

HANNAH

by Frank Wallace

Wallace's biographical study of Hannah from 1 Samuel examining her desire for a son, her passionate prayer and vow, God's answer, her faithfulness, and the results that blessed both her family and Israel, illustrating the power and importance of prayer in God's purposes.

7 Chapters

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3. The Importance of Prayer

The Importance of Prayer The story of Hannah is a very interesting one. We can view the incident of the prayer in three ways, first of all as an actual occurrence so full of interest to see how the Lord wrought with His servant, then prophetic, it looks on to that wonderful day when God's anointed, God's King, Christ, the Son of God will have supremacy in this world and all the enemies of God overthrown, then its application to us today, and this is what we are particularly concerned about that we might get some encouragement in this matter of prayer.

Individually and collectively, we are all concerned about spiritual progress. We continually hear of decline in one way or another. Praise God, there are spots where the Lord seems to be blessing, but in the general run of things it seems to be the other way, and we desire to see a change, and how are we going to do this? We believe that prayer is one of the best things that we can be occupied with. In order to make things better there are three things that we can do,

first of all, and I believe the most important, is that we can pray,

secondly we can talk about the truth and encourage each other in it (maybe we have to adjust our thinking), but if we talk about the truth in humility and in love towards each other then I am sure the Lord helps us,

thirdly, when we know the truth then we can be an example of it. This is always a means of making things better.

4. Hannahs Desire

Hannah's Desire

"Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite: and he had two wives; the name of the one was Hannah and the name of the other Peninnah: and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the Lord, were there. And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: but unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion: for he loved Hannah: but the Lord had shut up her womb. And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the Lord had shut up her womb. And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the Lord, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. Then 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?"(1 Samuel 1:1-8)

Now, we want to view this in the context that we find it, a woman beset by adversaries, a woman sorrowing bitter in soul because she had not received what she desired. We know from the book of Daniel that the Jewish women desired to give birth to a son, and that son they hoped would prove to be the Messiah, the long promised One to Israel. Every Jewish mother longed for this, that she might be the one whom God would use to bring into being the Messiah. So for a Jewish woman to be barren was a great reproach to her.

Here we find that it was God who had closed up her womb, I believe to test her faith and to cause her to pray in the way she did in order that she might be an example for us of prayer and perseverance and answer and response to God. Oh, what a wonderful story it is. So Hannah was persecuted and ridiculed and how deeply she felt it. She might have gone to her husband and complained of the treatment, but in verse 10 she prayed unto the Lord and she wept sore.

I have to ask myself, as I ask you, when was the last time you shed tears in relation to the testimony? When did you feel your spiritual condition so low, or the condition of the Christian testimony so low that it produced real tears and sorrow? We think of a man like Paul who spoke about reminding the saints night and day for three years with tears. We read about this constantly in the life of this devoted man, and we have to ask ourselves, do we ever feel like this? How callous and how cold our hearts can be! Yet I believe the Lord would stir us up to be concerned, that our hearts might be malleable, if you like, softened, to be concerned deeply about the prosperity of His interests.

Here it was a very personal matter with Hannah, and she prayed and she wept. As the Lord looked down on this dear woman, no doubt on bended knee in His presence, in privacy, and crying out her heart, how He would have appreciated such a condition. It was not just a read prayer,

something that was repeated verbally again and again and again, a reiteration of the same phrases, I do not think it would be that kind of prayer, it would be a prayer from her heart, real genuine concern, a crying to the Lord to reverse the situation she was in for her own blessing, and as we shall see, for the interests of the Lord, and so she prayed and she wept.

5. Hannahs First Prayer and Vow

Hannah's First Prayer and Vow

"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. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore. And 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." (1 Samuel 1:9-11)

She did a remarkable thing, she made a specific request. It was not a general prayer, it was a specific request. She said, 'Lord, I want a man child, and if I get him I will give him back to you, he will be yours forever'. She was prepared to receive what her heart yearned for and then to give it back to the Lord. What a remarkable woman! What earnestness of desire! What insight to see what would please the Lord, and she made this definite decision, which means, as far as we are concerned, that our prayers are not self-centred; we are praying for the Lord's interests.

