

Ryan Milne

1 Samuel / Thanksgiving; Prayer; Corruption; Judgment; A Child / 1 Samuel 2

1 Samuel 2 ESV

¹ And Hannah prayed and said, “My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.” ² “There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.” ³ Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. ⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. ⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. ⁶ The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. ⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD’s, and on them he has set the world. ⁹ “He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail.” ¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” ¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest. ¹² Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. ¹³ The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, ¹⁴ and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” ¹⁶ And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” ¹⁷ Thus the sin of the

young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.¹⁸ Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.¹⁹ And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.²⁰ Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the LORD give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the LORD.” So then they would return to their home.²¹ Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.²² Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting.²³ And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people.²⁴ No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad.²⁵ If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.²⁶ Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.²⁷ And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the LORD, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh?’²⁸ Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.²⁹ Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’³⁰ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.³¹ Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.³² Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.³³ The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.³⁴ And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.³⁵ And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.³⁶ And everyone

who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.” ’ ”

A Child Is The Answer

1. The Answer to Prayer (v1-10)

- 1.1 A Particular Praise (How God rules with Hannah)
- 1.2 A Panoramic Praise (How God rules with People)
- 1.3 A Prophetic Praise (How God rules with Kingdom)

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Introduction

As we journey through 1 Samuel, and likely 2 Samuel, by tackling chapter-sized portions each Sunday, please bear with us. This is a larger volume of text than we’re accustomed to, so I urge you to include the upcoming chapter in your weekly devotional reading. Look ahead, study in advance, and challenge yourself to become familiar with the text. Discover its treasures of application for yourself and your family. Engage with a study guide or commentary, guiding your household through the scripture. Come to Sunday services ready with anticipation for deeper meaning and context. When Mike or I overlook a point you’ve uncovered or emphasize what you might have seen as minor, we’ll spark conversations that could fuel a year of God-honoring dialogue.

Commentaries like Dale Ralph Davis’ have been particularly illuminating in my study of 1 Samuel, alongside insights from Gill, Poole, and Henry. Be encouraged, church—we’re just beginning, and my heart is already greatly stirred by this text.

1. The Answer to Prayer (v1-10)

1.1 A Particular Praise (How God rules with Hannah v1-3)

In verses 1-3, Hannah's delight in Yahweh's unique salvation and the relief He offered during her distress shines through. The frequent use of personal pronouns in verse 1 ("my," "I") highlights that Hannah begins with her own experience. She then erupts into a proclamation of faith in verse 2, followed by a warning in verse 3. This counsel isn't directed only at Peninnah, since the plural forms of the first two Hebrew verbs and "your" indicate a general admonition to all prideful boasters. Hannah praises Yahweh for delivering her in her time of crisis. This small-scale rescue reflects God's broader work. Hannah starts with her personal story and expands outward, providing a model for prayer. We, too, can begin modestly, without feeling overwhelmed, by focusing on personal gratitude and repentance. From there, we can widen our prayers to include immediate family, church, community, leaders, state, nation, and world. That's Hannah's approach, and we see it unfold in verses 4-8.

1.2 A Panoramic Praise (How God rules with people v4-8)

Hannah expands her song, revealing how Yahweh's rescue of her reflects His universal reign. Moving from her personal story in verses 1-3 to a broader vision in verses 4-8, she shows that Yahweh's actions in her life echo His enduring character. She proclaims: I was feeble, and the Lord gave me strength; I was barren, and He granted me children; I was destitute, and He enriched me. This is no surprise—it's simply God's nature! Through this, Hannah discovers anew the God she trusted, praising Him for His faithfulness. This trust drove her to pray in Chapter 1, knowing Yahweh's compassionate nature. In her distress, she poured out her soul, and now in verses 4-8, her prophetic prayer-song elevates this God from One who aids in personal trials to the Sovereign who governs all creation.

Hannah lists grand categories of God's dominion: the weak and the mighty, the satisfied and the starving, the barren and the fruitful, those facing death and those awaiting resurrection, the poor and the prosperous, the lowly and the exalted rulers. Just before these, she declares that the Lord is a God of wisdom, judging all deeds with perfect knowledge. She explains His authority in verse 8: everything belongs to Him. The Lord didn't merely acquire these things; He established their very foundations and set the world upon them. Tracing

back from this vast scope of Yahweh's ownership, rule, and judgment, Hannah glorifies Him not only for His majestic sovereignty but also for His intimate care. This God, who commands the rise of nations and the limits of the seas, tenderly responds to the cries of a single brokenhearted woman, answering her prayers with personal compassion.

