

File No. 50

I SAMUEL 1:1 – 2:11

GOD ANSWERS HANNAH'S PRAYER

(SBS Bk 2 Story No. 23)

Story Notes

Background Information

At the beginning of I Samuel, we are taken to where Israel's national life was focused, the Ark of the Covenant and the throne of God, and see that the priesthood had descended into self-interest. The story tells how God caused his word to be heard again, and how he raised up a king who loved his word.

Perhaps the Lord's reticence for Israel to have a king was because they were so unable to understand what manner of king he had in mind for his people.

Samuel was the last of the judges and the first of the 'order' of prophets.

Main Lesson

True godliness had survived in Israel, though much of the nation disregarded the Lord. Elkanah brought his offerings each year to the tabernacle where the ark was housed. Hannah, much loved by her husband, was childless and was taunted by a second wife. This brought her to cry out to God for a child. Her sufferings led her to God, and there, she discovered his loving kindness. The old high priest was not very discerning in all this but knew that God would grant the prayers of this distressed woman. When Samuel was born, she devoted him to the service of the Lord.

Hannah's worship, when she revisited the house of the Lord at Shiloh, shows that she had been opened up to far more than her own circumstances. Like Mary after her (Luke 2), she had discovered, through her own story, that Israel had no need to fear their enemies. Her weakened state had been the occasion of God's great mercy to her. It was so for all who called on the Lord in truth. The prayers of the hungry and the barren had been heard and now she asked that God would give strength to their king and take the whole nation forward.

In fact, Israel had no king at this time, so the song is prophetic—anticipating things still to come. Israel needed to know that the Lord was their God, and they needed to be a people who would call upon him. This faith was revealed to Hannah, an ordinary member of the community. Later, God would raise up a king who had a faith like this. His name would be David.

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