What a man Samuel was! He was the product of prayer; he was the product of care on the part of his mother, and no doubt by his father, and what a man he became, a man of God, the prophet in Israel, the last of the judges, instrumental in presenting God's king to Israel, David, the son of Jesse. That dear woman did not know what she was praying for in the full sense when she prayed for a man child and God gave her her desire, and it might be the same with us if we are really concerned about the Lord's interests, to pray for them in the spirit of self sacrifice, in the spirit of desire to do something for the Lord that will stand the test of time and promote His interests in a deeper and fuller way.

If we analysed our prayers, and if it were possible for them to be played back to us on a recorder, I think we would be astounded to see how we ourselves are the centre of our prayers, our interests, our desires, and so small a portion of them centred on the interests of our God and Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! I think I am saying the truth, at least I will speak for myself, oh how we need to get orientated into the desires of God, the interests of God and pray earnestly in relation to them!

Having made this tremendous vow, and not only would she have a man child, and return him to the One who gave him to her, but she would bring him up in such a way that he would be thoroughly and absolutely devoted to the Lord; she would bring him up as a Nazarite. I wonder how many parents have received children from the Lord and perhaps made a reservation that they would bring them up in the fear of Him and then, in the course of time, that desire perhaps had faded away and perhaps the teaching was not given as it should have been? But Hannah was true to her vow, and she brought up Samuel so that when he was presented to the Lord he had been brought up properly and was a fit instrument His hand, he was a true Nazarite indeed.

I have never had children, I do not know the problems involved in bringing them up, so I cannot speak with experience, I can only state what the Scriptures state, and it seems to me that here

was a woman who was thoroughly devoted to the interests of the Lord and the thing that was nearest to her heart, this man child that she longed for so much, would willingly be given back to Him, and not in a haphazard way, but a fit present to give to Him, brought up as a Nazarite and brought up to serve Him. Is it not one of the saddest things in the history of the testimony as we know it, what God has given to us to defend, the truth of the assembly, the free action of the Headship of Christ and the Holy Spirit and all the truths connected with this, how few of the children of the saints continue in this pathway? Theoretically it should be the reservoir that should be drawn upon to fill up the ranks. I cannot make any accusation against any of the parents as to why this should be so, I can only observe the fact and see that it is so. Oh, what a sad thing it is. I can only grieve with the parents over this kind of thing.

6. The Lord answers Hannahs Prayer

The Lord answers Hannah's Prayer

"And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And 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. 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. Wherefore 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.

" (1 Samuel 1:12-20) So this dear woman after having made this vow, continued praying before the Lord. She continued praying; not like a prayer that can be put in the files and can be drawn out at some convenient moment, a continuance in prayer, the desire of the heart so active in this way. Prayer, prayer, prayer. I do not know how long she prayed, but she continued in prayer, and having made the desire, having expressed her vow, having expressed her determination to do this, she continued in it until the time came when she got peace and assurance. The bitterness passed away. The priest said to her, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel will grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him".

How easy it is to be mistaken. Eli was a priest of the Lord, and he thought she was drunk because her lips were moving but he did not hear any sound! She was acting in a way that indicated she was intoxicated, but he was wrong, absolutely wrong. She was praying earnestly to the Lord, and she expressed this to him, and then he saw that here was a woman with real desires and he gave her the blessing of the Lord "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition".

Look at the change - "So the woman went her way and did eat and her countenance was no more sad". I believe there are times when we pray about matters, I think I can humbly say that I have known this in my experience, that there are times when we pray and we know that our prayer has been heard and it is going to be answered. All that we have to do is to wait in patience until the Lord's time comes. I often say there are three answers to our prayers - yes, no and wait. It is the waiting that is the testing time. But she continued on in her praying and then she received this confirmation from the servant of the Lord, 'Yes, your prayer will be answered', and her countenance was changed, no more sad, and she ate (it would seem that she had been fasting) and she went on her way rejoicing.

