

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

We will begin a new series of studies today. Last year we learned about the kings of Israel. Now we will rewind a little bit and focus on the most important king in Israel: David. God described David as “a man after His own heart.” Just like any person, David was far from perfect. Despite that, he had a key role in God’s salvation plan. Before we talk about David, we will discuss prophet Samuel who inaugurated David to be a king. The year was about 1100 BC. The Israelites went through over two centuries of chaos after they settled in Canaan. They followed idolatry and immorality of the pagans that God warned them before. Therefore, they experienced cycles of sinning, judgment, crying to God for help, deliverance through judges and peace. The book of Judges ends with these words: **In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.** (21:25) Sounds familiar, isn’t it? It happens in any generation when people make their own rules because they do not obey God’s standard. Israel was in a desperate situation looking for a leader. People often search for a hero when they are in a mess. At one time during my college years, no one wanted to be the chairperson of the student council. Someone posted a few big words on a notice board. It is a quote from ancient Chinese history that reads: “Isn’t there any capable person among us?” Few days later, another person added a line underneath it: “You can be a pioneer!” It is easy to complain. Step out and take the lead if you truly care. God never abandons His children. He appointed leaders for Israel. Israel was actually in a series of transitions: from a people group to a nation; from the last judge Samson to the first prophet Samuel; and from worship in the tabernacle to the temple. God will also lead our way if we follow Him by faith. We see that principle played out in the life of Hannah today.

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 妻子的愁苦 Misery of a Wife

Hannah was a wife of misery for two reasons. First, she could not conceive a child. Second, she was mocked by the second wife of her husband because of that. The chapter begins by giving us some background of this family. They lived in the area of the tribe of Ephraim. According to 1 Chronicles chapter 6, Elkanah was actually a Levite. His two wives were Hannah and Peninnah. Perhaps Elkanah took a second wife because Hannah was barren. Abraham and Jacob did that too. In all those cases, the wives became rivals. There is always a negative consequence when people violate God’s command. Even though Hannah was despised by Peninnah, she had a caring husband. We pick up the story by reading **verse 3-8**. Elkanah’s family remained faithful to God in a time of spiritual disobedience. They went to Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, to worship God once a year. The town was about five miles to the north of the future Jerusalem. That is a good reminder to the Christian dads. God assigns you as the spiritual leader for your family. Set a godly example to your family members. Guide them to love God and bring them to the church. Hannah’s heart was filled with misery because she was infertile. A son means two things at that time: a source of labor and a person to carry on the family’s name. The Bible says children are gifts from God. Therefore, the Hebrews interpreted a wife with no child as a curse. Verses 5 and 6 tell us Hannah suffered from infertility “**because the Lord had closed her womb.**”

God is sovereign over all things. Having baby and its timing are never too trivial to God. He gives us a lot of freedom to plan our education, career, marriage and parenting. But ultimately, God makes things happen according to His will. Hannah's misery got worse when she was teased by Peninnah. Those hurtful words moved Hannah to tears. It is always a rude thing to ridicule others in their misery. Besides, we have to be mindful of people's situation. In my former church there were frequently pot-luck home gatherings. Once a brother asked me why a particular family never showed up. The family received help from others to support the husband to attend seminary. Perhaps they did not have extra means to cook something presentable to share with others. We need to be sensitive to others even when we celebrate God's blessings. Other people may not have what you have. However, we should not harbor any bitterness or self-pity if we feel being less-fortunate. You may not be that rich or smart, you may have a humble job or your children do not attend renowned schools. Do not think that God blesses you less. He loves you more than money and material can quantify. Elkanah gave comfort to Hannah in her misery. He reserved two times of the meat to Hannah than what he offered to Peninnah and her children. Elkanah encouraged Hannah in verse 8: ... **"Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"** He tried to cheer up a weeping wife. But he could have done so in a more tender way. A Bible commentator suggests that Elkanah could have said: "You are worth more to me than ten sons." This author must be a great husband! The men among us need to take note. Hannah evaluated her self-worth in terms of her ability to carry a son. Therefore, she needed affirmation that she was precious to Elkanah no matter what. We can apply the same technique as we help people in their miseries. We encourage them to look to God instead on focusing on how the world evaluates us. God loves us the same no matter what we have or do not have; or what we can do or cannot do. God creates us and He provides what He sees as the best for us.

