

LESSONS FOR THE SISTERS

Lesson 34

Patterns and Examples of Women in the Old Testament (8)—Hannah

Scripture Reading: 1 Sam. 1:1–2:11

I. First and 2 Samuel unveil to us, from the beginning, that God's accomplishment of His economy needs man's coordination and cooperation; the first illustration is Hannah, the mother of Samuel:

- A. The birth of Samuel involved Hannah's cooperation with God; her case shows us the kind of persons God expects to have today:
 - 1. The old priesthood had become stale and waning, and God wanted to have another beginning; for Samuel's birth, God initiated things behind the scenes.
 - 2. On the one hand, He shut up Hannah's womb; on the other hand, He prepared a provoker—1 Sam. 1:5-7.
 - 3. This forced Hannah to pray that the Lord would give her a male child; in her prayer she made a vow and said, "O Jehovah of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me and not forget Your maidservant, but give to Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to Jehovah for all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head"—v. 11.
 - 4. This prayer was initiated not by Hannah but by God; God chose Hannah because she was willing to cooperate with Him; God answered her prayer and opened her womb, and Hannah conceived and bore a son—v. 20.
 - 5. Then according to her vow, she offered her son to God, placing him in the custody of Eli.
 - 6. From this we see that Hannah, Samuel's mother, was one who cooperated very much with God.
- B. We need to be impressed with the fact that the fulfillment of God's economy requires our cooperation; to cooperate with God means to be bound together with God; we may use a three-legged race as an illustration.
- C. Today many continents and countries are open to the Lord's recovery; there is the need for some to make a vow like Hannah; we hope that many of the young people will make such a vow:
 - 1. You need to say, "Lord, I am Yours. I just lend myself to You."
 - 2. God will take your heart and accomplish something to fulfill what you vow to Him.

II. In the midst of the chaos of the degraded Israel, Elkanah and Hannah remained in the line of life ordained by God for His eternal purpose:

- A. The line of life is a line to bring forth Christ for the enjoyment of God's people that on earth God may have His kingdom, which is the Body of Christ, the very organism of the Triune God.
- B. God's salvation is mainly for our benefit, whereas God's purpose is related to the fulfilling of God's desire:
 - 1. We need to ask ourselves whether we are here for our profit or for God's purpose.
 - 2. Today on this earth everyone is concerned for his own profit.
- C. Under God's sovereign dealing, Hannah was suppressed in her soul with a burden in her spirit to pour out before Jehovah; this was God's move; because of God's moving in her, Hannah could not have peace until she prayed for a son.
- D. God could motivate Hannah as a person who was one with Him in the line of life; as long as He can gain such a person, He has a way on earth:

1. We hope that at least some of us will be today's Hannahs and say, "Lord, if You have anything on Your heart to accomplish for Your purpose, I am here. I am remaining in the line of life for the carrying out of Your economy."
2. "If you do this, I have the full assurance that you will be the ones whom God will move. He will come to you and motivate you. God needs many Hannahs, persons who can bring forth some Samuels to turn the age"—*Life-study of 1 Samuel*, p. 11.

III. The origin of Samuel was especially his God-seeking mother with her prayer (vv. 9-18); her prayer was an echo of the heart's desire of God; her prayer was a human cooperation with the divine move for the carrying out of God's eternal economy:

- A. We should no longer pray old prayers in a formal way; instead, we need to pray something that is an echo of what is on God's heart; this means that what we say in our prayer is exactly what God wants to speak; such a prayer is the speaking out of God's heart.
- B. Hannah's prayer was like this; God wanted a Samuel, yet He needed Hannah's cooperation to pray to Him, saying, "Lord, I need a son."
- C. After such a prayer as Hannah prayed, it was easy for God to do something, because man's cooperation had become a base on which He could move.
- D. God's move in response to Hannah's prayer was in keeping with the principle that God needs man's cooperation with His move in His economy; this is the principle of incarnation.
- E. God's move with His answer to Hannah's prayer was to produce a Nazarite who was absolute for the fulfilling of His desire; a Nazarite is one who is consecrated to God absolutely:
 1. We need to be impressed with Samuel's origin, with his source; because he came out of such a strong source, he could not be an ordinary, worldly person.
 2. Rather, he was the one who replaced the waning priesthood and brought forth David, who brought forth Christ.
- F. The sisters especially should aspire to be like Hannah, praying to bring forth some like Samuel, who will terminate the confused age so that Christ the King may come with His kingdom:
 1. In order for us to pray to meet God's need today, we need Christ as the embodiment of God and the reality of the offerings—vv. 4-5.
 2. We also need the fulfillment of the Tent of Meeting, which is the church as God's dwelling place; Hannah did not pray her prevailing prayer in her home—vv. 9-11.
 3. We need God's embodiment and His full salvation in the church life; then we can pray prevailing prayers for God's goal, to bring in the kingdom.