1.3 A Prophetic Praise (How God rules with Kingdom v9-10)

In verses 9–10, the scope expands further, transitioning from Hannah's personal salvation in verses 1–3 to Yahweh's universal rule over all creation in verses 4–8, culminating in the ultimate vision of His complete and manifest dominion in verses 9–10. This progression traces from an intimate instance of individual deliverance in Hannah's life to the vast scale of global sovereignty when the Lord fully enacts His characteristic rule as seen in verses 4–8. The result of God's supreme authority is evident: the redemption of His covenant people, the overthrow of His adversaries, and the judgment of the whole world. Hannah foresees the Lord accomplishing this through His chosen king, His anointed one.

????? Do I want to introduce the topic of a king for Israel here? This, for some people, is a first chance to recognize that the plan was always a king for Israel. It was not wrong for Israel to want a king, they wanted to wrong kind of king! Just like when Christ came to Israel and was rejected, Israel wanted to be ruled by their hearts, and not by God. A King like the other nations have, not our God as King. ?????

The flow of Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel demands our careful attention this evening. It's tempting to quickly skim the surface of this opening chapter: "So what? Hannah got a son—nice. Peninnah, the rival with a house full of kids, got humbled. Things are quieter now at Elkanah's home in Ramathaim-zophim." But this is no trivial matter. We don't have two wasted chapters on an unimportant marital spat. Hannah's deliverance is a glimpse of how the Lord governs and will establish His kingdom. Her relief showcases Yahweh's characteristic ways and gives a foreshadowing of how He will act when His kingdom arrives in its fullness. The aid the Lord extended to Hannah is a preview, it's a miniature model of the far grand salvation He will unleash in soul-shocking splendor.

Every believer in Christ needs to internalize this truth. Each time God pulls you from the mire of sin and circumstance and plants your feet on solid ground, it's a taste of His coming kingdom, it's a small deposit of the ultimate deliverance promised to us, and that awaits us all. These small rescues are mere signs of the final redemption.

Consider a happily married woman wearing a wedding ring. If asked, she'd likely say it's a symbol of her husband's love, not the love itself, but a token. The real thing far surpasses the symbol. Yet, she doesn't dismiss the ring as "just a symbol" or toss it at a yard sale. Its deeper significance makes it precious, despite its relative smallness. Similarly, don't belittle the small salvations the Lord works in your life—these subtle hints, these quiet but clear signs of His kingship. They reveal His remarkable way of lifting the poor from the dust and raising the needy from ashes to seat them with Christ in heavenly places. Reflect on every instance of the Lord's saving help; it strengthens your faith in [Luke 12:32](#): "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

You must have this understanding of the purposes of God. [Luke 12:32](#) is so simple and so amazing, if we can grasp it from a perspective like Hannah's.

Fear not—that's the command, the call to reject fear in your heart, no matter the trial or situation. Christian, fear is unacceptable, even off-limits, even in the slightest, if you truly grasp whose hands hold you. Fear should be cast out completely!

Little flock—that's us, you and me, and this truth is precious. We're not stray sheep stumbling aimlessly off a cliff, lost and shepherdless. We belong to the Great Shepherd. We're little, not in count, for the saved will be beyond numbering, but in comparison to the vastness of our Shepherd.

It is your Father's good pleasure—our Father, the Great Shepherd, delights in this. In human terms, it's like the eager anticipation we feel after buying a gift for our children, counting down the days until their birthday to present it.

To give you the kingdom—that's the gift! Not fleeting things like toys or tools, but the entire Kingdom of God! If we could only fathom what stirs God's pleasure as He prepares to bestow this upon us—what kind, what quality, what a magnificent gift awaits!

Now, after verses 1-10, reflecting on how we reached this point, we could ask: Does Peninnah deserve any credit? It's a strange, almost unsettling question. Yet, without her cruel taunts and malice, would Hannah have been pushed to the desperate prayer born of her anguish? In hindsight, that heart-wrenching prayer was crucial. Hannah's deep sorrow sparked a plea that brought forth a son who would safeguard God's people. The Sovereign God, through his rule of providence, ignites our prayers and magnifies their power. Hannah's painful ordeal became the salvation of a nation. So, do we owe it to Peninnah? Absolutely not. All gratitude belongs to the God who purposes to transform even the venom of Peninnah into the cradle of a kingdom servant. How can we not stand in awe of God? How can we not find solace in His care for His people?

