the bull and then brought the boy to Eli. Now Eli is not the most spiritually-minded man. He was not the most spiritually fit man. Eli was old and he was not doing anything about the sin problems of his own boys. But Eli was still God's leader and Hannah honored him as such and followed through with what she promised to do.

According to **verses 26-27**, Hannah reminded Eli who she was. She reminded him that she was the woman who stood praying by Eli. She did not bring up the fact that he accused her of being drunk.

In **verse 27**, she informed Eli that she had prayed for this boy and that God had answered her prayer.

She also informed him that she had promised God if He would give her a son, she would dedicate him to His service. That word “dedicate” (v. 28) is one that means to give her son over to the Lord.

She gave up her only son to the Lord because she had promised God that this is what she would do.

**Verse 28** says, “and he worshipped the LORD there.” This is a reference specifically to Samuel. Although certainly Hannah would have led the way in the worship.

This is so interesting because the birth of Samuel is focused more on his mother than on him.

### **PARTING LESSONS:**

1. Those who will see God do great things and powerful things will be those who are people of prayer and worship.
2. Those who will see God do great things and powerful things will be those who are people of their word. They follow through on what they promise.
3. Those who will see God do great things and powerful things will be people who take responsibility to do what they can do.