IV. Hannah's ministry was to bring in the King:

- A. Hannah wept, fasted, prayed, and cried unto the Lord for a son who would be absolutely given to the Lord for His service—1 Sam. 1:10-11, 26-28.
- B. This son was the one that brought in the King—1 Sam. 16:13; 1 Chron. 11:3b; cf. Matt. 1:1.
- C. If these are the last days and God's eyes are on those who can be the means of bringing in the King, let us ask ourselves, "What is our ministry"? Have we any part in this special ministry, this Hannah ministry?
- D. Those who want to be Hannahs must prepare themselves for persecution, scorn, weeping, and fasting; this ministry costs; a price has to be paid because all such ministry comes through testing and suffering; it has to be wrought into us—1 Sam. 1:6-7.
- E. It is not a matter of how many we can save but of God getting His company of overcomers; God wants to get a people who will be able to pray and bring in His kingdom.
- F. Hannah's prayer was the means for the birth of Samuel; our prayers should result in the bringing forth of overcomers—Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26-28; 3:5, 12, 20-21; 12:5; 14:3-5.
- G. The son in 1 Samuel 1 is the man-child in Revelation 12, the one who brings in the King and the kingdom—12:5-10.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

A CONCLUDING WORD TO THE LIFE-STUDY OF 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

First and 2 Samuel unveil to us, from the beginning, that God's accomplishment of His economy needs man's coordination and cooperation. The first illustration is Hannah, the mother of Samuel. She was seeking God and spontaneously coordinated and cooperated with God. This afforded God the way to replace the waning priesthood under Eli with a new priesthood raised up by God through her son Samuel.

Samuel, the issue of his mother Hannah's coordination and cooperation with God, became a faithful Nazarite according to his mother's desire for God and rendered to God the way to end the corrupted age of the judges and to bring in (1) the age of kingship to replace the governing ministry of the old priesthood and (2) the prophethood to replace the God-speaking ministry of the old priesthood. (*Life-study of 1 Samuel*, msg. 38, p. 247)

THE CENTRAL THOUGHT

The central thought of 1 and 2 Samuel is that the fulfillment of God's economy needs man's cooperation, as illustrated by the history of Samuel's mother Hannah, Samuel, and David, in the positive sense, and by the history of Eli and Saul, in the negative sense. Such a cooperation is related to the personal enjoyment of the good land, which typifies the all-inclusive and all-extensive Christ. Hence, 1 and 2 Samuel are a continuation of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, giving us the details concerning the enjoyment of the God-given good land. The good land enjoyed by the cooperators with God became the kingdom of God, in which they reigned as kings. This is a type of the New Testament believers' enjoyment of Christ, which issues in their reign in the eternal life (Rom. 5:21).

We need to be impressed with the fact that the fulfillment of God's economy requires our cooperation. To cooperate with God means to be bound together with God. We may use a three-legged race as an illustration. The runners in such a race must run in pairs, with each partner having one leg bound to one of his partner's legs. In order for the partners to run, they must cooperate with each other and not move independently. This is a picture of the proper Christian life. To be a Christian is to be bound together with Christ and to have one living with Him by one life.

The birth of Samuel involved Hannah's cooperation with God. The old priesthood had become stale and waning, and God wanted to have another beginning. For Samuel's birth, God initiated things behind the scenes. On the one hand, He shut up Hannah's womb; on the other hand, He prepared a provoker (1 Sam. 1:5-7). This forced Hannah to pray that the Lord would give her a male child. In her prayer she made a vow and said, "O Jehovah of hosts, if You will indeed look upon the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me and not forget Your maidservant, but give to Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to Jehovah for all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head" (v. 11). This prayer was initiated not by Hannah but by God. God chose Hannah because she was willing to cooperate with Him. God answered her prayer and opened her womb, and Hannah conceived and bore a son (v. 20). Then according to her vow, she offered her son to God, placing him in the custody of Eli. From this we see that Hannah, Samuel's mother, was one who cooperated very much with God. Her case shows us the kind of persons God expects to have today....

Today many continents and countries are open to the Lord's recovery. There is the need for some to make a vow like Hannah. I hope that many of the young people will make such a vow. You need to say, "Lord, I am Yours. I just lend myself to You." God will take your heart and accomplish something to fulfill what you vow to Him. (*Life-study of 1 Samuel*, msg. 1, pp. 5-7)

His God-worshipping Parents

Humanly speaking, Samuel's origin was his God-worshipping parents (vv. 1-8).