This truth must shape our lives. I long for Awakening to be equipped to understand life's trials, even in moments of crushing distress. Imagine Hannah in chapter 1, before we know the answer in verse 20: Would we say God orchestrated this? Would God shut one womb to open another, exposing Hannah to Peninnah's scorn? Before the resolution of chapter 1, could we stand in that moment of heartache and proclaim, "God has done this, and I will praise Him"? Church, we must not only recognize this truth but resolve to trust God through it. Life often leaves us in the gap between the prayer and the answer, lingering in the uncertainty before the answer comes.

Hannah's prayer was answered with a child, a divine response to her distress. Yet, even within the first two chapters of 1 Samuel, the text reveals that Hannah's struggle is not the sole issue at hand; other problems emerge alongside hers.

2. The Answer to Priesthood (v11-36)

In today's fast-paced digital world, filled with podcasts and social media, information spreads rapidly. We frequently encounter the modern equivalents of Hophni and Phinehas. When corruption seeps into the church, especially through leaders who lack faith and lead unholy lives, it marks a dark moment. While we expect opposition from the wider world, the challenge grows dire when the church itself decays, and those called to be lights succumb to darkness. The time of Eli, Hophni, and Phinehas serves as a stark example of just that. Yet,

even in such a dismal hour, the Lord did not forsake His people. He was there, exercising both judgment and grace, beginning His judgment within the house of God.

2.1 Hatred (What needed answering)

Yahweh works so subtly in preparing His answer that His movements are nearly imperceptible, yet the chaos at Shiloh is unmistakable, glaringly obvious. Hannah's prayer in verses 1–10 references the arrogant (v. 3), the mighty (v. 4), the wicked (v. 9), and those who oppose the Lord (v. 10). And here they are—not, as we might anticipate, in the form of overt foreign foes like the Canaanites or Philistines, but embodied in Israel's own priests.

Liturgical Sins - 2:12-17

1 Samuel 2:12–17 ESV

Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD. The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

According to [Leviticus 3:3–5](#), the fat was to be burned on the altar for Jehovah, while the breast and shoulder, after being ceremonially "waved" and "heaved" as a dedication to Him, were designated for the priests. Hophni and Phinehas committed a twofold sin: first, they cheated the people by taking more than their allotted share, sending a servant to disrupt the sacrificial meal's preparation and snatch additional portions; second, they dishonored God by demanding their portion before the fat, sacred to Jehovah, was burned on the altar.

Worship at Shiloh has devolved into a shameful mockery. As a worshiper prepares their peace offering for a family meal, the priests' servant barges in, brandishing his infamous three-pronged fork. He stabs it into the worshiper's pot or kettle, taking whatever he retrieves back to the priests' quarters. Though the priests were entitled to the breast and right leg, this Shiloh fork-man is dispatched to seize even more. Worse still, before the fat is offered to Yahweh in reverence, the priests' lackey demands raw meat. If the worshiper protests, pointing out that Yahweh's honor demands the fat be burned first, the servant turns hostile, threatening to take the raw meat by force (v16). This flagrant disrespect by Hophni and Phinehas for the Lord's offering exposes the extent of their hatred towards God (v17). But it didn't stop there, look at verses 22-25.

Moral Sins - 2:22-25

1 Samuel 2:22-25 ESV

Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the LORD spreading abroad. If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.

The corruption at Shiloh extended far beyond worship, seeping into profound moral failure (v22). Hophni and Phinehas's sins were no secret; all Israel knew they were sleeping with women who served at the worship center. These men were utterly vile (v12), and the root of their wickedness is laid bare: they had no regard for Yahweh, no knowledge of the Lord, as the Hebrew literally declares, "They did not know the LORD." That such words describe the spiritual leaders of God's people is heartbreaking. With such a corrupt foundation, the resulting apathy in Israel's public worship and immorality in private lives is unsurprising, yet deeply tragic.