Look at the result, "They rose up in the morning early and worshipped before the Lord and returned to their house in Ramah and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife and the Lord remembered her". The first thing is husband and wife worship together. That is a happy thing when the home life is of such a character, where husband and wife are devoted to the Lord's interests and they can worship together, pray together, consider the Lord's interests together. What a happy home that kind of home is! The Lord's blessing is there, there is a response to the Lord, the Lord's interests are cared for there, and that is the kind of home that the Lord is welcome in. At Bethany, in the house of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, the Lord was welcome and they made Him a supper, and I am sure they knew something about worship and prayer as He was in their midst. So it was with Elkanah and his wife Hannah, they "worshipped the Lord and the Lord remembered Hannah". This is the great thing. Think of a God who hears our prayers, takes account of the motives, and the desires. In the epistle of James he says, "Ye ask, and receive not" (4:3). How often we have to say that is true of our prayers - we ask and receive not, why says James, "because ye ask amiss that ye might consume it in your lusts".

I do not suppose that any of us are praying for any great things in this world, but the motive might be wrong in our prayers, somewhere in the prayer there is that little worm of self. I do not think the Lord countenances these prayers. So James says you have to ask in faith. A double minded man does not receive anything from the Lord. It is this purpose, this motive that is behind the prayer, the desire for the Lord's glory and for the Lord's interests. This is why we find this statement in connection with Hannah "the Lord remembered Hannah", and now the wheels began to move so that Hannah's prayer could be answered.

We find that the child is born and he is given a name, Samuel. That would be a continual reminder that Hannah's prayer had been answered, she asked him of the Lord and the Lord gave him to her. There was the continual reminder that Hannah had prevailed in prayer and the Lord had remembered her and had blessed her. This is a very wonderful thing and I am sure very many Christians have experienced this blessing. They have received what they have prayed for in relation to the Lord's interests. I believe that the Christian testimony is borne up in power by the prayers of many, many who are praying in their homes, elderly people, they are never reaching the public eye, but volumes of prayer ascending to God and God listening to them.

We remember revivals in the islands in the north of Scotland that were the result of prayer, some few saints gathering together and crying to the Lord to bring revival. When I was in America last year I went to a very large meeting in New York consisting mainly of black people, and I was told that at one point there was one brother and fifteen sisters, so when it was prayer meeting night they had one prayer. Well, then the sisters got together to have a prayer meeting, which meant fifteen prayers. There are over 150 in fellowship in that meeting today. It is wonderful what the Lord can do when there is definite exercise. So this is the kind of thing that we find here in this chapter, the Lord remembered Hannah. The prayer was real, it was a proper motive, the Lord honoured it and there was a visible witness that her prayer had been answered. Her son Samuel, meaning "asked of the Lord".

7. Hannahs Faithfulness in Relation to her Vow

Hannah's Faithfulness in Relation to her Vow

"And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever. And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou hast weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh: and the child was young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord. For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshipped the Lord there." (1 Samuel 1:21-28)

Well, Elkanah went up to worship but Hannah remained to home, she said, 'I am going to wean the child'. It would have been very easy for her to give the child immediately. 'No,' she said, 'I will wean the child'. Mothers know that there is a long process involved before the child is weaned, and the child gets entwined in the affections, the child becomes part of the mother, well the child is part of the mother, but more and more as the mother cares for the child before this time of weaning comes. I believe this indicates the extent of the sacrifice that Hannah made. She handed him over to the Lord thoroughly weaned. Oh how she loved him, and how she cared for him, as we see in the succeeding chapters, preparing a garment for him year by year as he grew and given to the Lord and given to the Lord's servant and what a man he became! When she had weaned him she took him up with her with three bullocks and an ephah of flour and a bottle of wine and brought him unto the house of the Lord at Shiloh and the child was young. I think this indicates to us that there was a very definite response to God. God had done his part, now says Hannah, we will do our part, and I believe the bullocks would be burnt offerings, the flour indicates the meal offering and the wine indicates the drink offering, and the drink offering is always associated with joy. The Lord has His part, the offerer has his part, a mutual matter of joy. Having received this blessing from the Lord, Hannah and her husband responded unto the Lord with worship and thanksgiving.