## 2. 上帝的奧妙 Mystery of God

Hannah was a woman of misery. Instead of hiding her pain, she turned to God. Next we will look at the mystery of God. By that I refer to how God fulfills His plans behind the scene through our actions. We will read from **verse 9-11**. After Elkanah's comfort, Hannah went back to pray. The "temple" in verse 9 means the tabernacle. The Jerusalem temple was not built until 150 years later. Eli was the high priest at that time. Hannah made a pledge that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate the child to serve Him. The notion about not cutting his head is related to the vow of the Nazarites. A well-known example is Samson. According to Numbers chapter 6, both men and women could become Nazarites. They volunteered to serve God for a designated period of time. It is like today some Christians take time off work for various ministries. Hannah offered her future son to serve God for the rest of his life. Was she bargaining with God? We can certainly pray without making a pledge. Doing so will not make our prayer more effective. Hannah's concern was not to vindicate herself to Peninnah or just to complete her obligation as a wife. She knew that it could only be God's work if she conceived a son. Then the child was not hers. It was God's possession. He must have a special purpose for the child. Hannah showed us the proper attitude for prayer. We do not only pray for our needs. We should also pray that God will use what He offers us for His glory. It can be a baby, a job, a car, a house, a college degree or our health. God wants to bless us first, so that He can bless others through us. Hannah pleaded to God while sobbing and pouring her soul. Our emotions will not make prayer more convincing. However, our feelings reflect our sincerity. We can express our sorrow, fear, doubt and even

anger when we approach God. He fully understands us. Eli was present when Hannah prayed. He saw her lips moving without making any sound. He accused Hannah for he thought she was drunk. Do we not sometimes commit the same mistake? We should not assume that we know the whole story until we find out the facts. Do not rely on our imagination but do some investigations. After Hannah clarified herself, Eli gave her a priestly blessing. Look at **verse 17-18**. Hannah experienced God's peace after she committed her need to God. The burden was lifted off her shoulders. God will give us peace that surpasses all understanding as we pray to Him. Philippians 4:6-8 is a beautiful promise. Before God starts changing our life condition, He works on our heart condition first. We will still have concerns about our problem, but there should not be worry anymore. Finally, God answered Hannah. We continue to read **verse 19-20**. After the couple went home, they kept trying to have a baby. Prayer does not contradict our human effort. In fact, prayer does not take away our obligations. Employees have to work hard to put food on the table. Students have to prepare well for the next exam. We look for the best doctor when there is a severe illness. God ministers His grace through the resources He gives us. Verse 19 describes that God remembered Hannah. Of course, it does not mean that God forgot her. It is the opposite. God was mindful of Hannah's need. He took action when the right time came. The same expression appears in Exodus chapter 6. God told Moses that He was about to rescue His people from Egypt because He remembered the covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We may be absent-minded about the promises we made. But God will not. He works in mysterious way through our circumstances to accomplish His plans. Eventually, God gave Hannah a son. She named him "Samuel," which can mean "God heard." God graciously granted her wish when He heard her misery.

