Research: Hannah and Samuel

I Sam 1:2, 8-11, 13, 17-20, 28

**Shiloh** was a city in ancient Israel, situated north of Bethel and south of Shechem in the hill-country between the territory of the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim (Judg 21:19).

Shiloh was the religious capital of Israel during the times of the Judges.

It was an assembly place for the people of Israel and a center of worship from the time of Joshua, after the conquering of Canaan. After the 12 tribes settled in the Land of Israel, five of them were given territory on the east side of the Jordan river. The remaining seven met at Shiloh to draw lots to see where each tribe could permanently settle.

Shiloh became one of the leading religious shrines in ancient Israel, a stature it held until shortly before David’s elevation of the city of Jerusalem.

In Talmudic sources, the tent tabernacle remained at Shiloh for 369 years until the Ark of the Covenant was taken into the battle camp at Eben-ezer (I Sam. 4:3-5) and captured by the Philistines at Aphek.

The biblical story of Shiloh perhaps begins with the story of Samuel, the great prophet, and leader during ancient Israel’s transition from the period of the judges to the time of the David’s United Kingdom. Samuel was the last of the judges, and he anointed Israel’s first two kings – Saul and then David. Samuel carried out three vital roles, prophet, priest, and judge, at the same time.

At the time of Samuel, the condition of Israel was deplorable; there was no recognized leader, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. Before Samuel’s birth, his father Elkinah and his two wives: Peninnah and Hannah, came to Shiloh once a year to offer a sacrifice at the tabernacle.

Hannah had long remained childless, and since this was thought to be a direct reproach from God, she was very heavy and depressed about it. Finally, she prayed near the altar that she might bear a son. (information from Wikipedia

2Hannah had no children.

8Then 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?

**Eklanah** in Hebrew is *Elqanah* which means “whom God created; God has possessed.”

“**Hannah** in Hebrew is *Channah* which means “grace; favored.”

“Oughtest thou not to value my love to thee more than the having as many sons as Peninnah hath; who would willingly change conditions with thee? In Elkanah here we have an example of a most excellent husband; who patiently bore with the insolent humour of Peninnah, and comforted dejected Hannah with words full of tender affection” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

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.

**Shiloh** in Hebrew is *Shiyloh* which means “place of rest,” a city of Ephraim and temporary home of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle, the place where Samuel grew up,

“tranquility; “the scepter shall not depart from Judah until tranquility shall come and the peoples shall obey him (Judah). Gen 49:10. When the enemies are subdued, and he shall rule over many people; an expectation belonging to the kingdom of the Messiah, who was to spring from the tribe of Judah.

“Hannah, in the bitterness of her spirit, could not enjoy her feast, and so, after eating and drinking a little, she arose and went to the temple, leaving her husband and Peninnah and her children at table, where she still found them on her return [1 Samuel 1:18](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/1-18.htm).

“Upon a seat ... - Rather, "upon the throne," the pontifical chair of state [1 Samuel 4:13](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/4-13.htm), which was probably set at the gate leading into the inner court of the tabernacle” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Barnes’ Notes).

“**By a post of the temple,**i.e. of the tabernacle, which is called the temple here, and [1 Samuel 3:3](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/3-3.htm) [2 Samuel 22:7](http://biblehub.com/2_samuel/22-7.htm) [Psalm 27:6](http://biblehub.com/psalms/27-6.htm); as, on the contrary, the temple is called the tabernacle, [Jeremiah 10:20](http://biblehub.com/jeremiah/10-20.htm) [Lamentations 2:6](http://biblehub.com/lamentations/2-6.htm). And although this tabernacle was but a tent, yet it was supported by boards and posts, and especially at the entrance, by which Eli sat, even by the entrance into the outward court, otherwise he could not have seen Hannah” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

10And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

“And she was in bitterness of soul,.... Because of her barrenness, and the taunts and reflections she had met with on that account; her life was bitter to her, she could take no pleasure in any of the comforts of it:

“and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore; her prayer was with strong crying and tears; it was very fervent and affectionate; she prayed most vehemently, and wept bitterly. This perhaps was about the time of the evening sacrifice, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God, at the door of the tabernacle, or near it, as it should seem by the notice Eli took of her, who sat there” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Gill’s Exposition).

11And 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.

