

Hannah's SONG

By Scott Harrup

A fall day. In the cool afternoon, throngs of people move about Israel's tabernacle in Shiloh. For centuries, this sacred tent has been ground zero for the nation's annual ceremonies of worship to God.

The Feast of Tabernacles is particularly joyful as the people remember God's faithful provision to them. They bring sacrifices to express their gratitude. Once the sacrificial portion is given, there is much meat to be shared. Family reunions are organized. Laughter and good-natured shouts abound.

But not for one young woman.

You can see her there at the tabernacle's perimeter, alone among the crowds of Israel's pilgrims, shoulders dipping ever so slightly, chest catching in suppressed spasms of sorrow. She holds her hands out plaintively. She continues praying, trying to couch her agony in words. But there are none to adequately express her pain, so her mouth moves silently.

The high priest takes notice. Eli approaches the woman. Will he pray with her personally? What words of encouragement will he offer?

"Don't you have more sense than to show up drunk at God's house?!"

Amazing insensitivity. But perhaps not surprising from a man whose sons desecrate their holy office by sleeping with women bringing sacrifices to the tabernacle.

Things are bad ... and getting worse

Hannah lived in troubled times. The Philistines were the current overlords in the land; Israel had been the vassal of one nation or another for much of

the previous four centuries.

On the home front, Hannah endured a heartbreaking transition in her marriage. She was apparently the first wife of Elkanah. All indications are Elkanah loved Hannah dearly. But in Israel continuing the family line was a culturally imposed imperative.

Hannah was barren.

Elkanah married Peninnah, who mothered a profusion of sons and daughters. Had Peninnah accepted her blessed position gracefully, Hannah could have suffered in silence. But Peninnah's ego wasn't satisfied unless she publicly humiliated Hannah.

Elkanah's solace was welcome but incomplete. "Am I not worth more to you than 10 sons?" he asked. Wouldn't she rather have heard "Are *you* not worth more to me than 10 sons?"

This was a devout family. They journeyed regularly to Shiloh to God's tabernacle to present offerings on behalf of every member of the family. Elkanah gave Hannah a "double portion" to sacrifice, evidence of his continued love. But Peninnah always found a choice moment for another carefully phrased verbal lancet.

Hannah, in desperation, stood at the tabernacle's perimeter and

prayed out of her anguish. She called on God to give her a son. In return she would dedicate that child to God's service.

Even the worst can point to God's best

Perhaps your life is in turmoil. Perhaps Mother's Day reminds you of heartache rather than joy. Is there a husband who doesn't understand you? Family members who seem to delight in your every shortcoming? Do you find even church has failed to bring the comfort you crave?

When all the expected sources of solace failed Hannah, God inter-

In our darkest moments God must remain our focus

50 Tough Questions
Relevant answers for today's concerns


Life serves up its share of challenges and difficulties. In times like these you look for hope and answers.

50 Tough Questions offers relevant answers for today's concerns.

\$7.99 (plus shipping)

For your copy, call Gospel Publishing House at 1-800-641-4310 and order item #02TQ3033. Or visit: www.gospelpublishing.com.

ISBN 0-88243-343-1



they are strangers in their homeland

The second generation of immigrants who call Europe their home.

help us pray

for europe's immigrant population

www.eyes4europe.org



Their future,
your purpose

TEACH

Assemblies of God
faculty positions
now available

Assemblies of God Higher Education continues to develop a national database of all interested persons who would like to be considered for faculty positions at endorsed AG colleges and universities.

The greatest area of need is in the non-Bible and theology disciplines, particularly math, science, behavioral science, business, and music. However, all interested persons are encouraged to apply regardless of discipline.

Previous college teaching experience preferred but may not be required in all situations.

Requirements for database eligibility:
Be Pentecostal ●

Member of Assemblies of God with faithful attendance at an AG church ●

AG pastor's recommendation ●

Doctorate preferred, ●
Master's degree minimum

Online application available at
www.colleges.ag.org

For further information, please contact:

Christian Higher
Education Department

1445 North Boonville Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802

(417) 862-2781, ext. 3315
colleges@ag.org
www.colleges.ag.org



Hannah's SONG

vened. God gave Hannah not just any son, but Samuel, the son who would lead Israel in victory against the Philistines and anoint Israel's first kings. Other children followed. Hannah became a mother revered in Israel's history.

Hannah's exultant prayer in 1 Samuel 2:2-10 admits life is often tumultuous. But in the end, the person who trusts God will triumph.

"My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high. My mouth boasts over my enemies, for I delight in your deliverance."

Hannah wanted the world to know God had made her dearest dreams come true. Yes, if you looked into Hannah's history just a few years deeper you found a woman on the verge of emotional collapse. If Hannah had tried to sing

then, it would have been a dirge. But God changed everything.

In our darkest moments God must remain our focus. His eternal perspective is our tether to ultimate purpose when our circumstances scream chaos.