### 3. 家庭的事奉 Ministry of a Family

Now Hannah got a son. Next, she fulfilled her vow and dedicated Samuel to serve God. This offering is actually a ministry of the whole family. Hannah must seek Elkanah's approval before letting go of their son. Based on Numbers chapter 30, a father could accept or reject a vow made by a child still living at home. Similarly, a husband had to endorse a vow his wife made. In verse 22 of our story, Hannah reminded Elkanah her promise to God: ... **"As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever."** This should not be the first time she made the request. Regardless, there was no refusal from Elkanah. This godly couple agreed to give God their son for a lifelong service. Hannah waited till Samuel had weaned before bringing him to Eli. At that time, it could be as long as three years. We pick up the story in **verse 26-28**. Hannah had no reservation. The passage does not tell us her emotion. I am sure she had struggles. Samuel would also suffer from separation anxiety. Nowadays, some moms find it hard to drop off their children at school or to a nursery. This past Monday little kids giggled when they got on a school bus, while their moms shed a few tears. But Hannah had peace. Later, she expressed her feelings in another prayer. She begins in 2:1 by saying: ... **"My heart exults in the Lord..."** She reacted with joy, not sorrow! In giving her only child away, Hannah also forfeited the joy of motherhood. She told Eli in verse 28 that Samuel was "lent to the Lord." There is an interesting word-play behind it. The word "lent" is actually the root-word for Saul. Later, Saul became the first king of Israel because the Israelites asked God for a king. It implied that they should not have made the request. God had appointed a leader for them in Samuel. Now this future leader was lent back to God for service. But why did Hannah give Samuel away so soon? A three-year-old kid is far from independent. He might

cause unnecessary burdens to Eli. Hannah brought Samuel to the tabernacle soon after he had weaned. In other words, there was no delay in fulfilling her vow. From then on, Samuel would learn from Eli to serve God. The couple visited their son once a year when they presented an annual offering to God. Eli blessed them that God would give them more children. Hannah subsequently had three more sons and two daughters. What a beautiful ending! The experience of Hannah is about ministry of a family. Today parents and children should work as a team. If God puts a burden on one person, then the whole family can discuss how to offer their support. It surely takes faith when we offer to God, whether it is money, time or even our children. You trust that the Lord will provide for your needs. After all, God gives us everything we need first, so that we can return a portion to Him. God deserves our best, not the rest. Our offering to God also reflects our love for Him and our priorities. For example, we should not wait till we have secured our retirement funds and our children have graduated from school before we serve God. You can start by doing small things. I once encouraged some students to consider giving God a small money offering. It is a faith-growing process. If they are willing to give God a little, then they will give Him more when they receive their paychecks. In some cases, God may call children to full-time ministries just like He called Samuel. When children come to a certain age, it is a decision between them and the Lord. Parents should give their support, knowing that God's way is the best way. But of course, becoming a pastor or a missionary is not the only way to serve God. No matter what profession God calls each of us to do, it is a ministry in the workplace. We use the unique gifts God has given us to serve Him in any career. This world needs more doctors, teachers, scientists, businessmen, etc. who love the Lord. They witness God to their employers, coworkers and people they serve through their work.

## 結論 CONCLUSION

Hannah's experience was a journey of faith. She committed her desire to God, and waited for Him to make it happen in His right timing. God will lead our way too if we follow Him by faith. On a bigger picture, Hannah's story has a deeper spiritual meaning. Her infertility was an indication of the spiritual unfruitfulness of Israel. The nation as a whole walked away from God and indulged in idolatry. God answered the request of a humble lady. In doing so, God prepared a leader for His people. Likewise, God cherishes our petition out of simple faith for ourselves, our family, church and nation. But besides praying for specific needs, we should also make ourselves available for God's service. We say to God: "Lord, use me in any way that You see fit to accomplish Your plan."

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

我們今天將開始一系列新的學習。去年我們查考過以色列的君王。現在我們將倒退一點，看以色列最重要的君王大衛。神形容大衛是「合祂心意的人」。就像任何人一樣，大衛遠非完美。儘管如此，他在神的救恩計劃中扮演重要的角色。在我們談論大衛之前，我們會來看先知撒母耳，他按立大衛成為王。當時大約是公元前 1100 年。以色列人定居迦南後，經歷了兩個世紀的混亂。他們不理神之前的警告，跟隨外邦人拜偶像和行淫亂。因此，他們經歷了一個循環：犯罪、審判、向神呼求、士師的拯救和太平。士師記是這樣結束的：**那時，以色列中沒有王，各人任意而行。(21:25)** 這句話是否似曾相識？任何年代都會出現同樣的情形。當人們不遵守神的標準時，他們便定自己的規則。以色列正處於困境，尋找下一位領袖。人們經常在絕望中期待英雄出現。在我上大學的時候，有一段時候沒有人想當學生會主席。有人在佈告欄上貼了幾個大字。他引用中國歷史上的一句名言：「蜀中無大將？」幾天後，又有人在下面加了一行字：「你可作先鋒！」埋怨是很簡單的事。如果你真的關心，那麼便出來帶領吧。神從不丟棄祂的兒女。祂為以色列任命領袖。以色列實際上處於一系列的轉變中：從一個民族到一個國家；從最後的士師參孫到第一位先知撒母耳；從會幕中的敬拜轉到聖殿。只要我們憑信心跟隨神，祂也會帶領我們。我們今天從哈拿的經歷中體會到這個原則。

