

People of the Bible

Hannah

Hannah was the favored wife of Elkanah and the devoted mother of the prophet Samuel. Samuel was born to her after years of bitter barrenness (1 Samuel 1:6-8) and fervent prayers for a son (1 Samuel 1:9-18).

After she weaned her son, Hannah expressed her gratitude by returning him for service in the house of the Lord at Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:24-28).

Her prayer (psalm) of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10) begins with the words "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exulted in the Lord." This song foreshadows the Magnificat, the Song of Mary centuries later (Luke 1:46-55).

The name "Hannah" derives from the Hebrew word for "grace." She is remembered and honored for joyfully having kept the vow she made before her son's birth and offering him for lifelong service to God.