Then she gave testimony to Eli, "For this child I prayed and the Lord has given me my petition which I asked of him, therefore have I also leant him to the Lord as long as he liveth shall he be leant to the Lord", and note what it says, "and he (that is Eli) worshipped there". Here is worship, fellowship in worship. Hannah and her husband worshipped, Eli as he saw the result of the prayer worshipped. What a wonderful thing prayer is. What wonderful things it produces, a response to God, response in worship and praise, all involved in it, those who receive the blessing, the priest of the Lord, so happy in his soul that he saw this answer to prayer and he worshipped too.

8. Hannahs Second Prayer

Hannah's Second Prayer

"And 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. There is none holy as the Lord: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed....." (1 Samuel 2:1-3) I want to divide this prayer up very simply:

Verses 1 to 3 refer specifically to the greatness of God;

verses 4 to 8 indicate the God who can change things; and then from

verses 9 to 10 we find a prophetic reference to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

But first of all these opening verses 1 to 3, "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord... I rejoice in thy salvation". It was indeed salvation; a very practical result of prayer, very definite evidence that God would save this woman from bitterness and from the reproach of her enemy and He changed things in such a remarkable way that she prayed and praised, as I believe we could rightly connect with this prayer. This prayer was all about the Lord - her strength was in the Lord, her exaltation was in the Lord, He was the One who had brought about salvation. There is no mention of what she had done in prayer, it is rather what God had done as a result of her prayer. She gave God the glory. Is not this true of the prayer the Lord taught the disciples to pray - God first; this is always right in prayer, God's interests first and then the interests of others, and then our own personal interests, and so here Hannah, intuitively knowing what was right, glorified the God who had done so much for her. We find this in the Old Testament, we find it in the New Testament, praise God, we find it in our own experience.

It is one of the ways to warm our hearts when we bend our knees in prayer, not immediately to embark upon our requests for help or support or guidance, but just for a few moments to be engaged with the greatness of God Himself, just to let something enter into our souls of the greatness of the One to whom we are speaking, whether it is the Lord personally, or whether it is to God our Father, and doing these things in the power of the Spirit. We are exhorted to pray in the Spirit and I believe this is the way we pray in the Spirit, by addressing God the Father, by addressing God the Son, by His power and service, so that we say the things that are consistent with Their glory and greatness. This warms our hearts when first of all we recognise Their greatness and glory and supremacy, so small and puny as we are, and yet privileged to speak to Them in freedom and in liberty, with some intelligence in our souls as to Their greatness and yet who are we that can speak to them? And yet this is the wonder of the salvation that God has secured for us, that we can speak as if there was someone in our presence, some friend of ours, speaking to them face to face. This is the wonder of the communion today, God is not a God who is far off, He is a God who is near, hears our petitions, is glad to have us in His presence, glad to listen to what we have to say, and I believe pre-eminently, to hear us say how great He is, how

wonderful He is, possessed of illimitable power, and our desires are so small in one sense compared to the greatness of the operations that He has in hand, and so very often the things that loom so great in our vision are so small when we bring them to God. You remember when David went into the presence of God, "Who am I" he said, "that should be in the presence of this great God? What is my house that I should ask for it in the way I am asking?" But he said, "Thy condescending gentleness hath made me great" (2 Samuel 22:36). What a wonderful statement to make in the presence of God. So Hannah went on to say, "there is none holy as the Lord for there is none beside thee, neither is there any rock like our God". If I have iniquity in my heart Scripture says, God will not hear me. Read through the book of Proverbs and you will find again and again statements to that effect that the prayers of the unrighteous are an abomination to God. Moral condition is a tremendous necessity in this matter of prayer.