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

### 1. 妻子的愁苦 Misery of a Wife

哈拿是一個充滿愁苦的妻子，有兩個原因。首先，她無法懷孕。其次，她因此被丈夫的另一個太太取笑。這一章首先向我們介紹了這個家庭的一些背景。他們住在以法蓮支派的地區。根據歷代志上第 6 章，以利加拿實際上屬於利未支派。他的兩個妻子是哈拿和昆尼拿。也許以利加拿娶第二個妻子是因為哈拿無法生育。亞伯拉罕和雅各也是那樣做的。在那些家庭裡，幾個老婆成為對頭。當人違背神的命令時，總會有負面的後果。儘管哈拿被昆尼拿看不起，但她有一個體貼的丈夫。現在我們來讀**第 3-8 節**。在一個靈命悖逆的時代，以利加拿的家人仍然忠於神。他們每年到示羅去會幕敬拜神。那個城市是在未來的耶路撒冷以北約五英里。他們的例子是基督徒父親的一個很好的提醒。神安排你作為家庭中的屬靈領袖。你要為家人樹立敬虔的榜樣。引導他們愛神，並把他們

帶到教會。哈拿心中充滿了愁苦，因為她不能生育。兒子在當時意味著兩件事：勞動力和繼承家族的名字。聖經說孩子是神的賞賜。因此，希伯來人認為不能生孩子是神的詛咒。第 5 節和第 6 節都形容是「**耶和華不使哈拿生育**」。神是萬物的主宰。在神的眼中，生孩子的機會和時間都不是小事。神給了我們很大的自由來計劃我們的教育、職業、婚姻和養育兒女。但最終，神會按照祂的旨意讓事情發生。哈拿被昆尼拿戲弄後，她的愁苦變得更糟。哈拿被那些傷人的話弄哭了。嘲笑他人的愁苦肯定是不對的事情。此外，我們必須敏銳別人的情況。在我以前的教會裡，經常有家庭聚餐。有一次，一位弟兄問我為什麼某一個家庭從來不參加。那一家人得到別人的幫助，支持丈夫上神學院。也許他們沒有額外的錢來做一些像樣的菜與別人分享。當我們慶祝神的祝福時，也需要顧念別人的感受。其他人可能沒有你所擁有的。但同時，如果我們比較缺乏，也不應該懷有苦毒或自憐。你也許沒有別人那麼富有或聰明，你的工作可能比較簡單，或是你的孩子沒有上名校。不要認為神欠了你的祝福。祂愛你勝過金錢和物質所能衡量。以利加拿在哈拿的愁苦中安慰她。他留給哈拿的肉比他給昆尼拿和她孩子的肉多一倍。以利加拿在第 8 節鼓勵哈拿：…「**哈拿啊，你為何哭泣，不吃飯，心裡愁悶呢？有我不比十個兒子還好嗎？**」他嘗試鼓勵哭泣的太太。但他也許可以用更溫柔的方式來表達。一位解經家建議以利加拿可以說：「你對我來說比十個兒子更有重要。」這個作者一定是個好老公！我們中間的男士需要向他學習。哈拿根據能否生兒子來衡量她的自我價值。因此，她需要得到丈夫的肯定，她是被愛的。我們可以用同樣的方式來幫助在愁苦中的人。我們鼓勵他們仰望神，而不是專注於世界如何評價我們。無論我們有什麼或沒有什麼；能做什麼或不能做什麼，神都一樣愛我們。神創造了我們，並且賜給我們祂認為是最好的東西。

