

1. Readings in the Historical Books

1.1 1 Samuel 1:1–28

In this reading from the Book of Samuel you will encounter some distinctive characteristics of Hebrew biblical narrative. A brief prologue sets the story in time and place; be on the alert for geographic place names and a genealogy in this first segment. After the prologue, the narrator swiftly focuses on the main character and main action of the story. In this story, we find a woman taking a strong personal initiative to change her life and her status—and thereby to affect the course of the history of Israel.

This story and the prayer of praise that follows in 1 Sam 2 are used in the Jewish liturgy for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. As absorbed into the Magnificat (Luke 2:46–53), the prayer of praise has an important place in Christian liturgy as well.

Verse 1.

וַיְהִי

This formula introduces a past tense narrative by pointing to a particular time in the past; it opens the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel (cf. 2 Sam 1:1), Ezekiel, Ruth, Esther, and Nehemiah. (? [Need help?] see K. 232; L. 123; S. 159, 162, 191; W. 91–92.)

(→ WO'C 33.2.4.b, pp. 553–54; GKC §111 f; JM §118 b–c; L. 279–82; see List of Abbreviations.)

אִישׁ אֶחָד

אֶחָד ("one") is used here and on many other occasions (e.g., Judg 13:2; 2 Kgs 4:1) in the sense of "a certain one." אִישׁ אֶחָד is translated as "a certain man." אֶחָד serves as a marker of an indefinite noun. (→ WO'C 13.8.a., p. 251.)

מִן־הָרָמָתַיִם צוֹפִים מְהֵרָא אֶפְרַיִם

The expression מִן־הָרָמָתַיִם צוֹפִים may be translated as "from HaRamathaim (literally, The Two Hills) at Zophim" (cf. יִרְדּוֹ יִרְחוֹ e.g., Num 26:3; 31:12), or "from Ramathaim of the Zophites," or "from Ramathaim-Zophim." It shows, however, some grammatical peculiarities that have led a number of scholars to propose that the original text read מִן־הָרָמָתַיִם צוֹפִי ("from Ramathaim, a Zuphite," → McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 51). Also note that according to v 19, Elkanah is living in Ramah ("the hill").

Note

Whether we translate this phrase as “from Ramathaim of the Zophites” or “from Ramathaim, a Zuphite,” the geographical references move from a narrow circle to a larger one—that is, from the city/village of The Two Hills to Zuph, an area within the territory of Ephraim, and finally to Ephraim, the largest territorial unit. (This is similar to modern addresses, such as “Atlanta, Georgia.”) Significantly, the genealogy of Elkanah ends with a reference to Zuph, the Ephraimite (i.e., from the children of Ephraim), linking the genealogy with the geographical location. Genealogies in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible (OT/HB) often reflect geography.

וְשֵׁמוֹ

Why ו instead of ש? (? K. 111; Gr. 28; Ke. 209–10; L. 40; S. 34–35; W. 40–41; → GKC §104 e; JM §104 c–d.)

To whom does the pronominal suffix ו refer? How do you translate it?

Note

This form of clarifying the identity of a person just introduced in the narrative is quite common in the OT/HB. (See, for instance, Gen 24:29; 1 Sam 9:1; Ruth 1:2; 2:1; cf. Num 11:26.)

For Further Thought

The genealogical list serves the purpose of presenting Elkanah. Long genealogical lists are rare in the historical narratives in Joshua through Kings. Why might the text contain such a long genealogy? Comparing it with another passage containing a long genealogy, 1 Sam 9:1, may suggest an answer.

Verse 2.

To whom does לו refer?

This is the possessive לו, equivalent to the English “have,” in the sense of possessing (K. 32). (→ on the wide range of meanings of the preposition, see WO’C 11.2.10, pp. 205–12.) The question, therefore, is “who had what?”

וְלֹא שְׁתֵּי נָשִׁים שֵׁם אֶחָת חָנָה וְשֵׁם הַשְּׁנִיית פְּנִינָה

When two persons are introduced together, the clause opening with וְשֵׁם needs some clarifying expression to specify which name belongs to which person. The expression שְׁנִיית . . . אֶחָת in v 2 does exactly that. It occurs elsewhere in several similar situations (e.g., Exod 1:15; Ruth 1:2,4; cf. Gen 2:11–13).

After the atnah (? K. 44, 53, 344; Gr. 132–33; Ke. 16–17; L. 201–02; S. 290), the chain of vav conversive + prefix (wyqtł; hereafter ויקטל) continues. In this case, the chain does not refer to

a sequence of events but to the thread of the discourse. It provides an introduction to the narrative proper, which begins with the temporal clause in v 4. (→ WO'C 33.2.1.c, pp. 549–50.)

Should the ו in וּלְחֶנֶּה be translated as “and” or as “but”? *Explain.*

Translate vv 1–2.

Note

The contrast between the two women is stressed by a repetitive parallel structure, and the pattern is inverted: Hannah—Peninnah, Peninnah—Hannah. Hannah not only is mentioned first but also is at the center of the climactic contrast at the end of the verse. An inverted pattern of two syntactic elements or sounds in parallel phrases, called **chiasm**, is a common stylistic device in the OT/HB. (? K. 269, 345; → GKC §114 r n1, 456 §142f n1.) Note, too, the emphasis on Hannah's condition brought about by the particle of nonexistence, אֵין.

For Further Thought

Stories about two wives, one beloved but barren and the other less well loved but blessed with children, are common in the OT/HB (e.g., Sarah and Hagar, Leah and Rachel). Moreover, several biblical heroes (e.g., Isaac, Joseph, and Samson) were born either to mothers who considered themselves barren or under such circumstances that the infant's premature death seemed unavoidable (e.g., Moses). These stories suggest something beyond the ordinary concerning these persons, from the moment of birth. How does this contribute to the shaping of the hero's image?

Verse 3.

וַעֲלָה

This vav is not conversive (consecutive before imperfect). How do you know that? (? K. 7; Gr. 74–77; Ke. 211; L. 107–09; W. 90–92; → GKC §49; JM §118 a.)

For those who studied using Seow, *Grammar*, the vav (waw) opening the verse does not belong to a ויקטל form. How do you know that? (? S. 159–63.)

Analyze the verb וַעֲלֶה. (For an explanation of the grid, see “Note on the Text.” You can check the accuracy of your analysis against BDB.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

The verb is in affix (perfect) form. The contrast between the vav conversive + prefix (hereafter vav conversive–prefix; ויקטל) chain and the affix form וַעֲלֶה stresses the continuous or repetitive character of the actions of Elkanah. The expression מִיָּמַיִם יָמִימָה (? BDB) makes clear that the affix (perfect) form וַעֲלֶה is not used here simply to express one action completed in the past, in the sense of the English simple past (→ WO'C 30.2.2, pp. 482–83).

Who is the subject of the verb?

הָאִישׁ הַהוּא

Remember that הוּא is not always equivalent to the English “he.” Moreover, in this instance הוּא is preceded by the definite article, and therefore it cannot be the independent pronoun “he.” The הוּא in הָאִישׁ הַהוּא is a demonstrative pronoun. It indicates that he is not any man but *that* man. One set of demonstratives is identical with the third-person independent pronouns: הוּא, הִיא, הֵם, and הֵנָּה. Demonstratives may function in a sentence as attributive adjectives, that is, adjectives that not only describe and usually follow the noun but also agree with it in number, gender, and definiteness. (? about demonstratives, see K. 65, 102, 162–63, 352; Gr. 39; Ke. 52–54; L. 34–35; S. 60–61; W. 62; ? about attributive adjectives in general, see K. 232; Gr. 31; Ke. 45–46; L. 13–14; S. 40; W. 32–33.)

מֵעִירוֹ

Identify the preposition and **explain** its vocalization (? K. 238; Gr. 23, 84, 203; Ke. 30; L. 23; S. 34; W. 29).

With the verb construction וַעֲלֶה, the introduction to the narrative moves from the general background to a specific customary action of Elkanah's which is central to the narrative that follows.

Analyze לְהַשְׁתַּחֲוֹת (? K. 182, 361–62; Gr. 141; L. 254–55; S. 230–32; → WO'C 21.2.3.d, pp. 360–61; JM §59 b,g; cf. GKC §75 kk.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

How do you translate this infinitive construct? (? K. 47, 153; Ke. 179; S. 190–91; → WO'C 36.2.3, pp. 605–10.)

Does “to bow” or “to worship” make more sense than “by bowing” or “by worshipping”?

