

Hannah's Prayer

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Pray

Three Things...

John Marc will continue his series in Ephesians next Sunday. John Marc texted me while I was on sabbatical and asked if I would preach on Mother's Day. I asked, "Does it have to be a 'Mother's Day' message or can I preach a Psalm?" He said, "It doesn't have to be a 'Mother's Day' message." I started looking at some of the Psalms that I plan to preach. But then I thought about Hannah's Prayer in 1 Samuel 2. I looked to see if anyone ever had preached on this passage. John Marc said he hadn't. But Jen Kramer showed me that John Marc had preached a sermon on Hannah for Mother's Day on May 13, 2018. His message was titled, "Hannah – A Model for Motherhood." The sermon is on our website if you want to listen to it. Here is what John Marc said in his sermon about our passage this morning, "We don't have time this morning to plumb into the depths of Hannah's beautiful psalm of praise...". Well, he left the door wide open for us to look at Hannah's prayer this morning.

I know that several of the women in our church have been studying the *Women of the Bible* in their Thursday Bible study. Here is what John MacArthur wrote about the passage we are going to look at this morning, "If it were given to me as a text to preach on, I would undoubtedly have to preach a series of several sermons just to unpack its prophetic and doctrinal significance completely." John Marc didn't give me enough Sundays to preach a series of several sermons. I don't even think John MacArthur ever preached a series on Hannah's prayer. But in our time we have together this morning, we will focus on **1 Samuel 2:1-10**. In this remarkable prayer, Hannah praises the Lord for His holiness, His omniscience, His sovereignty, and His justice.

If you have your Bibles, please turn to **1 Samuel 2**. While you are turning there, let me give you a brief background from the life of Hannah.

“Hannah, like several prominent women in the Bible, was barren and unable to conceive a child for a long time after marrying. In ancient Israel, children were considered a clear sign of God’s blessing. **Psalm 127:3** says, *“Behold, children are a gift of the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward.”* Infertility brought severe disgrace to a woman because in those days it meant she could not fulfill her God-given purpose of producing offspring for her family. Adding to Hannah’s misfortune was her family situation: her husband Elkanah had a second wife, Peninnah, who had given him many children. The rival wife mocked Hannah cruelly. **Look at 1 Samuel 1:6. 1 Samuel 1:6–7** says, *“Her rival, however, would provoke her bitterly to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. It happened year after year, as often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she would provoke her; so she wept and would not eat.”* For years Hannah poured out her soul’s desire to the Lord in prayer, promising Him that, if she had a son, she would give the child back to God.

One day at the tabernacle in Shiloh, the high priest Eli overheard Hannah’s heartbroken petition and assured her that her prayer would be answered. True to the promise, Hannah gave birth to a son and named him Samuel. When the boy was old enough, she brought him to live with Eli to serve in the tabernacle of the Lord. After leaving behind her miracle child to be trained in the priesthood, Hannah prayed an extraordinary, poetic prayer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Like many biblical prayers, Hannah’s prayer begins with praise for a specific act of God and then branches out into a more universal praise of God’s attributes and actions.” (www.gotquestions.org)

As we look at Hannah’s Prayer this morning, it is my prayer, that we will remember to thank God as Hannah did no matter how God chooses to answer our prayers.

Let's look at 1 Samuel 2:1-10...

Biblical Counselor, Dr. Jim Newheiser, writes, “Hannah’s song is strategically placed at the beginning of 1 Samuel because its significance goes far beyond her personal situation of barrenness and taunting from her rival wife. Hannah’s song introduces the great themes of 1 and 2 Samuel and foreshadows the events which are to unfold. Hannah’s barrenness and misery are a picture of the situation of God’s people, Israel, who are weak and oppressed by their enemies among the Canaanites. Hannah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, doesn’t merely sing about her own situation; she sings prophetically for all God’s people, who will soon be lifted up. Just as God provided a son to deliver Hannah, so he will provide a leader to rescue Israel from her enemies.” (Opening Up 1 Samuel)

“Hannah’s prayer is a remarkable passage of Scripture containing a song of praise with prophetic and messianic significance. Hannah’s prayer eloquently celebrates the holiness and sovereignty of God and affirms the central tenets of Israel’s faith. Not only is Hannah’s prayer a testimony of God’s handiwork in her own life, but it is also a foreshadowing of His actions in the lives of the prophet Samuel, King David, and the nation of Israel.” (www.gotquestions.org)

This prayer is one of the earliest examples of Israelite poetry. David’s songs of praise at the end of 2 Samuel uses much of the same vocabulary found in Hannah’s prayer. Jesus’ mother Mary adapted Hannah’s prayer a thousand years later in **Luke 1:46-55**. Adrian read that prayer this morning.