Eli's old age may have dulled his response, but his religious character lacks depth, as he treated these heinous sins with alarming leniency. In the context of the situation, he seemed

more annoyed by the people's complaints than grieved by the offenses themselves. This pattern, evident here and throughout Israel's history, shows how the sins of those in authority spread, leading others astray. As ministers of God, Hophni and Phinehas not only sinned but defiled the worshipers they were meant to guide, committing a direct affront to the Lord Himself. This pervasive corruption set the stage for an unexpected man delivering an unforeseen message.

This evening, we might have time to briefly explore the profound and sobering implications of [1 Samuel 2:25](#):

"If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death.

At first glance, one might misread this verse, assuming a sequence where Hophni and Phinehas sinned, then ignored their father's counsel, prompting God to decide their punishment. But the text reveals a different reality. Eli's sons sinned in their priestly duties, and the verse notes they refused to heed their father's warnings, not as the cause of their judgment, but as part of it. Their refusal to listen stemmed from God's will to bring about their death. Because the Lord had purposed to judge them for their wickedness, He gave them over to a judicial hardening, much like Pharaoh, blinding them to counsel and hardening their hearts against admonition.

Encountering God's justice in Scripture isn't meant to spark intellectual debates about the mechanics of His decrees. Instead, it calls us to humble worship of the God who saves. Our role is not to question or fully grasp His ways but to stand in awe before a God who can justly render sinners deaf to the call to repentance.

The God who graciously grants Hannah a child is the same God who justly removes Eli's sons. This divine sovereignty, weaving both mercy and judgment, leaves us with nothing to do but bow in awe and worship.

1 Samuel 2:27–36 ESV

And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh?

Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel. Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’ Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the LORD declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men. And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever. And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.” ’ ”

When we consider the account of the unnamed man of God delivering God’s message, it’s easy to see it as confined to Eli’s specific circumstances. By fixating on the story’s particulars, we might miss its relevance to our own lives, thinking, “I’m not a high priest of Israel, so this is just a historical incident to note with disapproval.” Yet, by God’s grace, this text holds valuable lessons for every believer—two, in fact: a general truth and a specific application.

First, the general truth for all to apply.

The prophecy against Eli exposes a stark reality: grave sin can stem from valuing human niceness over God’s truth. It’s tempting to adopt a timid compassion that shies away from confrontation, confusing courtesy with love. This can lead us to sidestep God’s law and dismiss His holiness. Prioritizing people’s feelings doesn’t always equate to honoring God.

Second, the specific application for this situation.

Eli permitted his sons’ flagrant abuse and disdain for the Lord’s worship to persist, effectively

placing their honor above God's. While he verbally rebuked them, in his position as father and priest, he failed to act decisively when they continued their offenses. At minimum, he should have removed them from their priestly roles. Though Eli might not have been able to stop their personal immorality, he could have barred them from committing such acts as priests. Thus, this unknown man of God condemns Eli's sin of excessive leniency—his readiness to tolerate sin, to let God's honor take second place, and to favor his sons over his God. For Eli, family loyalty outweighed faith.

So far, all of this has been the priesthood problem, and unless you think the only answer provided in the text is the judgment, let's look at a few of the verses we conveniently passed over in the text.

2.2 Hallowing (What would God do)

The narrative thus far has centered on the problem within the priesthood, but reducing the text's response to mere judgment overlooks the broader divine activity woven throughout the story. Hannah's prayer was answered with a child, a clear sign of God's grace. Consider the countless prayers of Israel's families, robbed and dishonored during worship at Shiloh. Are we to conclude that death as judgment is the sole answer? No, the text subtly reveals more. Alongside the judgment on Hophni, Phinehas, and Eli, God is quietly at work, raising up Samuel through Hannah's answered prayer ([1 Sam. 1:20](#), [2:21](#)). This child, a gift of grace, foreshadows a new hope for Israel's worship and leadership, showing that God's response includes restoration, not just retribution.

Throughout the priesthood problem and moral decay at Shiloh, we can spot a glimmer of hope. Brief mentions of young Samuel are woven through the text, quietly contrasting the wickedness of Hophni and Phinehas. These subtle progress reports stand as quiet testaments to the Lord's provision.

Samuel serving - [1 Samuel 2:11](#) "Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest."

Samuel serving - [1 Samuel 2:18-21](#) “Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord.” So then they would return to their home. Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.”