For Further Thought

The clause providing the names of the sons of Eli does not follow the formula **שֵׁם הָאָחִיד . . . הַשֵּׁנִי** which we have just encountered in verse 2. In Ruth 1:2, the names of the two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, are given together, almost as a unit. This **שֵׁם** clause stands in contrast to the clauses referring to Naomi and Elimelech, and to Orpah and Ruth (in v 4). Do you think that the difference in the construction of these double **שֵׁם** clauses is meaningless? If not, what is the difference between these two forms of double **שֵׁם** clauses?

Is the final **ה** of Shiloh a marker of a vowel (*mater lectionis*) or a consonant? (? K. 3; Gr. 17–18; Ke. 18; L. xxiii–xxiv; S. 8–10; W. 6–7; please note that **ה** was used as a marker of any long final vowel other than a long *i*, or a long *u*, and not only of *a*; → GKC §7 b–c; Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*, 31–36.) If it is a marker of a vowel, can you think of a different spelling for Shiloh? Check your proposal against 1 Sam 1:24.

Translate v 3.

For Further Thought

Following the **atnah**, there is a reference to the sons of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas. The reader is thus prepared for a confrontation between them and Elkanah's family. As you will see, however, such a confrontation does not seem to occur. Has the reader been offered a false clue? Does reading the first seven chapters of 1 Samuel confirm your answer?

Verse 4.

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּזְבַּח אֶלְקָנָה

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם provides the temporal data, i.e., “the/this day” (? BDB).

Analyze **וַיִּזְבַּח**

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate the whole phrase.

You may have written: “On that day Elkanah offered a sacrifice”; “And the day came, when Elkanah offered a sacrifice” (cf. BDB). “One day he offered a sacrifice” (WO’C 33.2.1.c, p. 550) is also possible and may be the best translation, for it refers to a day on which a particular action happened. (Cf. 1 Sam 14:1; 2 Kgs 4:8,11,18; Job 1:6,13.)

וַיָּתֵן לְפִנְנָה אֲשֶׁתּוֹ וְלִכְל־בָּנֶיהָ וּבָנוֹתֶיהָ מִנֹּחַ

Analyze the verb.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Who is the subject?

What is the direct object?

Who are the indirect objects?

In this instance, מִנֹּחַ refers to the portions of meat from the sacrificed animal that can be eaten by the person who brought the animal.

The sequence *verb–subject–indirect object–direct object* is very common in biblical Hebrew (? K. 390; Ke. 87; L. 39–40; S. 94; → GKC §142 f; for a comprehensive analysis of word order in verbal clauses, see JM §155 k–t, 156). Why is the subject omitted here?

(For those who studied using Seow: What else is mentioned in S. 94 that does not occur in this sentence? Can you explain why it does not occur here?)

The verbal form וַיָּתֵן is different from the one in וַיִּזְבַּח. The latter points to a singular event, but here we are concerned with a customary, repeated series of actions. This chain of events is followed in v 9, or perhaps more likely in v 7b (after the atnah). The affix (perfect) form יָתַן points to something that was habitual, usual. וַיָּתֵן stops the flow of the narrative to give background for the event that is about to be told. You may then translate v 4 as follows: “One day he offered a sacrifice—he would give portions (of the meat) to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters.” (so WO’C 33.2.1.c, p. 550).

For Further Thought

According to the story, Elkanah took his whole family (including sons and daughters) to Shiloh. His daughters, together with his sons, enjoyed eating the meat from the offered animal. Moreover, although the narrator probably means to draw attention to the contrast between Hannah and Peninnah, one cannot but notice that these sons and daughters are called “her (Peninnah’s) sons” and “her daughters.”

Verse 5.

וַלְחֻנָּה יָתֵן מִנֶּה אַחַת אֶפְיִים

-ו may mean “and,” but it may also mean “but.” In this case it would be better translated as “but,” since contrast is implied. Note the change in the word order. The sentence opens with וַלְחֻנָּה, that is, with the indirect object instead of the verb. The usual word order is disrupted in order to highlight the contrast between Hannah and Peninnah (→ K. 248, 284; Ke. 87; S. 94–95; GKC §142 f).

Analyze יָתֵן

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

If you identified יָתֵן as a prefix (imperfect) form, you are right. The verb, however, points to a habitual behavior, like the previous וַיִּתֵּן. In this case, the variation of the verbal forms seems to be due to considerations of style.

The meaning of אֶפְיִים is unclear. You may translate אֶפְיִים as “double,” but this meaning is not certain. (→ on a different proposal, see Aberbach, “מִנֶּה אַחַת אֶפְיִים [1 Sam. I 5].”)

For Further Thought

If you look for the word אֶפְיִים in BDB (60a), you will find a proposal for textual emendation based on the Septuagint. According to this emendation, the original text read אֶפֶס כִּי (? BDB). This reading leads to the English translation, “But to Hannah he used to give one portion, though he loved Hannah; but YHWH had shut up her womb.” See, for example, this passage in the Revised English Bible (REB), Revised Standard Version (RSV), Tanakh (NJPSV), and Today’s English Version (TEV).

Which do you think is more likely:

(a) that a very clear text containing a relatively common expression, אֶפֶס כִּי, was turned into a very difficult text containing a rare and problematic expression because of a technical mistake made by a copyist; or

(b) that ancient readers of the received text found a very difficult Hebrew expression whose meaning was unclear to them, so they decided to interpret or simplify it, either in “popular” versions of the book or in translations into other languages, such as Greek, or in both?

The possibility that the presence of the word אָפִים in our text is due to a copyist’s mistake cannot be ruled out, even if, generally, such mistakes are likely to produce a difficult text. This explanation has, however, a main drawback. It assumes not only that the scribe erred, which is certainly human, but also that both the copyist and the community of readers of the copied text, both of which knew Hebrew, consistently failed to recognize the difficult reading and its origin in a human error. This being the case, it seems to us reasonable to prefer option (b).

Are you expecting אָהַב as the qal (G) affix (perfect) form of the root אָהַב? אָהַב is much more common in biblical Hebrew. Forms like אָהַב tend to be used for verbs expressing emotional states (→ WO’C 22.2.3 b–e, pp. 366–67). אָהַב occurs especially before atnah or other major disjunctive (i.e., dividing) markers (? K. 374; Gr. 135–36; Ke. 17; L. 201–02; S. 290; W. 21, 137; → GKC §29 i–w).

וְהָ סָגַר רְחֻמָּה

Analyze the verb.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

When the whole sentence is in the past tense, the affix (perfect) form may convey the sense of the English past perfect “had shut up” (→ K. 56–57; Ke. 85–86; JM §112 c; WO’C 30.3, pp. 483–85), especially when it occurs in a clause at the end of the sentence. Note that וְ introduces a clause that provides factual information needed for understanding the narrative. This expression forms an *inclusio* with the similar expression at the end of v 6. Together they delimit and bracket the note concerning Peninnah’s attitude.

Note

Here is a brief explanation of the stylistic device called **inclusio**: “When the word is repeated at the beginning and at the end, in the first and last verses, this is an inclusion. It is a frequent technique for marking the limits of the poem, the poem is ‘rounded off.’ Sometimes it is used to emphasize an important word. A minor inclusion is one which does not extend to the whole poem, but simply to one of its sections. The inclusion is strengthened when more than one word is repeated” (Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, 78). Such inclusions occur frequently in Hebrew prose and poetry. In fact, many features generally

associated with poetry (inclusio, chiasm, repetition of sounds and letters) are common in Hebrew prose.

For Further Thought

Neither Elkanah nor the narrator claims that something is wrong with Hannah, although she cannot conceive.

Verse 6.

וְכַעֲסָתָהּ

What does *וְכַעֲסָתָהּ* contribute to the meaning of this word?

This is one of the suffixes that point to the third-person feminine objective pronoun (“her”) when attached to an affix (perfect) verbal form. The other suffixes are *הָ*, and *הָ* (→ K. 215; Ke. 155–56; L. 266; S. 131–34; W. 123, 125; GKC §58 a, 59 g). The ending *וְכַעֲסָתָהּ* occurs only when the verb is in both the affix (perfect) form and the third-person feminine singular. (If you would like to know why the third-person feminine singular shows this special ending, → Ke. 156; S. 132–33; W. 125; GKC §59 g; JM §42 f, 63 d.)

