



HOW DID HANNA RESPOND TO HER SITUATION

WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THEM

1) The reason for her overwhelming sorrow

I think from the scriptures we can assume that Peninnah's mistreatment of Hannah stemmed from the fact that their husband loved Hannah far more than he loved her. Whatever the reason, Hannah was distressed and sorrowful over not being able to have children and the mistreatment by her husband's other wife.

So we know Hannah for her deep sorrow. She had longed for a son for many years, but she couldn't have children. We know her for her deep faithfulness. Hannah prayed continually and never gave up hope that God would hear her prayer. We know her for her unthinkable sacrifice. We also know her for her prayer, that was so deep and from the heart that the priest thought she was drunk.

2) Hanna was in good company

Hannah isn't the first woman that was barren to be written about in the Bible. Sarah laughed at the angel's proclamation that God would give her a child. (Genesis 18:12) "So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, "After I have become old, am I to have pleasure, my lord being old also?" Sarah doubted to the point of giving her husband her maid to sleep with and provide him a son. She didn't rely on God and His words brought by the angel. What a sad thing, when God sends a messenger directly to His people and they don't believe... Then again, He sent His own Son to come and proclaim that He had come to overcome sin and hell, and very few believed.

Rebekah married Isaac when he was 40 years old. She was unable to have children and Isaac prayed for 20 years on her behalf that God would supply a son. Rebekah conceived and was going to have twins. She struggled during pregnancy and she questioned, "If it is so, why am I in this *condition*?" (Genesis 25:22) as her twins struggled in the womb. She questioned God.

Rachel gave the responsibility to her husband for her inability to have children. His other wife, Rachel's sister Leah, was providing children for Jacob, so it wasn't his fault that she was not getting pregnant. Like Sarah, Rachel gave her husband her servant as another wife so that she could have children by her. Instead of waiting on the Lord they took matter into their own hands.

Hannah is one of the most recognizable women in Scripture for all these reasons. Many of us remember her story for her deep anguish over not being a mother. We all most likely recall her time at the temple, taking her request to God in powerful prayer. And what mom wouldn't be impacted by Hannah's bold move – leaving her little blessing at the temple to be raised by Eli the priest?



Hannah's life had significant moments that stand out, but there are other facts about her we often overlook. Are you wondering if there's more to Hannah's story than you thought? Here are 5 things you may not know about Hannah in the Bible.

3) Hannah knew how to respond with grace, or not respond at all.

Hannah showed unmatched restraint with her words. She not only knew the right things to say, but also when to say nothing. For years Peninnah, Elkanah's other wife, ridiculed Hannah for her infertility. Yet instead of responding to her tormentor, she kept her mouth shut.

During one of the family's annual trips to the tabernacle, Hannah had enough of the ridicule. She didn't lash out at Peninnah, but she knew it was time to do something. She left the dinner table and went straight to God with her plea. Her character was tested when Eli accused her of being drunk. And once again Hannah demonstrated grace and humility through her words.

Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation" (1 Samuel 1:16). By describing herself as Eli's servant, she acknowledged his position of authority. When she could have easily mouthed back at him, she chose to display proper respect.

4) Eli the priest asked God to bless Hannah with a child more than once.

Once Hannah explained herself to Eli, his heart softened. He then reassured her of God's intention to answer her prayer for a son. But that was just the last time Eli went to God on Hannah's behalf.

Eli was right. God answered her prayer. But the story didn't end when Hannah gave birth to Samuel. It didn't end when she took him to the temple either. Each year Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah again, asking God to give them more children (5) because of her sacrifice.

"Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, 'May the Lord give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the Lord'" (1 Samuel 2:20).