

Commentary on I Samuel 1:23-28

Hannah Keeps Her Vow

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Verse 23: "And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the Lord establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him."

Here is another lesson. Many times when men get married, before long, they become lord over all. The Bible says to dwell with your wife according to knowledge. Without Hannah's prayers, there would have been no son to make decisions about. Hannah's husband couldn't give her any children. I'm sure he tried many times, but nothing happened—they had no children. Hannah prayed to God, and God answered her prayer. So her husband let her handle the whole matter as she was being led by God. Without God, you really can't make good decisions.

There is a big difference between open sin and how we carry out the will and work of God. If your wife is being guided by the hand of the Lord, why jump in and interfere when something goes against your tradition? One may say, "Why do you say this?"

Well, King Saul was sitting under the pomegranate tree, and the enemies of the Lord were multiplying. The Philistines were killing and butchering God's people. They were being treated like dogs. Saul's son, Jonathan, said to his armor bearer, "Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few," I Samuel 14:6.

He said that it doesn't make any difference to God whether it be one—two— or three. You and I are just as powerful as an army if God is with us. First they checked with the Lord, and the answer came, "GO!" They went up and the Philistines came out against them. Jonathan and his armor bearer began to kill the enemy. Then God stepped in, and the earth began to quake with a very great trembling and the enemy began to die. The Philistines became confused. They began to fight with each other, and they began to destroy one another. They melted away like ice would melt on a hot day.

When King Saul realized what was going on, he raised himself up from under the pomegranate tree and started making rules. It just so happened that Saul

had Ichabod's brother with him that day. Ichabod means: the Spirit of the Lord has departed from here.

Stop and think about it, if Jonathan is fighting the battle, and it is going well so far; then let him go, and you help him finish it. If God took him this far, why should you jump in and make a lot of rules?

Saul then said, "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies," I Samuel 14:24.

The people grew weak and faint after a hard day's battle, and they began to kill oxen and eat it without shedding or draining the blood as it was written in the law.

Before the day was over Saul was demanding that Jonathan be killed for breaking one of his rules, which Jonathan had not even known existed. Jonathan had committed the terrible sin of tasting some honey, which was lying on the ground. For this, King Saul commanded his death. He had broken Saul's commandment—there would be no reprieve for Jonathan. Saul then commanded his soldiers to kill his own son. The soldiers refused to kill him because he had wrought such a great victory, so his life was spared.

Don't meddle in the affairs of God when He is working in the lives of His children. He puts up and He takes down.

Elkanah told his wife to do whatever seemeth right to her. You see, only God is going to establish His Word in the end. So the woman abode and gave her son suck until he was weaned.

Here's just one more thought before leaving this verse, about being happy and getting things from the Lord by praising and delighting yourself in the Lord. Do you remember what the Queen of Sheba said when she came down to Solomon's kingdom? She said that she was told a fantastic story down in Egypt, and she came to see if it was really true. Once she saw Solomon's kingdom, she said they didn't tell her even the half—it was more than she had ever dreamed.

I think that is why Jesus said that a greater than Solomon is here, and the people of that day would not even step out to see what was really going on. Therefore the Queen of Sheba will stand up against them in the Day of Judgment, because she traveled all that distance to check it out. She said, "Happy are thy men, and happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom," II Chronicles 9:7. (Read all of II Chronicles 9 and Matthew 12:42.

When you stand before the Lord and the Word of God, (because out of the Word of God comes wisdom and knowledge) then you are going to be happy. Do you know why? The Word of God fights all your battles and He wins every time. That's why we say, Jesus, the incarnate Word. Jesus is highly exalted above everything on this earth, and so is God's written Word highly exalted above

everything. The Queen of Sheba saw how happy the people were, who stood and listened continually to Solomon's wisdom. Now that the greater than Solomon, Jesus, has come, how much more joy we could have, if we stood still, listened, and followed His wisdom from the words He left us.

Verse 24: "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."

When Hannah took Samuel up to the Lord, she brought a little something along. This goes along with the New Testament story of the man that went down and fell among thieves. The Samaritan took him to the inn and left something there to take care of him. Hannah didn't just bring Samuel up, like she was pawning him off, but she brought flour and wine, also. When we deliver our spiritual children to some church, then we should also leave something for their keep—something to help pay the expenses of running God's house.