To which stem (binyan) does this verbal form belong? Is this pi’el (D)? Note that the verb has an *i* vowel underneath the first letter of the root. (? K. 71–73; Gr. 58–59; Ke. 114; L. 195–96; S. 111–15; W. 105–07.) If it is pi’el (D), why is the *ע* not doubled? (? K. 4; Gr. 30; Ke. 23; L. xx–xxi; W. 15; S. 3; → GKC §22 b.)

The meaning conveyed by the root *כַּעַס* is not only “to provoke anger” but “to provoke unwarranted anger.” *גַּם* in this sentence is emphatic. Note the strengthening of the message by both the presence of *גַּם* and the repetition of sounds between *כַּעַס* and *וְכַעֲסָתָהּ*. Note also the similar endings of *צָרָתָהּ* and *וְכַעֲסָתָהּ*.

בְּעִבּוֹר is a combination of *עִבּוֹר* and the preposition *בְּ*. Check its meaning in BDB. *בְּעִבּוֹר* generally introduces a telic clause, that is, one that explains the goal or endpoint of an action. The English equivalent of these Hebrew clauses is usually introduced by “in order to” or “so that.”

הִרְעָמָהּ is a hif’il infinitive construct with a third-person feminine singular suffix. Infinitive constructs may act as verbal nouns (→ K. 364–65; Gr. 55; Ke. 179; L. 128; S. 187, 190; W. 131–32; → GKC §114 a–c; JM §124 a–j). *הִרְעָמָהּ* may be translated as “to irritate her” or “to complain aloud” (“to thunder”). Post-biblical Hebrew and Aramaic point to the second understanding. A known midrash based on this reading claimed that Peninnah irritated Hannah in order to make her pray to the Lord, but this is not the straightforward meaning of the text.

For Further Thought

Note that the *ר* in *הִרְעָמָהּ* takes dagesh forte. There are relatively few cases of double *ר* in the OT/HB. With this double *ר*, v 6 contains no less than six *ר*s. The sound of *ר* recalls the sound of thunder, the basic meaning of the root *רַעַם*. This repetition of sounds may enhance the force of

the text, provided that רעם is understood as “to complain aloud.” If this understanding is preferred, then בָּעַד רַחֲמָהּ כִּי־סָגַר ה' בָּעַד רַחֲמָהּ can be understood in two ways: (a) Peninnah vexed Hannah because the Lord shut Hannah’s womb, and (b) Peninnah vexed Hannah so that Hannah would complain aloud that YHWH has closed her womb (cf. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 49, 52–53). Do you think that the phrase must convey only one of these meanings? Or may it imply both of them?

Translate vv 4–6.

Verse 7.

Who is the subject of יַעֲשֶׂה?

This prefix (imperfect) form, along with תִּכְעֲסֶנָּה later in the verse, points to habitual or iterative actions in the past (cf. יָתַן in v 5). This meaning of the prefix (imperfect) may be translated in English by “he used to” or “she would.” This is one of the potential meanings of a prefix (imperfect) form in biblical Hebrew (→ WO’C 31.2.b, pp. 502–03). You will see many instances of it in your reading of the HB/OT.

The expression בְּשָׁנָה בְּשָׁנָה can be translated neither as “year within year” nor as “year against year.” What other options are there? (? BDB.)

What are the words combined in מִדִּי?

Since the use of this compound preposition is idiomatic, you should check the reference to מִדִּי in BDB.

Analyze עָלְתָה (? cf. הִרְעָמָה in v 6; the context will help you decide to whom the third-person feminine pronouns in this verse refer).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Analyze תִּכְעֲסֶנָּה.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Why is the third-person feminine singular pronominal suffix ("her") in **תִּכְעֶסְנָהּ** different from the one in **כִּעְסָתָהּ**? (? K. 214–15; Gr. 71; Ke. 153–59; L. 266, 271–72; S. 179–81, 131–34; W. 123–27, 130–31; → GKC §59, 60.) To whom does "her" refer?

Analyze **וַתִּכְעֶסְנָהּ**

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Who is the subject of this verb?

Is this the same as the subject of **תִּכְעֶסְנָהּ**?

Note that the narrative has just moved Hannah from the passive position of direct object to the active position of subject.

Analyze **תֹּאכַל**

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

This verb belongs to a group of 1st א verbs in which the first vowel is o and the א drops out of pronunciation (i.e., is quiescent) in the qal prefix (imperfect). This group includes verbs from the roots **אמר**, **אכל**, **אבד**, and others. (→ K. 395; Gr.; Ke.; L.; S. 148–49; W. 161–63; and esp. GKC §68; cf. JM §73 a–f.)

Before translating v 7, notice

(a) that the "... כֵּן ... כֵּן" structure is best rendered "as he (Elkanah) would do (this) ... so she (Peninnah) would do (that) ...";

(b) that **וַתִּכְעֶסְנָהּ** does not seem to belong to the prefix (imperfect) series of **יַעֲשֶׂה** and **תִּכְעֶסְנָהּ** but to go back to **וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹהֵי הַיּוֹם**; that is, to what happened on that particular day, and not to what was habitually done (vv 4b–7a) (→ McCarter, *I Samuel*, 49, 59–60; WO'C 33.2.1.c, p. 550).

Translate v 7.

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Verse 8.

What are the words combined in לָמָה?

Clue: This form occurs only three times in the OT/HB, all of them in this verse, but a similar form, לָמָה, occurs many times in the OT/HB.

Find the expression יָרַע לִבִּי in BDB.

Translate the entire unit from vv 4a through 8.

Note

Verse 8 provides a glimpse into family life at this period. It contains a rare biblical example of a husband speaking directly to his wife. If this way of speaking is representative of the social customs of the period, then husbands, like Elkanah here, may have called their wives by their first names. Unfortunately, there is no similar example of direct speech of a wife to her husband. See, however, "For Further Thought," v 21.

Verse 9.

Analyze נָתַקַם (?) K. 400; Gr. 76; L. 149; S. 160–61; W. 197).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate נָתַקַם חֲנָה

With נָתַקַם, the narrative turns back to Hannah, and to the precise point in time when she broke with the seemingly ceaseless pattern of events described in vv 4–8.

אַחֲרֵי אָכְלָה בְּשֵׁלָה

How do you read אָכְלָה? Is there a qamets or qamets hatuf underneath the א? (? K. 26; Gr. 19–20; Ke. 19–21; L. xxv–xxvi; S. 12–13; W. 12–13. Seow, *Grammar*, should say “in a closed and unaccented syllable” instead of “in a closed syllable.”) How do you read נִתְקַם?

Many temporal clauses in the OT/HB are formed by a preposition followed by an infinitive construct. The preposition indicates the time relation (as do the English “when,” “before,” “after,” “from the time that,” “as soon as,” etc.) between the action or situation referred to by the infinitive construct and that of the main sentence (→ WO’C 38.7, pp. 643–44). If the main sentence opens with a vav conversive–prefix (וַיִּקְטֹּל) and includes a temporal clause, one may expect the order verb–subject–. . .–temporal clause (cf. Gen 5:4; 14:17).

אָכְלָה may be either a qal (G) infinitive construct with a third-person singular feminine pronominal suffix that lost the mappiq (a phenomenon attested several times in the OT/HB, e.g., עֲזָבָה in 2 Kgs 8:6; ? concerning mappiq, see K. 65, 367–68; Gr. 20 n 3; Ke. 18–19; L. xxiv–xxv; S. 9; W. 17; → GKC §14 a–d; JM §11) or simply an alternative form of the qal (G) infinitive construct of the root אָכַל, i.e., “eating” instead of “her eating.” Note that BDB mentions two forms of the qal (G) infinitive construct of the root אָכַל.

Write down the second form:

The OT/HB shows more than one form of infinitive construct from the root אָכַל in qal (G). In one of the forms the infinitive is patterned according to the feminine pattern of nouns and the other, לֶאֱכֹל (e.g., Gen 28:20), follows the masculine pattern. The same holds true for other verbs. For example, compare לִרְחֹצֶה in Exod 30:18 with לִרְחֹץ in Gen 24:32 (→ WO’C 36.1.1.d, p. 599; JM §49 d).

For Further Thought

How can you decide between the two possible translations:

- (a) “after she had eaten”
- (b) “after the eating”

Context may help. וַאֲחֵרֵי שָׁתָה seems to complete the expression, for it brings together “eating” and “drinking” (cf. 1 Kgs 13:23; Exod 24:11). It is natural to expect that if it is “she had eaten,” the parallel form would be “she had drunk.”

