

# Giving Thanks for Answered Prayer

## Hannah

### Foundation

#### Bible passage: 1 Samuel 1

Hannah very much wanted to have children with her husband Elkanah, but they did not have any. However, Elkanah did have children by another wife, Penninah and she made things much worse for Hannah by her taunting. It may be simpler just to focus on Hannah.

At that time the Ark of the Covenant was still in Shiloh, this was a full generation before what we read about in the previous unit. It was the custom following God's command for people to make regular visits to the Tabernacle of Meeting, and we are told how on one of these visits Hannah prayed fervently. As she did so she wept bitterly (v10) and promised that if the Lord gave her a son she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life (v11).

When Eli, the High priest saw Hannah he mistook her fervent prayer for being drunk, but when she explained her anguish he prayed for her. As a result Hannah conceived and had a son whom she called Samuel. The name is related to the Hebrew word *shama* meaning "heard" and *El* meaning "God" - so Samuel means something like "heard by God". Hannah then kept her promise once the boy was old enough. She took him to Shiloh and left him with Eli the High Priest so that he could serve in the Tabernacle.

It was a hard promise for Hannah to keep. She had desperately wanted a son but now had to let him go and she would only see him on trips to Shiloh. It would also have been hard for Samuel, though probably not all that unusual. But Samuel would have a key part in the history of Israel. He

*Samuel Dedicated by Hannah at the Temple by Frank W.W. Topham (1838-1924)*



was the last of the line of judges, a faithful leader of the people through a difficult time, and a great prophet who was used not only to speak to the people from God but also anoint their first two kings.

In chapter 2 verses 1 to 10 we read Hannah's prayer after "lending" Samuel to the Lord. In it she rejoiced in the Lord and His goodness, not simply because of what He had done for her, but because of His goodness and grace more generally.

"My heart exults in the LORD"

#### Booklet:

What did Hannah give thanks for? - Answered prayer.

How did Hannah's promise show how grateful she was to God?

#### Reflection:

Are you more thankful for things that you really want?

In what ways can we show just how thankful we are?



**When Hannah's prayer was answered she rejoiced, but she also "lent" Samuel to the Lord as she had promised.**