“She thrice calls herself God’s handmaid, out of a profound sense of her meanness, and his majesty. And she desires a man-child, because only such could wait upon the Lord in the service of the tabernacle, as she intended her son should do, if God bestowed one upon her. *Then will I give him unto the Lord*— That is, consecrate him to his service in his house. *No razor shall come upon his head —*He shall be a perpetual Nazarite, part of whose description this is, [Numbers 6:5](http://biblehub.com/numbers/6-5.htm)” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

13Now Hannah, she spake in her heart

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

“*Eli said, Go in peace,*&c. — Her modest and respectful answer fully satisfied him, and he prayed that God would grant her petition, or, as the Chaldee interprets his words, assured her, that the God of Israel would grant it her. *Let thy handmaid find grace in thy sight —*

“That favourable opinion and gracious prayer which thou hast expressed on my behalf, be pleased to continue toward me” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

18And 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*.

“*Her countenance was no more sad —*Her heart being cheered by the priest’s comfortable words, and especially by the Spirit of God applying them to her mind, and inspiring her with confidence, that both his and her prayers would be heard, she departed from the tabernacle with such satisfaction and assurance, that there no longer remained any token of sorrow or grief in her countenance” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).

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.

“Elkanah and his family had a journey before them, and a family of children to take with them, yet they would not move till they had worshipped God together. Prayer and provender do not hinder a journey. When men are in such haste to set out upon journeys, or to engage in business, that they have not time to worship God, they are likely to proceed without his presence and blessing” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Matthew Henry’s Commentary).

20Wherefore 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.

“**bare a son**. So the meaning is, That although her husband knew her conjugally at his return, and God was minded of her, and intended in his time to give her his blessing, yet she did not conceive at first, but after some days or time afterwards.

**“And called,**i.e. she called, not doubting of her husband’s consent to the name. The names of children were given to them sometimes by their fathers, and sometime by the mothers” (www.biblehub.com, Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

“**And called his name Samuel**.—The words translated “because I have asked him of the Lord,” do not explain the meaning of the name “Samuel·” they simply give the reason for his mother so calling him. The name Sh’muel (Samuel) is formed from the Hebrew words *Sh’mua El*(*a Deo exauditus*)*,*“heard of God.” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Ellicott’s Commentary).

28Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord.

“**I have lent him to the Lord,**or, given him, &c., i.e. do now give or offer him; for she did not lend him for a time, with a purpose or right to require him again. The words may be rendered thus, *And I also asked him, or made myself to ask him*. (a usual Hebraism,)*for the Lord*, i.e. I prayed for this child, not only for myself, and to take away my reproach, but especially that I might have a child to serve and devote to the Lord. And so the following words,

**“as long as he liveth,**are not to be joined with this foregoing clause, but with those which come next after them; and that whole clause may be thus rendered, as a consequent upon the former: *And*, or *therefore all the days in which he is, or shall be, he* is or shall be lent or given to the Lord; or, as one *begged for the Lord*, and for his service, and therefore justly given to him.

**“He shall be lent,**or *rendered*, or *used as one given in my prayer*; for this was the condition of my prayer, that he should be the Lord’s” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

I Sam 2:1, 2

1And 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.

“These true, beautiful thoughts the Spirit of the Lord first planted in Hannah’s heart, and then gave her lips grace and power to utter them in the sublime language of her hymn, which became one of the loved songs of the people, and as such was handed down from father to son, from generation to generation, in Israel, in the very words which first fell from the blessed mother of the child-prophet in her quiet home of “Ramah of the Watchers.”

**“My heart rejoiceth.**—The first verse of four lines is the introduction to the Divine song. She would give utterance to her holy joy. Had she not received the blessing at last which all mothers in Israel so longed for?

**“Mine horn is exalted.**—She does not mean by this, “I am proud,” but “I am strong”—mighty now in the gift I have received from the Lord: glorious in the consciousness “I have a God-Friend who hears me.” The image “horn” is taken from oxen and those animals whose strength lies in their horns. It is a favourite Hebrew symbol, and one that had become familiar to them from their long experience—dating from far-back patriarchal times—as a shepherd-people” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Ellicott’s Commentary).

2*There is* none holy as the Lord: for *there is* none beside thee: neither *is there* any rock like our God.

“*There is none holy as the Lord —*None so perfectly, unchangeably, and constantly holy. *None besides —*Not only none is so holy as thou art, but in truth there is *none holy besides thee;*namely entirely, or independently, but only by participation from thee. *Any rock —*Thou only art a sure defence and refuge to all that flee to thee” ([www.biblehub.com](http://www.biblehub.com), Benson Commentary).