Analyze שָׁתָה

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

How can an infinitive absolute like שָׁתָה follow (i.e., be the object of) a preposition (אַחֲרֵי)? In fact, this is one of the few cases in which this does happen in the OT/HB (→ WO’C 35.3.3.a, p. 591). The only real alternative is to emend the text, which, of course, has been proposed many times.

שתה suggests that the translation “after the eating and drinking at Shiloh” is more likely than “after she had eaten and drunk” (as the Targum and Rashi interpret it). See the words of Hannah in v 15: “I have drunk no wine or other strong drink.”

Thus, one may translate the entire verse up to the atnah as, “after the eating and drinking at Shiloh, Hannah rose.” But one must remember that the possible “after she had eaten” keeps echoing in the mind of the reader, who must wonder to what extent Hannah actually heard Elkanah’s words of consolation, to what extent she actually participated in the sacrificial meal with the rest of the family.

For Further Thought

An equivalent to the Hebrew phrase וְאַחֲרֵי שְׁתֵּה is not attested in the Septuagint (Vaticanus text). How can we explain this?

וְעָלִי הַכֶּהֶן יֹשֵׁב

Analyze יֹשֵׁב (?) K. 39–41, 114; Gr. 55; Ke. 193–94; L. 18–19; S. 46; W. 65–66; → GKC §50.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

-וְ is commonly translated as “and,” which suggests some kind of similarity. But vav + noun frequently has a disjunctive value, separating the clause that follows from the one that precedes it. In this case, the vav marks a clear break in the narrative, a point at which a new personage is introduced and at which the story moves from Hannah’s specific actions to the general circumstances in which they take place (→ WO’C 8.3.b, p. 129, 39.2.3, pp. 650–52). Taking into account these features, McCarter (1 *Samuel*, 49) translates v 9b as “(now, Eli, the priest, was sitting . . .).” What justification might he offer for rendering יֹשֵׁב as “was sitting”? (→ WO’C 37.6.c–d, pp. 624–26)

עַל־הַכֶּסֶּא

Note the definite article before כֶּסֶּא. What difference would it make if the text had said כֶּסֶּא rather than הַכֶּסֶּא?

עַל־מְזוֹזוֹת הַיָּכָל ה'

Can this עַל be translated in the same way as the preceding one?

Note that the construct chain contains three different nouns. Is this a definite construct

chain? How do you know? (? K. 21–22; Gr. 34–35; Ke. 63; L. 67–70; S. 70–71; W. 46; → GKC §127, esp. 127 a; JM §139, esp. 139 a.)

Translate v 9b (? BDB).

Verse 10.

וְהִיא מֵרַת נֶפֶשׁ וְתַחֲפֹלֶל עָלֶיהָ וּבָכָה תְּבָכָה

Who is the “she” in וְהִיא?

Of course, “she” is Hannah. Thus, the narrative goes back to v 9a. Accordingly, one may write all of v 9b within parentheses. Note the use of the vav + (pro-)noun here. Vav + non-verb is a common way of introducing a disjunctive clause. Some of these clauses are circumstantial, that is, they provide information concerning the circumstances in which events take place. Many of them, but not all of them, are verbless (→ WO’C 39.2.3.b, p. 651).

The expected verbal form is **הַתְּפַלֵּל** but instead one reads **תַּחֲפֹלֶל**, which is used elsewhere with the meaning of either “for, on behalf of” (2 Chr 30:18; Job 42:8) or “about, because of” (2 Chr 32:20). This verse is one of several occasions in which **עַל** occurs instead of an expected **אֶל** (cf. **וַיִּלֶּךְ אֶלְקָנָה הָרֶמְתָּה עָלֶי-בֵּיתוֹ** in 1 Sam 2:11).

Since **מֵרַת נֶפֶשׁ** is an expression, you can look for it in BDB. Why does the text say **מֵרַת נֶפֶשׁ** instead of **מֵרַת נֶפֶשׁ**?

Note

It is likely that the root **מָרַר** conveyed not only the meaning of “being bitter” but also the meaning of “being strong.” Although in the context of 1 Sam 1:10 the basic meaning of the word is “bitter,” it seems reasonable that readers/hearers of the story, who were aware of the second possible meaning, would notice the conveyed connotation: Hannah is bitter, but she is not powerless or passive.

Note

Alonso Schökel proposes that **נֶפֶשׁ** could mean “neck” in some of its occurrences (e.g., Jonah 2:6; Ps 124:4). He suggests that **מֵרַת נֶפֶשׁ** “could mean ‘to feel bitterness in the throat’; as long as the expression has not been lexicalised to mean simply any interior bitterness, even metaphorical.” (Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, 102–103.)

Analyze both בָּכָה (?) K. 171–72, 364; Gr. 54, 90; Ke. 184, 287; L. 158–59, 309 [there the reference to par. 128 is mistaken; the relevant paragraph is 129]; W. 79–80, 217; S. 181–83; → GKC §45 a–b, 113) and תִּבְכֶּה (?) K. 49, 408; Gr. 88–90; Ke. 287–89; L. 143–45; S. 149–50; W. 216–17; → GKC §75).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Unlike וַתִּבְכֶּה and וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל, וַתִּבְכֶּה תִּבְכֶּה is not a part of the chain of vav conversive–prefix (ויקטל) forms. That is, Hannah did not cry once, after praying and before making a vow, but she *began to weep* when she prayed. Waltke and O'Connor correctly translate: “She prayed to YHWH and began weeping bitterly” (WO’C 31.2.c, p. 504; ? on the general uses of the infinitive absolute, see K. 171, 364; Gr. 54; Ke. 185; L. 158–59; S. 182–83; W. 79; → GKC §113; JM §123; WO’C 35, pp. 580–97). A prefix (imperfect) form, especially when it stands next to or in the middle of a vav conversive–prefix (ויקטל) chain, may convey the meaning of a nascent action together with the sense of progressive continuance (→ WO’C 31.2.c, pp. 503–04, cf. 31.3.d, pp. 505–6).

Translate v 10.

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Verse 11.

Analyze וַתִּדְּרַר (?) K. 77–79, 398; Gr. 103; Ke. 302–03; L. 133; S. 150; W. 141; → GKC §66)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Note

The use of a verbal form and of a noun of the same root (here **נָדַר**) is a well-attested stylistic device in the OT/HB, e.g., **שָׁמַחִים שְׂמֵחָה גְּדוּלָּה** in 1 Kgs 1:40. The emphatic character of the **alliteration** (repetition of consonant sounds in neighboring words) is self-evident (→ Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, 22–23).

Analyze **וַיֹּאמֶר**

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

As with **וַיֹּאמֶר**, the expression introduces direct speech.

Do you remember why the **א** in **וַיֹּאמֶר** has no vowel marks? (? K. 4, 273, 395; Gr. 98, 100; Ke. 18, 237–40; L. 119–20; S. 13, 148; W. 18–19, 161–62.)

אִם־רָאָה תִּרְאֶה

A conditional sentence in which the condition is real, or realizable, opens in most cases with **אִם**, followed by a prefix (imperfect) verbal form (→ WO'C 31.6.1.a–b, pp. 510–11).

If you have trouble translating **רָאָה תִּרְאֶה**? ? K. 171, 364; Gr. 54; Ke. 185; L. 158–59; S. 182–83; W. 79; → GKC §113.

Now comes a series of vav reversive + affix verbs (hereafter, vav-affix), following the prefix form **תִּרְאֶה** (a *yiqtol* + *weqatal* sequence). Such a sequence should be translated as if it were a series of prefix (imperfect) forms. (? K. 36, 57, 256, 388; Gr. 76–77; Ke. 212–14; L. 108–09; S. 160; W. 90–92; → on vav-affix in general, see WO'C 32, pp. 519–42.)

One verb in this series looks different. Which is it?

Should one translate it in a different way?

Why doesn't the verb show a vav-affix (*weqatal*) form?

Note

The word **אֲמָתְךָ** ("your servant") occurs three times in Hannah's appeal to YHWH. This word, and the masculine form **עֲבָדְךָ**, are commonly used in appeals to a higher authority (to God, to a king, or to an important officer). In this case the repetition of "your servant" is a stylistic device to express Hannah's attitude of humility before God. Note, too, the movement from a general plea that notice be taken of her affliction, to the clear and specific request for a child. In many cases, the emotional charge of the biblical verse intensifies from clause to clause, reaching its climax at the end of a series of parallel clauses. (→ Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*, 13–14, 29, 51–58.)