The day came when Hannah could proclaim God's goodness not only in her life, but in all of life. Her words sing from Scripture 3,000 years later.

So take heart. If this Mother's Day is overshadowed, don't lose hope. God shaped a nation through one young woman's shattered life. He can transform your pain into promise as well. **tpe**

SCOTT HARRUP is senior associate editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

E-mail your comments to tpe@ag.org.

ABCs OF SALVATION

To know God and be ready for heaven, follow these steps:

A. Admit you are a sinner.

"There is no one righteous, not even one ... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:10,23 (See Romans 5:8; 6:23.)

Ask God's forgiveness and repent of your sins.

"Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13 (See Acts 3:19.)

B. Believe in Jesus (put your trust in Him) as your only hope of salvation. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (See John 14:6.)

Become a child of God by receiving Christ.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." John 1:12 (See Revelation 3:20.)

C. Confess that Jesus is your Lord.

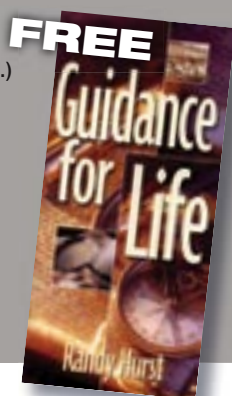
"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." Romans 10:9 (See verse 10.)

For further help, contact the Assemblies of God church near you.

If you would like someone to pray with you concerning your decision to follow Jesus Christ, please contact the church indicated on the back cover or call:

1-800-4PRAYER

Assemblies of God National Prayer Center



Q U I Z

1. What did Hannah give Samuel each year as he was growing up in the temple?

- A. Basket of food B. Ephod
C. Robe D. Oil

2. Who was the son of Rahab?

- A. Boaz B. Salmon
C. Obed D. Nahshon

3. How long did Moses' mother hide him after his birth?

- A. 1 month B. 2 months
C. 3 months D. 5 months

4. Who was Absalom's mother?

- A. Abigail B. Ahinoam
C. Eglah D. Maacah

5. Paul said the mother of what man had also been like a mother to him?

- A. John Mark B. Rufus
C. Timothy D. Gaius

6. To whom did the Shunammite go for help when her son died?

- A. Elijah B. Elisha
C. Samuel D. Solomon

7. Who told Mary she would be the mother of the Messiah?

- A. Michael B. Gabriel
C. The high priest D. An unnamed angel

8. How many children did Leah have?

- A. 6 B. 7
C. 10 D. 11

9. Near what region did a Canaanite woman come to Jesus seeking help for her daughter?

- A. Damascus B. Joppa
C. Samaria D. Tyre and Sidon

10. Who was Timothy's mother?

- A. Eunice B. Lois
C. Priscilla D. Julia

Answers on page 30.

(Some questions adapted from the Junior Bible Quiz program. For more information, visit nationaljbq.org.)



L I V I N G I T

Call upon the Lord!

Acts 2:21 tells us, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (NIV). That verse is talking about eternal salvation. But when we face unexpected danger, the Lord should be the One we think of immediately.

On a winter day in 1986, my wife, Patty, and I took a short vacation to see our friends in Moberly, Mo. We lived in Fairfield, Iowa, so it was about a 150-mile journey. We left on a Thursday night after I finished work. Patty, six months pregnant at the time, drove in the dark. I soon fell asleep, as did our 3½-year-old son Josh and 2-year-old son Jesse.

Just before we reached the Missouri state line, the car hit a patch of ice. Patty was driving 55 miles per hour, and the car began spinning out of control. I immediately woke up and instinctively yelled, "Lord, save us!"

And He did. The car turned 360 degrees and ended up on the opposite shoulder facing the direction we were headed. So many disastrous things could have happened. The car could have flipped and we could have been killed. We could have dropped into a deep ravine on either side of the highway. There could have been a car in the oncoming lane that would have hit us head-on or broadside.

We were powerless in that situation — except for the saving hand of Jesus. We emerged without a scratch, either on us or on the car.

The excitement of this trip wasn't over. I drove the rest of the way. When we reached Macon, Mo., we stopped at a convenience store to buy some milk for Jesse's bottle. En route, Patty had taken her wedding ring off to put lotion on her chapped hands. But she forgot. When Patty got out of the car the ring fell off her lap onto the pavement.

Patty didn't notice the ring was missing until she woke up in Moberly — 30 miles away — the next day. Then she realized what happened.

Again, God was with us. It had snowed overnight. We called the store in Macon, but no one answered. So we called the police department. An officer graciously drove over and found the ring in the snow by the front door, 14 hours after Patty lost it. In another 45 minutes the parking lot was plowed and the ring might never have been found.

As James 5:13 reminds us: "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray."

JOHN W. KENNEDY is news editor of *Today's Pentecostal Evangel*.

(For more articles like this, visit tpe.ag.org and click on Daily Boost.)