

Hannah's Commitment

JVI, Long Lake Friends Church, 05.10.20, 1

Texts, NRSV: 1 Samuel 1.1-14; Acts 2.5-6, 13-16; 1 Sam 1.15-20, 24-28; 2.11, 18-21

i. 1 Samuel 1.1-3: This is *Shiloh* in the center of Israel, the Tabernacle

a LHB: This scene does NOT look like 2 MIL PPL worshipping God in Exodus

1 This is NOT the bustling scene of the busy Temple that comes later

2 The High Priest Eli and his 2 sons are running the whole show

3 After all the sin in the book of Judges, there's probably only a *remnant*¹

b The business of the Tabernacle is basically a "Ma and Pa Shop"

ii. One family that's part of that *remnant* is Elkanah's family

a Elkanah has 2 wives . . . Peninnah has children . . . but Hannah doesn't

1 In that day it's basically a curse for a wife to be barren

2 Elkanah loves Hannah more . . . but Peninnah taunts barren Hannah

b Elkanah's family is committed to worship . . . but Hannah makes a *commitment*

1 **1 Sam 1.4-11**: In the Hebrew Bible, we see people making Vows

2 Vow: Lord, if You do something for me, I will dedicate something to You

3 Hannah makes a couple Vows that day . . . *Hannah's Commitment*

a) She commits Samuel to the Lord, to serve in the Tabernacle

b) She commits to make Samuel pure, as a Nazarite (v. 11)

1) Nazarite Vow, abstinence, purity, from certain things

2) Nazarites commit to simplicity instead of extravagance

3) Nazarites are pure, so they're often God's messengers

4 Elkanah's family is committed . . . but we see *Hannah's Commitment*

a) *Hannah's Commitment* encourages Moms and mentors today

b) We can all live a committed life . . . live a Christian lifestyle

Q: *But can we all make a crucial commitment for our family?*

Q: *Can we make a commitment that will impact our society?*

Hannah's Commitment flows from a heart that has witnessed the brokenness of Israel

c Hannah wants God to raise up a Godly Nazarite for the nation

Q: *Can I remind you of the value of your commitment as a Mom or a mentor?*

iii. The Lord notices Hannah

a Eli, the High Priest takes notice of her, **1 Sam 1.9, 12-14**

1 This is not the type of way that anyone wants to be noticed

2 Some compare this to the prayers at Pentecost, **Acts 2.5-6, 13-16**

¹ William Sanford Lasor, David Allan Hubbard, and Frederic William Bush, *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI, Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1996), 168.

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- 3 Like the symbolism in our last sermon pointing to the HS, this does too
- b There are 2 more important things about this moment to consider

1 The form of prayer itself is abnormal, even though we pray silently today

LHB: "The Israelites, like most Orientals, typically prayed aloud regardless of the circumstances."²

- a) We also know the Bible is read aloud until about 300-400 AD
 - b) Silent, reflective prayer and reading is abnormal during that time
 - c) It catches the eye of the High Priest . . . It catches the eye of God
- Q: *Do we pray in whatever way necessary, to catch God's eye?*

2 Kugel: Her silent prayer is abnormal, but it reflects Hannah's reverence

- a) Israel has a healthy "fear of the Lord" that we see in the Bible
 - 1) Often characters appear out of the faceless crowd
 - 2) They petition God with a Vow, or pray out of desperation
 - 3) Then they disappear back into the greater narrative
 - 4) The emphasis is on approaching God reverently
- b) Hannah's prayer is one example of the healthy fear of the Lord³

c We understand what it is to be a friend of God, but . . .

Q. *Do we know what it means to have a healthy fear of the Lord?*

Q. *Have we lost our sense of fear . . . reverence . . . awe . . . wonder?*

Hannah's Commitment is seen in powerful prayer and in reverent fear of the Lord.

iv. The Lord rewards *Hannah's Commitment*, 1 Sam 1.15-20, 24-28

a Crystal shared *Hannah's Song*, or the *Canticle of Anna* (1 Sam 2.1-10)

b Let's pick up afterwards, **1 Sam 2.11, 18-21**

c We've seen *Hannah's Commitment*. What is Hannah's reward?

d I'm not sure that's the right question to ask of this Scripture

- 1 Remember, Hebrew writings introduce people who have a prayer need
- 2 They approach God, make a request, then step back into the stories
- 3 Sometimes they receive an answer or reward . . . sometimes they don't
- 4 Stories are not about rewards, but about reverently approaching God

So this story isn't about Hannah's reward . . . It's about Hannah's Commitment

Invitation: What is your story about? Are you only seeking rewards?

- 1 Is your story about what you're seeking, or about what you're committing to?
- 2 What commitments can you make to the Lord, your family, and friends?

² Ibid., 169.

³ James L. Kugel, *The Great Poems of the Bible: A Reader's Companion with New Translations* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 254-255.