Note that **אָמַתָּךְ** is a pausal form, the ordinary form being **אֶמְתֶּךָ**. What is the pausal form of **עֶבְדְּךָ**? (K. 95; Gr. 135–36; Ke. 17, 240–41; L. 201–02; S. 290; W. 137; → GKC §29 h–w; JM §32)

Check your proposal against BDB.

The **vav** after the **atnah** introduces the **apodosis**, i.e., the “then” clause in an “if . . . then . . .” sentence (→ L. 276–79; S. 259; also JM §176; and WO’C 38.2.b, p. 636, cf. 32.2.1.b, p. 256).

Who is the “him” in **וְנִתְּתִי**?

Translate **מוֹרָה** (? BDB)

The word **מוֹרָה** occurs also in Judg 13:5. Do you see some parallels between the story there and the one in 1 Sam 1?

If you wonder why Hannah promised that “no razor will touch his head,” see Num 6:2–9 and Judg 13:4–5,7.

For Further Thought

According to the Septuagint, Hannah’s vow included “he shall drink no wine nor strong drink.” Do you think it more likely

- (a) that a scribe forgot to copy one of the main requirements of the Nazirites—and that no one in the community of readers of the book noticed, so that the corrupted text become the accepted one; or
- (b) that a scribe well versed in the law of the Nazirites duly recorded the received version of Hannah’s vow despite its apparent “defectiveness” in following the Nazirite law?

Translate v 11.

Translate vv 9–11.

Verse 12.

וְהָיָה כִּי הִרְבָּתָה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לִפְנֵי ה'

Analyze הִרְבָּתָה (?) (K. 409; Gr. 88–91; Ke. 288; L. 227–28; S. 123; W. 219)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate הִרְבָּתָה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל (cf. K. 203; see L. 228; BDB)

וְהָיָה is a common way of introducing a temporal clause and is translated in English by “when” or “as” (→ K. 232; S. 192). Thus, if one had ה' הִרְבָּתָה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל לִפְנֵי ה' one would translate the phrase, “as she continued praying.” The problem, of course, is that the text reads וְהָיָה instead of הָיָה. This seems to be one of only a few cases in which a text reads וְהָיָה where one would expect הָיָה. Of the eight proposed instances of such an interchange in the HB/OT, five occur in the Book of Samuel (1 Sam 1:12; 10:9; 17:48; 25:20; 2 Sam 6:16; → GKC §112 uu; JM §119 z).

Here, as on many other occasions, וְהָיָה (or הָיָה) marks the beginning of a new segment in the narrative. The next part of the story centers on Eli and Hannah.

וְעַל שֹׁמֵר אֶת־פִּיהָ

For the function of the vav, see the note on v 9. This is the first of two clauses introduced by vav that explain the circumstances of the first action following the וְהָיָה, i.e., הָיָה שֹׁמֵר אֶת־פִּיהָ.

Analyze שֹׁמֵר

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Among the many possible translations of שֹׁמֵר, which one best suits the context? (?) BDB.)

Translate v 12.

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Verse 13a.

וְחִנָּה הִיא מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ

The introduction of the pronoun/copula היא between the subject and the verb is a stylistic device to place emphasis on the subject, Hannah (cf. 1 Sam 17:14).

The expression דָּבַר עַל לֵב (in which דָּבַר is in the pi'el, or D) is attested several times in the HB/OT, and can be translated as "comfort" (e.g., Isa 40:2). But this cannot be the meaning of מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ in our text. Why not?

How, then, shall we translate מְדַבֶּרֶת עַל-לִבָּהּ?

Clue: The expression דָּבַר אֶל-לֵב has an attested meaning of "speak to oneself" [e.g., Gen 24:45]; see also our notes concerning וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל in v 10.

שָׁמַע וְנָעוּת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע

Analyze שָׁמַע and נָעוּת

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Note the multiple variations within the parallel *verb-noun*, *verb-noun* structure:

- the form (inflection) of the verb changes;
- the stem (binyan) changes from qal (G) to nif'al (N);
- the "voice" changes from active to passive;
- the noun changes from plural to singular;
- the noun changes from feminine to masculine;
- the first phrase is affirmative, the second negative.

Note

The use of parallel structures is a common stylistic device in Hebrew poetry and prose. In many cases, these parallel structures contain grammatical, semantic, and phonological shifts and contrasts between the first verset and the second. Moreover, in this instance, as in many other cases, the second verset moves the text forward and heightens it. Verse 13a explains the circumstances of Eli's actions. The crucial factor that led to his

misunderstanding of Hannah was not that “her lips were moving” (first verset) but that “her voice was not heard” (second verset). (→ Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*; and Berlin, *Dynamics*.)

Translate vv 12–13a.

Verse 13b.

וַיְחַשְׁבֶּהָ עָלֶי לִשְׁפָרָהּ

The initial vav has several functions:

- it signals a movement from one subject to another (see note on v 9);
- it belongs to a vav conversive (ויקטל) before prefix form whose chain goes back to v 12 (see note);
- it introduces an apodosis. That is, “Hannah was speaking in her heart, only her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard, *therefore* Eli . . . ”.

Analyze the verbal form וַיְחַשְׁבֶּהָ.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

To whom does the pronominal suffix refer? Why is there no mappiq in the ה?

Clue: Mappiq tells the reader that the ה is consonantal and not a marker of a vowel (*mater lectionis*). Does the reader actually need the help of a mappiq to know whether the ה in וַיְחַשְׁבֶּהָ is consonantal? (? concerning mappiq, K. 65, 367–68; Gr. 20 n 3; Ke. 18–19; L. xxiv–xxv; S. 9; W. 17; → GKC §14 a–d; JM §11.)

Before translating, check חשב ל- in BDB.

Compare the word order and the verbal forms in v 13b with those in v 12b. What do you make of the difference?

Translate v 13b.**Verse 14.**

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶּ עַד־מָתִי תִשְׁתַּכְּרִין

עַד־מָתִי is another case of a combination of a preposition (עַד) with an interrogative word (מָתִי). For the meaning of the expression, see BDB.

Where does the direct speech of Eli begin?

Where does it end?

How do you know?

Before you analyze תִּשְׁתַּכְּרִין, note that

—the final ך is paragogic ך (? K. 272; Gr. 189; Ke. 128; L. 99; S. 141; and esp. GKC §47 o; → GKC §47 m, o; 58 l; JM §44 e–f; WO'C 20.2.f, p. 347; 37.7, pp. 514–18). A paragogic ך may occur in the second-person feminine of a verb in its prefix (imperfect) form, though it is much more frequently attested in the third-person masculine plural. It tends to occur before a major disjunctive marker (such as sof-pasuq or atnah; → WO'C p. 516). The second-person feminine singular ending ך occurs in Aramaic (and in Arabic). In the OT/HB, it is attested in Isa 45:10; Jer 31:22; Ruth 2:8,21; 3:4,18, as well as in this reading.

—some letters undergo **metathesis** (that is, they switch places) in the hithpa'el stem (HtD binyan). (? K. 370; Gr. 86; Ke. 111; L. 248; S. 229; W. 120; → GKC §54 b–d; JM §17 b.)

After the atnah, in the second part of the verse, Eli's speech moves from reproach to direct command: הִסִּירִי אֶת־יִגְדְּךָ מֵעָלַיךָ

Analyze the verb (? K. 401; Gr. 81; Ke. 324; L. 231–32; S. 214; W. 201).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate v 14 (? BDB).

Note the emphatic repetition of the second-person feminine pronominal suffixes at the end of the verse, which, of course, also provides a repetition of sounds.

For Further Thought

The Jewish sages relate this incident to the ruling that a drunken person is not allowed to pray (b. Ber. 31a). Interestingly, the Septuagint adds a sentence to this verse: “Go out from the presence of the Lord.”

Verse 15.

וַתַּעַן חַנָּה וַתֹּאמֶר

Verbal forms from the roots אמר and ענה (? BDB) occur together several times in the OT/HB (e.g., Gen 18:27, Exod 4:1). The name of the person who responds stands between the two verbs.

