

Commentary on I Samuel 1:8-17

Accused of Drunkenness In Church

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Verse 8: "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?"

There is a spiritual meaning in this. Sometimes these things can be seen easily, and other times it seems as if they are hidden from us. In Paul's writings, he said that we are like chaste virgins to the Lord. We are the bride of Christ, and as a man and a woman become one in marriage, so does a Christian become one with the Lord. The Lord becomes the head and makes the decisions.

So let's just say that this is like the Good Shepherd saying, "Am I not better to you than your children would be? Are you not better off with my love, living in my perfect will and presence, than if you had riches, wealth, and children?"

If you are not being lead by the Good Shepherd, then your life is empty. It is like Solomon said as his life was coming to a close, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit," Ecclesiastes 1:14. ". . . hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man," Ecclesiastes 12:13.

God is saying, "Don't grieve! Don't worry! Don't you know I am better to you than ten sons! I am more than money! I am more than children! I am more than the thing you might want to accomplish in this life. I am more than the job you want—more than a position. I am more than whatever it is you are seeking for."

Hannah was so grieved that she couldn't even eat. You know, if the devil vexes you long enough, you cannot seem to get your mind unscrambled to exercise your faith from God's Word. Faith is what you need to make you strong, so that you will be able to fight the enemy. Some people have died when they grieved naturally. They just wasted away to nothing, because they couldn't shoulder their troubles. When the devil vexes you, he can make you think you are just "a nobody." You've failed! He makes you feel like, why even bother to read, you don't understand it anyway.

Later on we'll see how Hannah explains the understanding God gave her. God puts up and God takes down. He gives grace to those that are falling, and he

breaks the bow of the mighty. He picks them up that stumble. When you're down, you can just expect God to come along with grace enough to pick you up.

Verses 9-11: "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."

The priest was looking at the people as they came in and went out of the temple. He sat on a seat where he could observe what was going on, and the people would come in and talk with him.

The vow Hannah made was a vow of a Nazarite. Samson's mother was told not to have his hair cut. This tradition of the Nazarite was very important. It meant he would be reserved for the work of God. Hannah also promised to give her son to God all the days of his life. There is a great lesson to be learned in this scripture for us. Anything we give to God only multiplies itself and returns to give us honor—whether it be money, children, or ourselves.

Verses 12-13: "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."

You know, there is an old saying, "Don't believe anything you hear and only half of what you see." Many times I have heard rumors about one of the great evangelists being so drunk he couldn't stand up. Preachers hear this and pass it on to their congregations. God is not pleased with this!

Eli was the priest, and he drew his own conclusion when he saw Hannah. Caiphias, the high priest, back in the days of Jesus, got a message of prophecy—even though he wasn't living godly. Everything points to the fact that he wasn't saved; yet God gave him a message. Caiphias interpreted the message wrong, but it had a spiritual meaning which said, "It was better that one man die than all men die." The message was talking about Christ, who would come to die for all the sins of the world. When Moses smote the rock twice, which he wasn't supposed to do, God didn't keep the rock from sending out water because he disobeyed. The

rock poured out sweet water, just like God told him it would, but Moses had to answer to God for his disobedience. Many times preachers have a beautiful message, but one day they're going to have to answer to God, as to whether or not God ordered their message the way they preached it.

Eli was partially blind to what was going on. We should never get into the habit of pointing a finger at someone, because we don't always know exactly what is going on. Samuel, Hannah's son, who was yet to be born, would one day be sent by God to pick out David to be the future king. He didn't even know which son it was. In fact, he thought it would be one of the other sons. The Lord said he was looking on the outside. Eli was looking on the outside and on the appearance of the situation, but God was looking inside Hannah's heart.

There's another thing we should remember, even if you see it—don't spread it around. God said, "Speak evil of no man," Titus 3:2. You better be sure before you say it. We all jump to conclusions, and we all form fast opinions, but that does not exonerate us.

We must keep fighting the good fight of faith by reading and following the Word of God. We must always look for the admonition and learning, along with the doctrines of the Bible that we might not be mistaken. Remembering always, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death," Proverbs 14:12, 16:25.

Verses 14-16: "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."

I will say this about Eli, he told *her*. He didn't go outside and tell everybody else that Hannah was in there drunker than a dog. Hannah didn't fall to pieces under a false accusation from the priest, but she asked Eli not to count her as one of the daughters of the devil. That's what Belial means, an evil person. Many times this name is mentioned as a very bad person—a son of Belial, a son of the devil, the son of an evil person.

Verse 17: "Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him."

Here Eli, being the priest of God, told Hannah to go her way and God would grant her petition. When God appointed priests back in the Old Testament days, they spoke the words of God, and God confirmed it. There is no faith without the Word of God to back it up. You must have the Word of God before you can believe for anything. Christian friends can give you good advice, but lots of times they can give you bad advice, too. So the best advice is from the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.

You might be saying to yourself, where can we get wisdom and knowledge? God has already answered that in the book of Proverbs. It says, "For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding," Proverbs 2:6. It also says in the third chapter of Proverbs that wisdom is better than fine gold and silver and her fruits are not to be compared to earthly riches.

Where will you find your answer? "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man [and woman] of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works," II Timothy 3:16 & 17.

God answered Hannah, and she had His Word on it. In I Timothy 2:15 and Hebrews 11:11, it says that God gives women strength to bare children. They received it by the Word of God—by faith. Faith will close the mouths of lions and quench the violence of fire.

Many times, I think of the three Hebrew boys. The old king told them about the fire when he built it. He said that when the music sounds, everybody hit the dirt, but the boys refused. When the princes, the lords, and the governors saw this they went directly to the king. They told the king that the boys didn't bow. The king flew into a rage. "Make the fire seven times hotter," he stormed to his men.

He said to the three Hebrew boys, "Since you are a part of the realm of the kingdom, we'll give you another chance, but if you don't bow down this time, whose going to deliver you out of my hand?" The king then informed them that the furnace was seven times hotter. That didn't change their minds. I think this showed tremendous faith as they said, "Oh king, the God we serve: he can deliver us, but we don't know if he will or not. Whether He does or He does not, it doesn't make any difference at all to us. (Paraphrased from Daniel 3). The Bible says that if you are brought before rulers and kings, think not what you will say, because God, by His Holy Spirit will instruct you.

You might say to yourself, why did they say, "We don't know if God will deliver us or not?" Do you know that in the last few verses of Hebrews 11 it says that a lot of people who were considered righteous were slain, martyred, and killed. Christ, Himself, gave His life. I believe those three Hebrew boys didn't know whether it was the will of God for them to be martyred and give their lives or if they would live. Either way it didn't make any difference to them, God was God

anyway. They said okay, we know God can deliver us, but we don't know how He will choose to handle the situation. One thing is for sure, however, it didn't change their minds about being true to God.

Paul said in the first chapter of Philippians, whether I live or die, it makes no difference to me. In fact, he even said that it was better for him if he went on to be with the Lord. Paul had been through so much in this life, and God will not put any more on us than what we are able to bear.