Samuel growing - [1 Samuel 2:26](#) “Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.”

Samuel serving - [1 Samuel 3:1](#) (*I'll steal 1 verse from Pastor Mike next week*) “Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.”

What a contrast to the sinful sons of Eli. With all the shocking news of the great sins of Eli and his sons, we might just miss the quiet child growing and serving in the background.

These verses highlight two key points before I reach my main focus.

First, even a child is noted as ministering, a truth we should cherish when we see children serving at Awakening Church. While I am certain that an adult could undoubtedly move chairs faster and in greater quantity, [1 Samuel 2:11](#) states, “Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.” This follows Samuel’s arrival at Shiloh, likely at age 3–6. What could a child so young do? The text doesn’t detail tasks or measure output—no chair stacking is mentioned—but it affirms he was ministering to the Lord.

Second, God’s people are never diminished by giving. Hannah prayed for Samuel, not for herself, but “for the Lord,” and she dedicated him to God’s service. In return, she receives “grace upon grace” ([John 1:16](#)), a hallmark of “classic Yahweh.” No sacrifice ever leaves the

Lord's servants lacking. We pour out to the Lord endlessly, yet when we rise, our cup still overflows. The Lord not only meets His people's needs ([Psalm 23:1-2](#)) but provides abundance even in hardship ([Psalm 23:5](#)). This abundance transcends material blessings of the Old Covenant, encompassing the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit for all who seek Him.

Returning to these often-overlooked verses, my central point is this: the brief mentions of Samuel carry profound weight. They show that the Lord is quietly at work, raising up a new, godly leader for His people. There's no spectacle, no campaign, no bold announcement—just subtle, steady growth. The Lord nurtures His next leader in silence, as growth rarely makes noise. In contrast, Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, dominate the scene with their loud, arrogant, and immoral priesthood, valuing prime cuts of meat over godliness and personal gratification over interceding for God's flock. Their sin in this chapter is deafening. To Israel's worshipers, it likely felt like an unending, oppressive darkness. Yet, in this bleak night, the text gently urges us: "Don't miss Samuel; see how he serves." A child is the answer. This mirrors the Lord's way—quietly preparing hope in the darkest times. We saw this same pattern with Hannah's prayer, didn't we? Remarkably, the answer is not only the same—"a child is the answer"—but the very same child. The child God destined for Hannah is the same one He ordained for Israel, a response to both Hannah's personal distress and Israel's collective anguish. A Child is the answer!

3. A Child is the Answer (Application)

In Hannah's prophetic prayer of praise, we see how her faith is built upon who God is. Because God has shown himself to operate this way on a grand scale with salvation, she knows and trusts that the big picture of salvation is made up of individuals being saved. Because God is a savior of Israel, she knows that God is a savior of Hannah. She trusts that the God who opens the sea can open the womb. She KNOWS that the God who saves a nation can save a woman. She knows that the God who promised a child would look upon her prayers for a child.

3.1 Application

[James 4:3](#) “You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.”

Hannah’s prayer for a child was not driven by selfish motives or a desire to silence Peninnah. Her suffering was real, but her heart’s aim was the glory and service of the Lord, trusting in a God who cares for the brokenhearted. Remarkably, the answer to both her personal distress and Israel’s broader crisis in 1 Samuel’s opening chapters is the same: a child is the answer—Samuel. This reveals God’s pattern in answering prayer and bringing salvation.

Hannah was powerless to change her barrenness, yet she cried out to the God she knew as Savior. Similarly, Israel was helpless against the corrupt priests Hophni and Phinehas; Eli did nothing, yet families continued to worship despite the priests’ theft and dishonor. Neither Hannah nor Israel could resolve their plights, but God saved. He saved with a child, working His salvation quietly, according to His plan, amid the deafening clamor of sin.

This same answer resonates today for all who trust in the God who delivered Hannah and raised up a boy to rescue Israel from a corrupt priesthood. If the sins in this ancient story seem loud to us, even though they happened so long ago and so far away from us, our own sins should feel even more deafening. Yet, when guilt and sin debt seem to drown out all else, shouting toward God’s justice, the Savior God that Hannah relied on has quietly provided an answer. A child is the answer—Jesus, just as Samuel was in his time.

[Isaiah 9:6–7](#) “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.”