לֹא אֲדֹנִי

This is a short and sharp reply. Although showing respect to the priest (אֲדֹנִי is the formal address to someone higher than the speaker in rank, status, or authority; cf. Zech 4:5, 13), Hannah clearly and unequivocally declares that he is wrong. She lets Eli know the truth in three short versets:

(1) אִשָּׁה קִשְׁת־רוּחַ אֲנִכִּי

(2) וַיֵּן וְשָׁכַר לֹא שְׁתִּיתִי

(3) וְאֶשְׁפֹּף אֶת־נַפְשִׁי לִפְנֵי ה'

In the OT/HB the expression קִשְׁת־רוּחַ occurs only in this verse. It probably means “firm-spirited,” in the sense of a spirit that does not yield to difficulties. If this is the meaning, Hannah portrays herself as a woman who maintains hope, in spite of her seemingly hopeless situation. Some scholars propose the existence of an original text קִשְׁת יום instead of קִשְׁת רוּחַ, on the basis of the Septuagint and because of the occurrence of קִשְׁת־יוֹם in Job 30:25, which may be understood as “unfortunate.” But as we shall see (v 16), Hannah does not consider herself a passive, powerless woman.

The predicate-subject word order in this sentence gives emphasis to the predicate (e.g., מְרַגְלִים אַתָּם in Gen 42:9).

Translate the first verset.

Translate the second verset.

Have you translated **שְׁחִיתִי** by an English verb in present perfect? If not, why not?

Note that whereas the first verset merely implies that Eli's image of Hannah is incorrect, the second verset explicitly contradicts that image.

Remember that a vav conversive–prefix (ויקטל) form that follows an affix (qtl, hereafter, קטל) form translated by a perfect tense (present perfect or past perfect) may also have a perfect meaning (e.g., Gen 39:13; → WO'C 33.1.c, p. 556). For the idiomatic meaning of **וְאִשְׁפָּה אֶת־נַפְשִׁי** see BDB.

Translate the third verset.

Verse 16.

אֶל־חַתָּן אֶת־אֶמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי בַת־בְּלִיעֵל

To translate **אֶל־חַתָּן אֶת־אֶמְתָּךְ לִפְנֵי** (K. 168, 267; Gr. 51; Ke. 173–73; L. 114; S. 144, 173; W. 77) you need to know that **לִפְנֵי**, which in most cases is translated as “before,” used either spatially or temporally, is better rendered by “as” or “like” in this case (as well as in Job 3:24).

בַּת־בְּלִיעֵל is translated as “worthless woman,” with a connotation of antisocial behavior. Hannah and Eli implicitly assume that being drunk is included in this kind of behavior. Hannah claims that she is not **בַּת־בְּלִיעֵל**, though Eli (mis)judged her a reprobate. Significantly, the narrator will later explicitly state that it is actually the sons of Eli who are **בְּנֵי בְלִיעֵל** (1 Sam 2:12).

Note

The word **בְּלִיעֵל** is probably a combination of **בְּלִי** (“without”) and a word from the root **יעל** (meaning “benefit,” “worthy,” “of use”), just as **בְּלִי־מָה** (“nothing”) in Job 26:7 is a combination of **בְּלִי** (“without”) and **מָה** (“anything”).

Of course, there is nothing grammatically wrong with the translation “daughter of Belial” (see KJV). Nevertheless, this translation is commonly rejected because it

implies that Belial is the proper name of either a human being or a personification of evil, depending upon the context. The first possibility can be immediately ruled out. The text would be meaningless if “Belial” identifies the biological father of Hannah. Furthermore, in the OT/HB the phrase “children of Belial” is applied to various people (e.g., Judg 19:22). The second possibility looks more promising. In fact, Belial (often spelled Beliar) is the personification of evil in Pseudepigrapha (e.g., Martyrdom of Isaiah), in Qumranic literature (e.g., Hodayot), and in the New Testament (2 Cor 6:15). But this literature is later than the OT/HB. In sharp contrast with this later literature, no action or attribute is accorded to Belial in the OT/HB. Thus, there is no evidence that the Israelites in the OT/HB period understood כְּלִיעֵל as “Evil One.”

Translate v 16.

Verse 17.

וַיַּעַן עָלַי וַיֹּאמֶר parallels the opening of v 15. This form introduces Eli’s response to Hannah.

Note that Eli’s acceptance of Hannah’s words, and of his own mistake, is stressed by the language of his response. He turns Hannah’s אֶל־תָּתִן, a negative statement referring to him, into יִתֵּן, a positive statement whose subject is God. That is, Eli’s words convey not only that he should not have “taken” Hannah for a worthless woman, but also that he hopes that God will “take” (i.e., fulfill) her request.

For Further Thought

שְׁלָחַךְ is another case of a “missing ׀” (e.g., רָשִׁית from the root רָאשׁ in Deut 11:12). Most of the cases of missing ׀s concern a final one (e.g., תִּמְכִּי in 2 Sam 5:2). Against this background, how do you analyze the name שְׁלָחַיִל in Hag 2:2? (Cf. Hag 1:1.) Why do you think these ׀s were dropped?

Translate v 17.

Verse 18.

Verse 18a contains Hannah's response to Eli's last words. The form **מצא חן בעיני-X** (lit. "find favor in the eyes of X") occurs many times in the OT/HB. Here, as in 2 Sam 16:4 and Ruth 2:13, it is the response given by a person of lower rank or status to a superior who has made a promise to, or acted favorably toward, the inferior. This sense of ranking is stressed in this verse by the use of the word **שפחה**.

The dialogue between Eli and Hannah ends here, and the narrator moves the narrative forward with **ותלך**, which removes Hannah from the scene.

ויפניה refers here to "her (distressed) expression."

Translate v 18.

Note that the reference to eating in v 18b provides a sharp contrast with v 7. The situation is reversed: Hannah is now able to eat, and she no longer wears her "crying" expression.

Verse 19.

Verse 19 contains a long chain of vav conversive–prefix (**ויקטל**) forms whose climax is in the last member of the chain.

Analyze ויזכרה (?) K. 215; Gr. 71; Ke. 156–59; L. 271; S. 180; W. 130.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Compare **ויזכרה ה'** with **ויזכרתני** in v 11. Note the pattern of request and fulfillment.

.....
 What kind of ה is the final one in **הרמיתה**?
 (?) K. 47–48, 246–47; Gr.; Ke.; L.; S. 96; W. 66–67; → GKC §90 c–i, esp. 90 i; JM §93 c–f, esp. 93 c.)

Translate v 19.**Verse 20.**

The events told in vv 20–28 of the narrative are separated from the preceding ones by a new temporal introduction (cf. v 1). Thus, the text is divided into two main narratives, with similar openings. Can you point to the new temporal introduction?

הַיָּמִים לְתַקְפוֹת הַיָּמִים may best be translated as “at the turn of the year” (→ Exod 34:22). For הַיָּמִים conveying a sense of “year, yearly,” see v 21.

The expression “Y- וַתֵּהָרָה X- וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן . . . וַתִּקְרָא אֶת-שְׁמוֹ” is used in notes concerning the announcements of births (e.g., Gen 29:32–35; 38:3–4; Isa 8:3; 1 Chr 7:23; cf. Isa 7:14; Hos 1:3–8).

Note

It has been proposed that the phrase should be understood as “at the end of the period of gestation.” If that were the case, וַתֵּהָרָה should have been before the temporal clause. In fact, this Hebrew sequence is suggested by the Septuagint, but the Septuagint reading may well be the result of interpretation. In the Hebrew text וַתֵּהָרָה follows the temporal clause.

שְׂמוֹאֵל כִּי מֵה' שְׂאֵלָתִי

Observe carefully the vowel markers in the word שְׂאֵלָתִי. Instead of the expected pataḥ underneath the א one finds hireq. There are some qal affix (G perfect) verbs that show either hireq or tsere instead of the expected pataḥ when an object suffix is attached to them. An *i* class vowel (i.e., segol) also occurs in שְׂאֵלָתָם (see 1 Sam 12:13; 25:5; Job 21:29). (→ L. 267–68; S. 135; GKC §44 d.)

Translate v 20.

Note

The original meaning of the name שְׁמוּאֵל is probably "This name is El." It is by no means self-evident that such a name corresponds to שָׁאַלְתִּיו ("I requested him"). In fact, the word שָׁאַלְתִּיו suggests a name such as שְׁאוּל and not שְׁמוּאֵל. Indeed, there are scholars who think that the birth story of Samuel contains, at the very least, some elements of an original birth story of Saul. In any case, it seems likely that the writer and the community of readers were aware of the suggested reference to Saul. But had this been the only possible communal interpretation, then the message conveyed by the account of Hannah's naming the baby שְׁמוּאֵל would be almost irrelevant. A popular analysis of the name may have led to an interpretation such as "he who is from El" (cf. מוֹאֵב, popularly understood as "from my father," see Gen 19:37; → McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 62). If the name שְׁמוּאֵל was understood as "he who is from El/God," the name would certainly underscore the pattern of request and fulfillment in the story (cf. v 19). According to this interpretation, the text states that Hannah has requested an offspring from the Lord, that Hannah bore a child "who is from El/God," and that Hannah is fully aware of that. (→ on biblical Hebrew names containing the name of the deity, see Fowler, *Theophoric Personal Names*.)