## 2. 上帝的奧妙 Mystery of God

哈拿是一個愁苦的女子。但是她沒有隱藏自己的愁苦，她向神求助。接下來我們看看上帝的奧妙。我指的是神如何透過我們的行動來完成祂的計劃。我們來讀**第 9-11 節**。得到以利加拿的安慰之後，哈拿回去禱告。第 9 節中的「殿」是指會幕。耶路撒冷的聖殿是在 150 年後才建成的。以利是當時的大祭司。哈拿許願，如果神給她一個兒子，她會奉獻這個孩子來服事神。不砍剃頭是與拿細耳人的約有關。一個有名的例子是參孫。根據民數記第 6 章，男人和女人都可以成為拿細耳人。他們自願為神服務一段指定的時間。就好像今天有些基督徒請假專心參與事奉。哈拿要讓她未來的兒子一生事奉神。她是在和神討價還價嗎？我們禱告時當然不需要向神作出任何承諾。這樣做不會使我們的禱告更有效。哈拿所關心的不是向昆尼拿爭一口氣，也不只是完成她作為妻子的責任。她知道，如果她懷孕的話，那只能是神的作為。那麼這個孩子就不是她的，而

是神的產業。祂必然對這個孩子有特別的心意。哈拿向我們顯示了禱告的正確態度。我們不僅為我們的需要禱告，我們也應該祈求神使用祂所賜給我們的一切來榮耀祂。可以是嬰兒、工作、車子、房子、大學學位或我們的健康。神首先祝福我們，並通過我們祝福別人。哈拿一邊哭泣，一邊向神傾訴她的心願。我們的情感不會使禱告更有效。然而，我們的感情反映我們的真誠。當我們靠近神時，我們可以表達我們的悲傷、恐懼、懷疑甚至憤怒。祂完全了解我們。哈拿禱告時以利也在場。他看到她的嘴唇在動，但沒有發出任何聲音。他指責哈拿以為她喝醉了。我們不是常常犯同樣的錯誤嗎？在找出事實之前，我們不應該假設自己知道整個故事。不要依賴自己的想像力，而是要做一些調查。在哈拿解釋之後，以利給了她一個祭司祝福。請看第 17-18 節。哈拿將自己的需要交託給神之後，便經歷了神的平安。擔子從她肩膀上卸下來。當我們向神禱告時，祂會賜給我們出人意外的平安。腓立比書 4:6-8 是一個美好的應許。在神開始改變我們的現狀之前，祂首先會改變我們的心情。我們仍然會關心我們的問題，但不應該再擔心了。最後，神回應了哈拿。我們繼續看第 19-20 節。這對夫婦回家後，不斷努力嘗試。禱告與我們的努力並不矛盾。事實上，禱告並沒有除去我們的責任。員工必須工作使家人有飯吃。學生必須為下一次考試做好準備。當有嚴重疾病時，我們會尋找最好的醫生。神通過祂給我們的資源來賜予祂的恩典。第 19 節描述神顧念哈拿，原文直接翻譯是神想起哈拿。當然，這並不是說神忘記了她。恰恰相反。神知道哈拿的需要。祂在適當的時候採取行動。同樣的形容也出現在出埃及記第 6 章。神告訴摩西祂快要從埃及拯救祂的子民，因為祂想起祂與亞伯拉罕、以撒和雅各所立的約。我們或許會忘記自己許下的諾言，但是神不會忘記的。祂藉著我們的環境以奧妙的方式工作，以成就祂的計劃。最終，神賜給哈拿一個兒子。她給他起名叫「撒母耳」，意思是「神聽到了」。當神聽到哈拿的愁苦時，祂恩慈地滿足了她的願望。