*Remaining in the Line of Life
Ordained by God for His Eternal Purpose*

In the midst of the chaos of the degraded Israel, Elkanah and Hannah remained in the line of life ordained by God for His eternal purpose. The line of life is a line to bring forth Christ for the enjoyment of God's people that on earth God may have His kingdom, which is the Body of Christ, the very organism of the Triune God.

Elkanah and Hannah remained in this line of life not merely for God's eternal salvation but for His eternal purpose. God's salvation is mainly for our benefit, whereas God's purpose is related to the fulfilling of God's desire. We need to ask ourselves whether we are here for our profit or for God's purpose. Today on this earth everyone is concerned for his own profit. Even the majority of Christians do not care for God's purpose. I can testify of Brother Watchman Nee that he was a man altogether for God's purpose. I would like to follow his pattern. In the Lord's recovery, we are for God's purpose, remaining in the line of life ordained by God for His eternal purpose, which is to gain the Body, the organism of the Triune God, that He may have a full expression in a corporate way.

*In Cooperation with the Move of God on Earth
for the Accomplishment of God's Economy*

This couple was in cooperation with the move of God on earth for the accomplishment of God's economy. Elkanah and Hannah were not the only ones moving; they were moved by the moving One, by the unique, divine Mover, who was moving secretly behind the scene. Under God's sovereign dealing, Hannah was suppressed in her soul with a burden in her spirit to pour out before Jehovah. This was God's move. Because of God's moving in her, Hannah could not have peace until she prayed for a son. God, the sovereign One, kept moving her and motivating her so that she had to pray, even though Eli, the one taking care of the service in God's house, did not understand her. In her prayer Hannah cooperated with the move of God.

God could motivate Hannah as a person who was one with Him in the line of life. As long as He can gain such a person, He has a way on earth. I hope that at least some of us will be today's Hannahs and say, "Lord, if You have anything on Your heart to accomplish for Your purpose, I am here. I am remaining in the line of life for the carrying out of Your economy." If you do this, I have the full assurance that you will be the ones whom God will move. He will come to you and motivate you. God needs many Hannahs, persons who can bring forth some Samuels to turn the age.

Especially His God-seeking Mother with Her Prayer

The origin of Samuel was especially his God-seeking mother with her prayer (vv. 9-18). Her prayer was an echo of the heart's desire of God. Her prayer was a human cooperation with the divine move for the carrying out of God's eternal economy.

We should no longer pray old prayers in a formal way. Instead, we need to pray something that is an echo of what is on God's heart. This means that what we say in our prayer is exactly what God wants to speak. Such a prayer is the speaking out of God's heart. Hannah's prayer was like this. God wanted a Samuel, yet He needed Hannah's cooperation to pray to Him, saying, "Lord, I need a son." This prayer was very human, yet it was a cooperation with the divine move for God's economy.

*The Moving God with His Answer
to the Prayer of Samuel's Mother*

*According to God's Desire and Intention
for His Move among His Elect*

In a very particular way, the origin of Samuel was the moving God with His answer to the prayer of Samuel's mother (vv. 19-20). After such a prayer as Hannah prayed, it was easy for God to do something, because man's cooperation had become a base on which He could move. The

moving God answered the prayer of Samuel's mother according to His desire and intention for His move among His elect.

*In Keeping with the Principle
That God Needs Man's Cooperation*

God's move in response to Hannah's prayer was in keeping with the principle that God needs man's cooperation with His move in His economy. This is the principle of incarnation.

*To Produce a Nazarite Who Was Absolute
for the Fulfilling of His Desire*

God's move with His answer to Hannah's prayer was to produce a Nazarite who was absolute for the fulfilling of His desire. A Nazarite is one who is consecrated to God absolutely. A Nazarite could never cut his hair or drink wine. In the Bible, long hair signifies the headship, the authority. A Nazarite's keeping his hair long was a sign that just as a female takes her husband as her head, he takes God as the Head, considering God his Husband. Thus, a Nazarite is one who submits himself to God, taking God as the Head, the authority. This is why Hannah prayed that if the Lord would give her a boy, no razor would come upon his head (v. 11). In the Bible, to drink wine is to enjoy the worldly pleasures. A Nazarite not only submits to God as the authority but also has no interest in the enjoyment of worldly pleasures. Even before he was born, Samuel was consecrated by his mother to be such a person. This is a great thing, for it was Samuel who brought in a new age.

The New Testament age was brought in by another Nazarite—John the Baptist. The Lord Jesus was a Nazarite, as were Peter and Paul. Actually, everyone who remains in the line of life is a Nazarite. If we would be today's Nazarites, we must take God as our Head and Husband, submitting to Him, and have no interest in worldly pleasures.

We need to be impressed with Samuel's origin, with his source. Because he came out of such a strong source, he could not be an ordinary, worldly person. Rather, he was the one who replaced the waning priesthood and brought forth David, who brought forth Christ.