Verse 21.

The vav conversive–prefix (וִי־קטל) chain continues in v 21. The verb וַיַּעַל in v 22 agrees in person, gender, and number with Elkanah, but not with the entire subject of the sentence, that is, "Elkanah and all his house," i.e., his family. When the verb precedes such a compound subject, it often agrees in person, gender, and number with the first and closest noun (e.g., וַיָּבֹא נָח וּבָנָיו in Gen 7:7; → GKC §146 f; JM §150 q).

The expression in this verse, וַיָּבֹא הַיָּמִים, occurs only in the Book of Samuel (see 1 Sam 2:19; 20:6). Though הַיָּמִים is translated as "days" on many occasions, it was understood as "year" in a few of its occurrences in the OT/HB, such as Lev 25:29 (see BDB יוֹם 6.c). Cf. v 20 above.

To whom does the suffix refer in the word נִדְרָו?

Translate v 21.**Note**

The main figure in the compound subject is Elkanah. He opens the sentence, and his vow closes it. In English, you might express the distinction between Elkanah and "all his

family” by placing “all his family” in apposition: “Elkanah, and all his family, . . .”. In the Hebrew text, an equivalent to these commas is the *ṭifḥa* markers (–), which are one of the main dividers of clauses ending with *atnaḥ* (.) or *silluq* + *sof pasuq* (: ,).

For Further Thought

Can you think of a reason for **הָאִישׁ אֶלְקָנָה**, instead of simply **אֶלְקָנָה**, following **וַיַּעַל**? Verse 8 may provide a clue. In addition, read Hos 2:18 (ET Hos 2:16). According to the text in Hosea, what was the common form by which wives addressed their husbands? What alternative mode of address does the text in Hosea suggest? How does Hos 2:18 help us understand 1 Sam 1:21?

Verse 22.

Verse 22 returns to Hannah. The *vav* introducing the verse is a classical case of adversative *vav*; it is to be translated as “but.” The adversative *vav* may be seen as a special case of the disjunctive *vav* discussed in v 9. In both, there is a change or twist in the thread of the text, and the noun attached to the *vav* serves as the subject of a new clause. However, the adversative *vav* points to a contrast and should be translated as “but,” whereas the disjunctive *vav* may mean “now” and not necessarily “but” (→ WO’C 8.3.b, p. 129).

Why does the text refer to Hannah’s actions by verbs in the affix (perfect) form?

What kind of dagesh is the one in the **ל** of **יָגִמַל**?

Analyze the verb.

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Why does the verb occur in prefix (imperfect) form?

What kind of verbal chain do you find in Hannah’s speech in v 22? How do you translate this chain?

Analyze **וַיִּרְאֶה**

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate v 22 (? BDB).**For Further Thought**

Hannah's words represent her reasons for not coming with the rest of the family to Shiloh. "I will stay" or "I will not go up" is the implied opening of Hannah's speech (before "until the boy be weaned"). **Ellipsis**, the omission of a word or phrase that can be reconstructed from the context, is a common figure of speech in the OT/HB (→ WO'C 11.4.3, pp. 223–25; Alonso Schökel, *Manual*, 166–68).

Note

The words of Hannah in v 22 are enclosed by two similar temporal **עד**s. The difference between these two **עד** phrases encapsulates the contents of her speech. The first phrase points to a specific time, "until the child be weaned"; the other points to the temporally unlimited "forever." The first sets the time limit for Hannah's being with the child, the second establishes the permanence of Hannah's gift to the Lord.

Verse 23.

The expression **עשה הטוב בעיני-י'** occurs many times in the HB/OT. What does it mean?

Nowhere before is it said that Elkanah knows about Hannah's promise. He is described here not only as accepting Hannah's request that she and the lad remain in Ramah when the rest of the family makes its annual pilgrimage to Shiloh, but also as accepting that the child will remain in Shiloh, serving the Lord, for his lifetime.

Analyze גמלך

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

How do you pronounce **גמלך**? (? note on **אכלה**, v 9.)

The word **אך** has the restrictive meaning of "only." In English you expect a comma or a semicolon preceding a clause that opens with "only." A similar function is fulfilled by the

disjunctive (i.e., separating) marker *zaqef qatan* (ֿ) above the word אֶתְּ. *Zaqef qatan* divides *atnah* clauses. Do you know another marker that divides *atnah* clauses?

Analyze יָקַם (?) K. 400–401; Gr. 81; L. 231–32; S. 212, 287; W. 200; → GKC §72 aa and p. 524).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate v 23a.

For Further Thought

Though the translation of this half verse is simple, it seems to cause contextual problems. To which “word” of the Lord does Elkanah refer? None has been mentioned before. Of course, if instead of “his word” the text said “your word,” it would read much more easily. This is the reading suggested by the Septuagint and by 4QSam^a (manuscript “a” of the Book of Samuel found in Cave 4 at Qumran; another manuscript, called “b,” was also found in the same cave). Which reading is the original? To choose between the two alternatives you must ask yourself, Which is more likely?

(a) that questions about which “word of the Lord” Elkanah refers to brought about the reading “your word”; or

(b) that a contextually simple “your word” brought about the MT (masoretic text) reference to an unknown “word of the Lord”?

This “word of the Lord” is not the only “loose end” in the story: Elkanah’s vow (v 21) is not explained or developed. In v 21 the Septuagint shows a longer reading: “. . . the yearly sacrifice, and his vows, and all the tithes of his land,” which to a certain extent solves the question of the vow by making it a part of a common practice. In any case, if you find yourself unsure as to which alternative to prefer, you may take solace in knowing that many scholars find themselves in a similar situation (→ Tov, *Textual Criticism*, esp. 176).

The *vav* conversive–prefix (וַיִּקְטֹל) chain is resumed at the beginning of v 23b. From v 23b the

narrative turns to describe the fulfillment of the words of Hannah, which have now been endorsed by Elkanah. The first part of this fulfillment is told in v 23b.

Analyze נָחֵיָהּ (?) K. 397; Gr. 214; Ke. 345–46; S. 214; W. 269).

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Translate v 23b.

Verse 24.

וַתַּעֲלֶהּ עִמָּהּ

Who is the subject of the sentence?

Who is the only person actively involved in planning the fate of the lad?

.....

Analyze גָּמְלָתוֹ

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Why is the object suffix in this verb תּוֹ instead of הָּ as in the first verb?

.....

(→ Ke. 156; L. 266–67; S. 133, cf. S. 180–81; W. 123–25.)

Explain why the form of the first verb in this verse is different from the form of the second verb.

.....

When Hannah brings the lad she does not come empty-handed. The text lists the things that Hannah brings with her to the House of the Lord.

Translate v 24 up to the zaqef qatan ('). (? BDB.)

For Further Thought

The Septuagint suggests a Hebrew reading **בִּפְרִי מִשְׁלֵשׁ**, “with a three-year-old bull.” (? BDB; if you do not find the reference to 1 Sam in BDB, analyze the verb **מִשְׁלֵשׁ** and check for its meaning in BDB afterward.) This reading is supported by 4QSam^a and seems to be supported by **הִפָּר** in v 25 (but see below). The difference between the two alternative Hebrew texts rests mainly on whether the letter **מ** begins the word **משלש** or belongs to the end of the word **בפרם**. (Remember that the masoretic vocalized text was unknown by the time of the Second Temple, when the Septuagint and the Qumranic material were written, and that the distinction between final and medial mem was probably not made until the third century BCE). There are several occasions on which it seems that letters migrated from the end of one word to the beginning of another or vice versa (→ McCarter, *Textual Criticism*, 49–50).

Although the technical difference between the received Hebrew text and the Septuagint is relatively small, an analysis of these texts shows that it is not by chance that the Septuagint gives the line as saying one bull and the MT gives it as three bulls. It seems reasonable that the described offering was generally interpreted as a thanksgiving offering. Indeed, Hannah’s list in both the Septuagint and 4QSam^a includes the word “bread,” which may well be an attempt to solve possible tensions between this text and the rules in Lev 7:11–13 concerning thanksgiving offerings. If this is the case, the difference between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text concerns the number of the offerings. The Septuagint suggests one bull for all the family, or for Elkanah, who is, according to the Septuagint, the slaughterer of the bull (see below). The MT suggests one bull for each person—Hannah, Elkanah, and Samuel. Of course, both readings could have been the result of exegetical activity on the text. On the one hand, the amount of flour in Hannah’s list could have been interpreted as suggesting three bulls (see Num 15:9; 28:12). On the other, the narrative that follows seems to refer to one bull (v 25), and the sacrifice of three-year-old animals was a known custom (Gen 15:9). Thus, a one-bull reading could have been supported.