### 3. 家庭的事奉 Ministry of a Family

現在哈拿有了一個兒子。接下來，她實現自己的承諾，將撒母耳奉獻給神。這個奉獻實際上是整個家庭的事奉。哈拿必須得到以利加拿的同意，才能放下他們的兒子。根據民數記第 30 章，父親可以接受或拒絕仍住在家裡的孩子所許的願。同樣，丈夫必須同意妻子的誓言。在我們故事的第 22 節中，哈拿提醒以利加拿她對神的承諾：…「等孩子斷了奶，我便帶他上去朝見耶和華，使他永遠住在那裡。」這應該不是她第一次提出這個要求。無論如何，以利加拿沒有拒絕。這對敬虔的夫婦同意將他們的兒子獻給神，讓他終生服務。哈拿等到撒母耳斷了奶，才把他帶到以利那裡。這段時間可能長達三年。我們繼續看第 26-28 節。哈拿沒有任何保留。這段經文沒有提到她的情緒，但她心裡肯定會有掙扎。撒母耳也必然會不捨得爸媽。如今，一些媽媽把孩子送到學校或教會的嬰

兒室也會捨不得。過去的這個星期一，小孩子們笑著上校車，而有些媽媽卻流眼淚。但是哈拿很平靜。後來，她在另一個禱告中表達了她的感受。她在 2:1 說：…「我的心因耶和華快樂…。」她的反應是喜悅，而不是悲傷！哈拿放下她唯一的孩子，也失去了做母親的快樂。她在第 28 節告訴以利，撒母耳是「歸與」耶和華的。那個字的直接翻譯是「借給」。「借給」實際上是掃羅這個字的字根。後來，以色列人向神求王，掃羅便成為第一位君王。這裡暗示他們根本不需要提出這個要求。神為他們預備了撒母耳成為領袖。現在這位未來的領袖被借還給神。但是為什麼哈拿這麼快就把撒母耳送走呢？一個三歲的孩子仍未獨立，他可能會給以利帶來不必要的負擔。撒母耳斷奶後不久，哈拿就帶著他來到會幕。也就是說，她毫無耽擱，按時遵行她的諾言。從此，撒母耳向以利學習事奉神。這對夫婦以後每年趁獻祭時都會看孩子一次。以利祝福他們，期望神賜給他們更多的孩子。哈拿隨後又生了三個兒子和兩個女兒。多麼美好的結局！哈拿的經歷是整個家庭的事奉。今天，父母和孩子應該是同一個團隊。如果神給某個成員特別的負擔，那麼全家人可以討論如何同心支持。當我們向神奉獻時，肯定需要信心，無論是金錢、時間，甚至是我們的孩子。你要相信主會供應你的需要。畢竟，神首先把我們需要的一切都給了我們，然後我們再把一部份還給祂。神配得我們最好的，而不是剩餘的。我們對神的奉獻也反映我們對祂的愛和我們的優先次序。例如，我們不應該等到有足夠的退休金，或是孩子畢業後才事奉神。你可以從做一些小事開始。我曾經鼓勵一些學生考慮奉獻一點點金錢。這是一個信心成長的過程。如果他們願意給神一點點，那麼當他們有收入時，他們會願意給神更多。在某些情況下，神可能會呼召我們的孩子全時間事奉祂，就像祂呼召撒母耳一樣。當孩子到了一定的年齡，這是他們和主之間的決定。父母應該給予支持，因為知道神的安排一定是最美好的。但當然，成為牧師或宣教士不是事奉神的唯一途徑。無論神安排我們從事什麼職業，工作場所就是事奉神的地方。我們使用神賜給我們的獨特才幹在事業上為祂服務。這個世界需要更多愛主的醫生、老師、科學家、商人等。他們向他們的老板、同事和所服務的人見證神。

## 結論 CONCLUSION

哈拿的經歷是信心的旅程。她把自己的願望交託給神，並等待祂在適合的時間實現它。如果我們憑信心跟隨神，祂也會帶領我們。從整體來看，哈拿的故事具有深層的屬靈含義。她的不孕表明以色列沒有屬靈的果子。整個國家都遠離神，沉迷於偶像敬拜。神回應一位謙卑女士的請求。如此，神為祂的子民預備了一位領袖。同樣，神珍惜我們以單純的信心為自己、家庭、教會和國家的禱告。但除了具體的需要之外，我們也可以祈求神使用我們。我們對神說：「主啊，求祢按祢認為適合的方式使用我來完成祢的計劃。」