God is holy and He would have His servants holy. We are told to lift up clean hands in the sanctuary. We are told to come before God in purity, with a contrite heart. We cannot go into God's presence and pray for His interests with thoughts of revenge or anger against our fellow believers, all these things must be eliminated from our minds and consciences. God is holy and He would have us to be holy when we approach Him in prayer or in worship. That subdues us when we go into the presence of God, when we remember that He is holy. There cannot be any levity in His presence, there cannot be anything that speaks of man and his glory in His presence. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 1:31), and so Hannah recognised the holiness of God and what was necessary for His company.

Then she said, "neither is there any rock like our God". I commend for your interest Deuteronomy 32:1-52 and see how often God is spoken of in that chapter as a Rock, and think of the other rocks, the rocks of the heathens, their idols, their support and think of the tremendous contrast between God and them, and this was what Hannah was saying, 'Oh', she said, 'there is no rock like our God.' 'Our God' she said. This indicated some sense of relationship in her soul. She thought of the stability of God, the permanency of God, nobody could overthrow God, nothing could overthrow God, He is able in His power to bring into effect what He desires. And then, "Talk no more so exceeding proudly, let not arrogancy come out of thy mouth for the Lord is a God of knowledge and by him actions are weighed". There are many portions in the word of God that tell us that God is a heart-knowing God. We might be before Him with very correct expressions, but it may not be true of our hearts. God knows the heart and by Him actions are weighed. The parable, or rather, the story that the Lord told in Luke 18:1-43 speaks of the two men who went up to the temple to pray. One said, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are" (v.11) and went on to say he was a very good man, and by our standards he was a very good man, albeit, a proud and arrogant one. But the other man could not lift up his face to heaven but smote upon his breast and declared what he was in reality in the presence of God, and God heard him and answered his prayer because He is a heart-knowing God.

You remember that one man was to be chosen of the two candidates to fill up the place of Judas. The disciples felt that they could not make the decision, and so they prayed to the Lord and said, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men" (Acts 1:24). Outwardly those two men were just the same, they had been with the Lord, they knew all that He did from the baptism of John right up to the time He ascended to glory. They were conversant about the Lord and the things of the Lord. Now, said the disciples, 'Thou art the heart knowing God, tell us which of the two is to take the

place of Judas?' And the lot fell on Matthias, and he was chosen to fill up the place. Here we find this in Hannah's prayer, God is a God of knowledge, by Him actions are weighed. You remember what is said of Belshazzar, "thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting". God, who knows our motives, our desires and everything about us, who can look right into our hearts and judge accurately why we say or do things and why we pray about things, weighs our actions. And there was not any question about Hannah, that her heart was as transparent as possible, there was not a single thought about self, it was all about God and about His interests, and she was so real and genuine about it that God answered her prayer. The supremacy of God was very much in Hannah's heart.

"The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength. They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." (1 Samuel 2:4-8)

God reverses situations. The adversary had been very prominent prior to Hannah praying and poor Hannah had a very difficult time indeed, but now we see in all the things that she said the position was reversed, instead of being persecuted she was in a place of peace, of blessing, instead of being barren she had a son whom she could give to the Lord, instead of being the enemy she was now in a place of nearness to God under His favour and kindness. We could go over all these sentences and we would find that this is the God who changes things. Oh, my, I need to get that into my soul and I am sure you do too. There is no need to acquiesce in a situation personally, or in our homes, or in our meetings, it is not right to acquiesce and say, 'There is nothing I can do about it, I must accept it'. We can do something, we can pray to God to change things. This has been done again and again and again in lives, in homes, in meetings, in the Christian testimony. There is a God who hears prayers, good prayers, genuine prayers coming from the heart and conscience and God can change things. If you forget all else, oh please remember this, and myself too, that we have a God who can change things! He is so powerful, He is so great that He can deal with any situation, whatever it might be, and can bring in blessing into seemingly impossible situations.