In any case, the Septuagint’s reading is congruent with its tendency to stress the role of Elkanah and diminish that of Hannah (e.g., “his father slew his offering which he offered from year to year to the Lord; and he brought the child near and slew the calf”), while the MT emphasizes Hannah’s role (→ Walters, “Hannah and Anna”). In other words, it seems that the main textual differences between these two texts are not the result of random scribal mistakes, but rather of conscious exegesis.

Translate v 24 from the zaqef qatan (') to the end of the verse.

Note the “modern” spelling of Shiloh. (See note on v 3.) This spelling occurs several times in the OT/HB (e.g., Judg 21:21; 1 Sam 3:21b; Jer 7:14), and it reflects an advanced stage in the development of a system of markers for vowels in biblical Hebrew. Originally ה was a marker (*mater lectionis*) of any final vowel except *i* and *u*. Later, the final *o* began to be marked by ו. Other examples of final ה/ו spellings include נכו in Jer 46:2 and 2 Chr, and נכה in 2 Kings.

The stress on the word נער in v 24b is self-evident. Although נער as predicate complement does not mean something different from נער as subject of the sentence, the repetition underscores that Hannah is about to give up her son to the Lord, despite his being a very young child who was just weaned. (→ on weaning age, see Meyers, *Discovering Eve*, 151, 206 n30.)

Verse 25.

Who is the subject of the second verb in v 25?

Do you think that Hannah is included in the subject of the second verb?

Who else besides Hannah might be included in this subject?

Why?

Who is the subject of the first verb in v 25?

If the subject of the first verb in v 25 is the same as the subject of the second verb, then Hannah, a woman, is described as having an active role in the making of the sacrifice. (This position is clearly attested in some traditional Jewish interpretations of the text; moreover, according to one of them, the boy Samuel taught on this occasion that the slaughter of the sacrifice can be done by nonpriests, by women, and even by slaves.) Alternatively, the subject of the first verb may be an impersonal “they” (→ WO’C 4.4.2, p. 71), with the chain of vav conversive–prefix (ויקטל) forms carrying the thread of the narrative but not necessarily referring to the same people in each instance. A third position is that the text is ambiguous. No matter what position you choose, it is worth noting that the verbal plural forms are preceded and followed by a chain of verbal forms whose subject is Hannah. Whether Hannah took part in the sacrifice or not, the thread of the narrative closely follows her actions.

For Further Thought

הַפָּר is commonly translated as “the bull,” implying “one bull.” This understanding of הַפָּר may be seen as support for the Hebrew reading suggested by the Septuagint (בֶּפֶר מְשֻׁלָּשׁ, for the other two bulls are not mentioned in v 25) or as its justification (since only one bull is mentioned in v 25, ancient interpreters concluded that v 24 has to refer to one bull instead of three). The translation itself, however, is far from secure. Though it is grammatically correct, it is not the only possible understanding of הַפָּר. Several times in the OT/HB, a definite singular noun that is preceded by the same noun in the plural refers to the group or collective expressed by the plural noun. (For instance, in Num 21:6–7, אֶת־הַנָּחָשׁ . . . אֶת־הַנָּחָשִׁים, “the serpents.”) Thus, הַפָּר may also be translated as “the bulls,” and accordingly the apparent tension between v 24 and v 25 disappears (→ Ratner, “Three Bulls or One? A Reappraisal of 1 Samuel 1,24”).

Translate v 25.

Verse 26.

בִּי אֲדֹנָי (and the similar בִּי אֲדֹנָי) is a phrase that conveys the sense of “pardon me, my Lord.” It is used as an opening for direct speech to a person higher in status than the speaker. It has been suggested that it conveys the sense of “on me be any guilt” (? BDB; → JM §105 c; WO’C 40.2.3.a, pp. 680–81).

חֵי נַפְשִׁי אֲדֹנָי is a specific case of a very common introduction formula to oaths in biblical Hebrew. The general formula is X־חֵי, in which X may be the speaker (חֵי־אֲנִי), a person of higher status than the speaker, or the Lord (? K. 304; Gr. 185; L. 172; S. 233; BDB; → JM §165, esp. 165 e; WO’C 40.2.2, pp. 678–80). But can you find the oath in this verse?

This formula has also a secondary use as an asseverative. If this is the case in our verse, the phrase may be translated “by your life, my Lord, indeed . . .” Do you think that this translation suits its context?

עֲמָכָה is an alternative spelling for עֲמָךְ. It is attested nowhere else in the MT.

For Further Thought

The pronominal suffix ך is frequently spelled כה in Qumran scrolls. The MT of the Book of Samuel shows several rare, long, full spellings, such as עֲמָכָה, that are well attested in Qumranic material, and that can be considered “modern” spellings. To illustrate, עֲשִׂיתָה occurs only eight times in the OT/HB, of which seven occurrences are in Samuel, and this form is common in

Qumran. The Book of Kings, which is the thematic continuation of the Book of Samuel, shows a very conservative spelling. What does this fact suggest to you? (→ Andersen and Forbes, *Spelling in the Hebrew Bible*; on Qumranic orthography, see Qimron, *Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*.)

The demonstrative הַזֶּה is used idiomatically in the expression בְּזֶה. It is a good idea to check the meaning of idiomatic expressions in BDB.

Translate v 26.

Verses 27–28.

Translate v 27a.

Note the emphatic word order at the beginning of the sentence.

Translate v 27b.

Note that the pattern of supplication, followed by God's fulfillment of the request, characterizes both this verse and the entire story. The related pattern of Hannah's promise and her fulfillment of her promise is central to this part of the narrative and comes to the forefront in v 28. These two patterns are linked not only by a certain symmetry and by the opening וְגַם at the beginning of the next verse, but also by the stressed rhetorical repetition of words from the root שָׂאֵל. Note the reference back to v 20, in which the reasons for Hannah's naming the boy Samuel are explained, emphasizing her awareness that the boy represents God's fulfillment of her request.

Analyze הַשְׂאֵל־תְּהוּ in v 28. (? K. 133, 149, 215; Gr. 61–62, 71; Ke. 153, 253; L. 213–14,

266–67; S. 120–22, 133; W. 112–15, 124; → about א instead of the expected א in השאלתהו, see GKC §64f.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Note the use of the affix (perfect) form הִיָּה in the clause כָּל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הִיָּה, which may convey a sense of the future perfect, i.e., “all the days he shall be” (WO’C 30.5.2.b, p. 491), or probably better, this affix (perfect) form points to a situation extending from the present to the future—a persistent future perfective (→ WO’C 30.5.1.e, pp. 489–90).

Note that the temporal clause is demarcated by two zaqef qatan (') markers.

Analyze וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה (?) K. 182, 361–62; Gr. 141; L. 254–55; S. 230–32; → WO’C 21.2.3.d, pp. 360–61, JM §59 b,g; cf. GKC §75 kk.)

Root	Stem	Form	PGN	SF	OS	BRM

Who is the one who is bowing down worshipping the Lord?

Note

Some MT manuscripts read וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה instead of וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה. How does this reading change the meaning of the sentence?

Who now is bowing down and worshipping the Lord?

4QSam^a reads וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה. How would you translate this reading?

Who is the one who is bowing down and worshipping the Lord in this reading?

Translate v 28.

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Translate the entire chapter, incorporating your new understandings of the text.

For Further Reading

For an evaluation of the role of 1 Sam 1 in the overall narrative concerning the birth of the monarchy in Israel, see Brueggemann, "I Samuel 1: A Sense of a Beginning."

Several times in this discussion we have touched on textual questions. For an introduction to different scholarly approaches to these issues, see Barthélemy, Hurst, Lohfink, et al., *Preliminary and Interim Report*, ix–xvii; Albrektson, "Difficilior Lectio Probabilior," which is a partial critique of Barthélemy et al.; McCarter, *Textual Criticism*; and Würthwein, *Text*, 103–17, esp. 116–17. For a comprehensive study on this topic, see Tov, *Textual Criticism*.

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