Supported by His Mother

First Samuel 2:19 indicates that Samuel was supported by his mother. In the Lord's recovery today, we also need support, and we thank the Lord for the many mothers in the church life. (*Life-study of 1 Samuel*, msg. 2, pp. 9-14)

**THE APPLICATION OF THE CASE OF SAMUEL
TO OUR PRESENT SITUATION**

Our present situation and God's need today are the same in principle as the situation and the need at the time of Samuel. Some today need to pray according to God's need, as Hannah did. God needs some like Samuel, who was a Nazarite, a priest, a prophet, and the last judge. Samuel was the last judge because God used him to terminate the confused situation among God's people, who were without a king or a kingdom. God needs such ones who are qualified to terminate the negative situation and bring in the king and the kingdom. The fulfillment of the kingdom is the coming kingdom, which will be brought in by the Lord Jesus, but there is a need today for some like Samuel to cooperate by bringing in that kingdom. In a sense, Christ our King is not here yet, and we are still in a confused situation, just as in the age of the judges. We should aspire to be the last judge. The sisters especially should aspire to be like Hannah, praying to bring forth some like Samuel, who will terminate the confused age so that Christ the King may come with His kingdom.

We need to realize how greatly the Divine Trinity is needed for this to be accomplished. In order for Hannah to pray such a prevailing prayer and receive a definite reply, she needed the tabernacle and the offerings, which typify Christ the Son as the embodiment of God and the reality of all the offerings. Similarly, in order for us to pray to meet God's need today, we need Christ as the embodiment of God and the reality of the offerings. We also need the fulfillment of the Tent of

Meeting, which is the church as God's dwelling place. Hannah did not pray her prevailing prayer in her home. We need God's embodiment and His full salvation in the church life. Then we can pray prevailing prayers for God's goal, to bring in the kingdom. This is the experience of the Divine Trinity. (*CWWL, 1983*, vol. 3, "The Divine Trinity as Revealed in the Holy Word," ch. 10, pp. 292-293)

THE HANNAH MINISTRY

Hannah wept, fasted, prayed, and cried unto the Lord for a son who would be absolutely given to the Lord for His service. This son was the one who brought in the King. Hannah had nothing to be proud of. However, Peninnah, had much to boast of. She could point to all her children and say, "I have this and that, all this and all that, etc." I want to say a word to you out of my heart. If you are still in the realm of the judges, you can be blessed and have results, but God's eyes are not on you. If these were not the last days, we would hope that Peninnah might have many more children. But if I am right, these are the last days and God's eyes are on those who can be the means of bringing in the King. Let us ask ourselves, "What is our ministry? Have we any part in this special ministry, this Hannah ministry?" Some have no other thought but revival. They think that the principle of the judges will continue to the end. But there is the more important ministry of bringing in the King.

Hannah's way was not an easy way, and it was made even more difficult because of Peninnah's comparisons and tauntings. Those who want to be Hannahs must prepare themselves for persecution, scorn, weeping, and fasting. This ministry costs. A price has to be paid because all such ministry comes through testing and suffering; it has to be wrought into us. Others can eat and drink and look at their children, but here was one who fasted and wept. It is not a matter of how many we can save but a matter of God getting His company of overcomers. God wants to get a people who will be able to pray and bring in the kingdom.

Hannah's prayer was the means for the birth of Samuel. Our prayers should result in the bringing forth of overcomers. What have we done in this respect? Some who have worked much and have many children will say, "It seems that you are not doing anything. In the past you could lead revival meetings and do this and that. What are you doing now?" Even Eli, God's priest, did not understand Hannah. He said, "What are you doing? You are drunk."

From the birth of Samuel we see a line of prophets who could also be priests to bring in the King. Hannah bore a son—a prophet. God had done quite much with Hannah; He led her through all sorts of difficulties. As a result, He was able to find one who could put eating and drinking and all else aside. She came to the point where she could not go on without a son; she came to a point where she had to have a son. The son in 1 Samuel 1 is the man-child of Revelation 12, the one who brings in the King and the kingdom. (*CWWN*, vol. 46, ch. 172, pp. 1179-1180)

Study Questions:

1. In what way did Hannah coordinate and cooperate with God for the accomplishment of His economy? How does her case show us the kind of persons God expects to have today?
2. What is the "line of life"? How can we, like Hannah, remain in the line of life for the carrying out of God's economy?
3. How can the sisters as today's Hannahs pray prevailing prayers to meet God's need and bring in God's kingdom?

References and Further Reading:

1. *Life-study of 1 Samuel*, msgs. 2 and 38.
2. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1983*, vol. 3, "The Divine Trinity as Revealed in the Holy Word," ch. 10.
3. *The Collected Works of Watchman Nee*, vol. 46, ch. 172.