

## 1 Samuel Chapter 1 - Part Two

*by Charles E. Wigg*

### THE NEXT TEST

The family's religious formalities continued as before, but what was Hannah to do? Should she just fall in with the old ritual, or should she take a stand against the deadness of the annual pilgrimage? She decided that she would pour all of her loving care into the life of her precious son. God was going to use him in the coming years to deliver His people from their dead formalities, and from their backslidden ways. She must do all she could to prepare him for his future life and ministry. She declined to go up, and after discussion with her husband it was agreed that she should take no part in their religious formalities. The next time she went to Shiloh it was to make the greatest sacrifice of her life she was to give back to God the son that He had given her. She would have kept Samuel to the breast as long as she was legitimately able, and commentators consider that he could have been at least four years old when she did take him to Shiloh. Elkanah seemed to be afraid that she would back out of the commitment or the vow that she had made. He stated "May the Lord establish his word". But though it was to cost her dearly, and though she had sworn to her own hurt, she would not change it. Psalm 15:4. It is possible that during those years Satan strove mightily to try to turn Hannah from her vow. He had a suspicion of what God was going to do through this boy, that God would use him to turn His people back to Himself. He would try desperately to prevent this if he could. Satan would constantly remind Hannah of what kind of men Eli's two sons were. He would remind her of Eli's age, the fact that he was almost blind, that he was fat and probably lazy. He would call to her attention that even the women that served at the Tabernacle, (who might be expected to care for the little boy), were lustful immoral people, little more than prostitutes in spite of their pretended holy occupation. Satan would also remind Hannah of her sacred responsibility as a mother, and possibly chide her and accuse her of a careless disregard of her maternal duty, if she was to commit her only son to the care of such people. All this was in a vain attempt to turn her away from fulfilling the costly vow that she had made that day, as she prayed that God would give her a son. She would trust Samuel to no one but to the God that had given him.

God had kept His side of the bargain, would she now keep hers? But God gave her the strength to master any maternal misgivings that she may have, and to keep her costly vow.

### THE PARTING

It must have seemed to Hannah that the years had raced away, but the time had now come to part with the dearest object of her affections, and she faced the test with great courage and with a brave spirit. Samuel also had to be prepared for this parting he had to be weaned, not only from his mother's milk, but also from his mother's loving care, and her godly teaching. Hannah did not make this an occasion to draw attention to herself and her sacrifice. She did not try to attract the sympathy and the applause of others for her great act of sacrifice. She went with her husband, her son and also took three bullocks and a skin bottle of wine. One bullock was to be offered on Samuel's behalf. Though he was such a holy boy, a Nazarite in practice, separated to God, yet all that could not make him acceptable to God. They slew a bullock and brought Samuel to Eli. This is to show us that any of us, regardless of our holy beginnings, or the holiness and consecration of our parents, can only be reconciled to God through the death of His Son. Before Samuel (though such a child), could be accepted by God, a sinless victim must die, its blood must be shed.

Elkanah had led in all this, as Hannah humbly took the woman's place. But as the sacrifice was offered it was now the time for her to give her testimony. Her words are so touching, as she took the mind of the High Priest back over the years. "For this child I prayed" and the Lord had answered her prayer. She could have easily reminded the old man of how that he had rebuked her and charged her with being drunk, but she made no mention of this. Her object was to give the glory to God, to praise His faithfulness, not to expose the failures of man. Then followed that act of total surrender, "Therefore I have lent him unto the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord". Then it adds, "And he

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worshipped the Lord there". We are not told who the 'he' was. Was it Elkanah, was he now moved by his wife's great sacrifice and devotion? Was it Eli, had he now been humbled by this unusual display of Hannah's sacrifice and devotion? Or was it Samuel himself, had he just now realised what it had cost the mother that he loved, the one that had conceived him, born him, and nurtured and taught him all his days, to give him up wholly to God? What a sacred moment that was? As the fire in the altar of burnt offering consumed the body of the sinless victim whose life had been given for Samuel, they bowed in the presence of the Lord in genuine worship. As the smoke of that sacrifice ascended to God, its richness and savour filled His heart with joy and satisfaction. He looked on to the day when His only begotten Son would offer himself to God on our behalf.

The skin bottle of wine was doubtless for a drink offering, and spoke to God of the life of this boy that was now being presented to Him, that would be poured out in lowly service for Him until its end. This offering brought great joy to the heart of God, and it also brought great joy to the hearts of all those that witnessed this sacrifice. We are not told what was done with the other two bullocks. Perhaps one was presented as a peace offering the greater part of this sacrifice was eaten by the worshipper and his friends. This was not like the annual ritual that Elkanah had gone through over the years, this was true fellowship. Perhaps the other bullock was given as a gift to Eli? We are not told.