

## **FOR THIS CHILD I PRAYED**

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*Lessons: 1 Samuel 1; True Christian Religion 677,681,684 (headings)*

Long, long ago there lived a woman named Hannah. She was a good woman, for she loved the Lord; and every year at the time of sacrifice she would go with her husband, Elkanah, to worship in the Lord's holy temple at Shiloh. But each year, as Hannah prayed to the Lord, her heart was filled with sadness. You see, Hannah loved little children with a very tender love, but she had none of her own.

So it was that Hannah wept in the house of the Lord and as she wept she lifted her eyes to heaven and prayed to the Lord, saying:

'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.'

Now the Lord knows all things. He hears all of our prayers, and when it is good for us He answers them and gives us the things we ask of Him. So the Lord heard Hannah's prayer, and He answered it; for in a year's time a son was born unto her. And she called the name of the child "Samuel", which means "asked of the Lord", for she had prayed to the Lord for her son.

You can imagine how very happy this little child made Hannah. But Hannah was not only happy, she was thankful as well. For she knew well that all children are given to parents by the Lord alone. And she knew that the reason the Lord gives them to parents is so that mothers and fathers will protect them, feed them, clothe them, and above all teach them about the Lord, so that as they grow older they will come to know the Lord, to love Him, and to worship Him.

More than anything else in the world, Hannah wanted her little son, Samuel, to love the Lord and to serve Him. So, as soon as he was old enough to feed and clothe himself, she took him to the house of God in Shiloh. And she brought him to Eli, the high priest, and said: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord there."

So Eli took the little child, Samuel, and he lived with Eli, the high priest, in the temple of God at Shiloh. And each year at the time of sacrifice Hannah would

come to see her son, Samuel; and each year she brought him a little coat of fine linen which she had made for him.

Now the Lord wants all of us to be as wise as Hannah. He wants us to know that He alone gives children to parents; and that parents are not only to protect and feed and clothe the children given into their care, but they are also to teach them about the Lord, about His Word, and about life as it is in heaven.

The Lord does not want us to take our children to the church and leave them there as did Hannah, when she left Samuel with Eli in the temple at Shiloh. Things are done differently today. But the Lord does want parents to do something very much like the thing that Hannah did. He wants parents to bring their newly born babies before Him in His open Word and have them baptized. And when mothers and fathers do this thing, which the Lord asks of them, it shows that they love the Lord and His Church. It shows that they are grateful for the children the Lord has given them, and that they want their children to grow up in the Church where the Lord is loved, where His Word is read, and where the commandments are kept.

You know we are told in the Lord's Word that there are three uses of baptism. The first use is introduction into the Christian Church both in this world and in heaven. The second use is that the Lord may be known, acknowledged, and followed. The third and last use is that man may be regenerated.

When the Word speaks of three uses, we immediately think of three responsibilities, or three things that must be done. And since there are three uses of baptism, there are three things that parents must promise to do, when they bring their infant children before the Lord to be baptized in His name.

The first promise that parents make to the Lord is that they will raise their children in a home where the Church is loved and the teachings of the Church are talked about and lived. This introduces a child into the Church. The second promise is to teach children about the Lord so that they will learn to know Him and love Him. The third promise that parents make to the Lord is to read His Word to their children and to have regular family worship. They promise to teach their children to be obedient and respectful, for they know that only children who have learned to obey and respect authority can come to love, respect, and obey the Lord when they have grown up.

If fathers and mothers have these things in their hearts, when they bring their little ones into the presence of the Lord; and if afterward they do the things which they have promised; then they will be like the good woman who long ago brought her son to the house of God and said: "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of Him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord. And he worshiped the Lord."