Now if we have not this faith in God it seems to me we will not make very much progress. Paul roars it triumphantly from Romans 8:1-39, "If God be for us who can be against us?" There is a note of triumph, and we can all take that home to our souls this evening - a God who changes things.

"He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth: and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed." (1 Samuel 2:9-10)

We have all experienced this, I am sure, that He keeps our feet in a straight path when it might be so easy to turn aside and wander. As we look back over our lives, we say, 'However did we get through? How was it that we kept going?' We can remember times when it would have been so

easy to slip away. We can only say, 'Well, God kept our feet in the pathway for His glory because He had something for us to do and He wanted some response from our hearts'. We praise God in the uncertain days that lie ahead, days that we do not know, days of darkness perhaps, days of difficulty, we can have this confidence, He will keep the feet of His saints.

There is one verse that is often a particular joy to my spirit, and this is in 2 Timothy 4:1-22. Paul, the servant of the Lord, was in prison and facing great difficulty, it was not a pleasant experience for him, but he uttered the words so triumphantly to Timothy when he said, "The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18). There was a man with the faith in his soul that God would keep his feet; and we need to remember this, in days of great opposition and difficulty, we have a God who keeps us. The Lord Jesus said to His Father in John 17:1-26, 'None of them is lost, I have guarded them, I have kept them'. Oh, how wonderful it is today that the Lord keeps us and as we just quietly give our lives into His keeping, how able He is to do it and to lead us along step by step for His pleasure and glory. Hannah knew this, she had experienced this, she knew the joy of victory through prayer and she was able to respond to the God who had done it all.

Verse 10 could only be said through divine inspiration. At that time there was no king in Israel, there was no suggestion of a king, and yet here was Hannah speaking about a king, speaking about the Lord's anointed. Again I say, this could only be through divine inspiration; and though it was fulfilled partially in David, the son of Jesse, it will be finally and completely fulfilled in Jesus, the Son of God, God's king, God's anointed, when every adversary will be overthrown and destroyed, and a permanent change for the better will be brought in for a thousand years when God's king will reign, and all the adversaries will be put down for ever. Hannah was a living example of this, she had overcome, her adversaries had been defeated and she was in the joy of victory. So it will be with the Lord's anointed, He will overcome, He will bring in different conditions and He will create praise and worship to God for that wonderful period when He shall be supreme.

9. The Results of Hannah's Prayer

The Results of Hannah's Prayer

"And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house. And the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest." (1 Samuel 2:11)

We live in days when so often a great deal of segregation goes on, the young Christians want to be with themselves, they do not want to have the older saints with them. Here we find a young boy and he was with an old man and in the old man's company he was going to learn something, as we learn from a later chapter, something that he could not discern Himself, he was not of sufficient age or maturity to discern the Lord's voice when He spoke to him, but He learnt it through Eli the priest, the young and the old, they walked together.

I would say to the young brethren, keep in the company of those who know more than yourselves, by that you will learn. This is the way we have all learned, to be in the company of older brothers, mature brothers and from them we learned by their knowledge, by their experience, and we made progress. All through the Scriptures this is the true principle, the true pattern, and would to God it were followed more today, so that the young and the old move together for the pleasure of God.

What a delightful scene it is to see this young boy handed over to the Lord and in the presence of this aged servant, learning what is pleasing to the Lord. So Hannah's prayer bore wonderful fruit, and is an encouragement to each one of us to continue earnestly in prayer and to make sure that our prayers are God-centred, Christ-centred, and of course, to mention our own problems and difficulties too. The Lord delights to hear them and He delights to answer them. May we be encouraged for His name's sake.

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