Verses 25-27: "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 . . . "

Just like David and Daniel had excellent spirits and were never arrogant, neither was Hannah, arrogant. Some people would go back with a proud attitude and say, "Look, this is my son! You remember me, don't you? You said I was drunk." Love never comes to its own defense. Someone may be asking, "Am I proud if I come to my own defense, to spring quickly to fight against anyone who may say something against me?" Yes! It is an element of pride.

The Bible speaks about Ephraim's pride. It seemed that he was always angry with someone for not including him in their plans. He got angry because Gideon didn't send for him before he went to fight against the Midianites. When Gideon and his three hundred men returned and Ephraim heard about it, he was very upset and wanted to know why he wasn't sent for. Gideon replied to his pride by saying, "Is not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?" Judges 8:2. What he was really saying to Ephraim was that his best harvest was not near as good as Ephraim's leftovers. Then Ephraim's pride was satisfied.

Hannah didn't have that kind of attitude. She just said that this is the child I prayed for, and the Lord has given Him to me. God has answered my petition. She just slipped her son into the arms of the Lord and let it go at that.

When Jesus performed great miracles, the people "went away glorifying God." It seemed that the people always went away giving praise to God, the Father. Jesus never brought any of them back and said to them, "Get up and testify. Tell everybody what I did when I prayed for you." When too many people came, it interfered with His work. They even came once to make him king. When the fame became heavier than the praise of God, He would just say, "Let us go into another city. Let us go somewhere else."

If you have the power of God in your life, no matter where you go, you are going to find out that God is going to work for you. You are going to be established wherever you go. Then if you become too popular, and God's praise begins to subside, maybe it is best to move on because it will hinder you from getting God's work done and open a door to pride.

Verse 28: "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."

We sing a song called, "You Can't Beat God Giving, No Matter How Hard You Try." I'll tell you what's the truth, anything you give God is like a loan, and that which you lend to God, He will repay you again. (See Proverbs 19:17). Hannah gave the one child unto the Lord and the Lord visited her again. She had three sons and two daughters, afterward—five for the Grace of God. Grace means living under the influence and in the favor of God. God always makes it up to you.

When you do something for the Lord, don't get the idea that you gave up everything for the Lord. I have seen people do things for the Lord, and the rewards in this life cause them to backslide. Some people have prospered beyond anything you could think. However, in their prosperity they left God, and naturally speaking, it looks as if they are never going to come back to the Lord. One thing you must remember: God always pays His debts.

One man, after leaving God, suddenly began to prosper. He joined a cult and completely rejected God, as we know Him in the Bible. He would say that his gain was because of his godliness, but God was paying him "in full" for all his previous works. He would have no rewards after this life. It stands to reason that if you are going to miss heaven and God owes you anything, He will have to pay you before you leave this world. There is no punishment in heaven and no rewards in hell.

God told Jehu to destroy all the house of Ahab. He said, "Don't leave one of his family living." Jehu did exactly as God had directed, but later he turned aside after the golden calf and forsook the Lord. God said, "But I am going to pay him for his obedience." So God informed Jehu that because he had done right in destroying Ahab's house, he would let four of his sons sit on the throne. Then Jehu would be paid—all his rewards were received; and God marked his bill "paid in full." Jehu and his house passed on after that and was forgotten. (See II Kings 9)

I don't want to get all my rewards in this short life. I don't want to receive all my rewards and have prosperity in this life—and nothing but Hell in the next. So many times when people fall from the grace of God, they begin to prosper. Instead of going down, it seems like they are moving up. Sometimes this can be a bad sign.

On the other hand, if a person turns aside, and they don't have anything but trouble, then usually God is correcting them. God says that every son that is His, He chastises. God chastises everyone that does wrong.

Hannah was a godly woman. She kept her vow. She lent Samuel to the Lord forever. Then God's grace favored her with five more children. This is a lesson for us: Give God your firstfruit offering. Then He will influence and favor you, and the windows of heaven will be opened and a blessing will be poured out upon you.