In this prayer, we are going to see that Hannah thanks God for three things:

- 1. Hannah praises God for who He is v 1-3**
- 2. Hannah praises God for what He does v 4-9**

3. Hannah praises God for what He will do v 10

Let's look at verses 1-3 again...

I. Hannah praises God for who He is.

Notice three statements as Hannah opens her prayer. “**My heart** exults in the Lord,” “**My horn** is exalted in the Lord,” and “**My mouth** speaks boldly against my enemies.” Hannah is worshipping with her entire being. In Hebrew thought, the heart designates the most inward part of a person, the center of one's will and thoughts. **Horn** represents strength. Picture an animal with horns raising its horn high. That is a picture of strength. So, Hannah is saying, “In the Lord I now hold my head high” or “I have triumphed through the Lord.” When Hannah says, “*My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies,*” she is not making a personal attack on her husband's other wife, Peninnah. She is speaking against God's enemies. God's enemies are Hannah's enemies too, because His enemies attack her trust in God and His dealings with her. Why does Hannah praise God? Look at the last part of verse 1...” Because I rejoice in your salvation. One commentator writes, “The object of Hannah's delight is neither herself—that she has overcome the disgrace of barrenness—nor her son; instead, it is the Lord who is the source of both her son and her happy circumstance.” (Robert D Bergen) Did you catch that? Read verse 1 again. Hannah's delight is “in the Lord.” Her heart exults in the Lord. Her strength is exalted in the Lord. She rejoices because of the Lord's salvation. “In Old Testament times, salvation refers to both every day, regular types of deliverance—as from enemies, disease and danger—and to those major deliverances that are specifically interpreted as being a definite part of God's unique and special involvement in human history as well as special revelations of His character and will.”

(www.gotquestions.org) His salvation, that being delivered by Him, makes Hannah burst forth into thanksgiving. God is her delight. And she expresses her delight praising God for who He is. When you pray, do you praise God because you got what you wanted? Or do you praise God

because He is your delight? Do you praise Him because of Who He is? Hannah did. Who is God?

A. He is Holy

Hannah prays in verse 2, *“There is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides You.”* Hannah is praising God because He is Holy. **Leviticus 10:3 (NASB95)** — 3 *Then Moses said to Aaron, “It is what the LORD spoke, saying, ‘By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.’”* So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. **Leviticus 11:44 (NASB95)** — 44 *‘For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth.* **Leviticus 19:2 (NASB95)** — 2 *“Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, ‘You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.* **Leviticus 20:26 (NASB95)** — 26 *‘Thus you are to be holy to Me, for I the LORD am holy; and I have set you apart from the peoples to be Mine.* **Exodus 15:11 (NASB95)** — 11 *“Who is like You among the gods, O LORD? Who is like You, majestic in holiness, Awesome in praises, working wonders? The holiness of God is “God’s separateness from all else and particularly from all evil.” God’s Holiness causes Hannah to rejoice. Richard Phillips writes, “This is entirely appropriate, because it is God’s holiness that comforts and encourages us in every situation. The holiness of God implies His separation from all His creatures, but it carries especially the notion of God’s moral perfection. Since God is holy, all His intentions for His people are holy. It is not possible for God’s motives to be perverse or callous or mean—even in judgment and especially toward His beloved people—for He is “of purer eyes than to see evil and cannot look at wrong” (**Habakkuk 1:13**) ... Since God is perfectly holy, what truly matters is not what circumstances befall us in life but our relationship with the Holy One.” Hannah praises God for who He is. He is Holy. But we also see that...*

B. He is a Rock

Hannah prays, “*Nor is there any rock like our God.*” The image of God as a rock conveys His faithfulness to protect and establish His people.

Deuteronomy 32:4 says, “*The Rock! His work is perfect, For all His ways are just; A God of faithfulness and without injustice, Righteous and upright is He.*” God is Hannah’s rock. And she praised Him for who He is. **Third, ...**

C. He is omniscient.

In 1 Samuel 2:3, Hannah prays, “*For the Lord is a God of knowledge.*” God is all-knowing. He sees the powerless and disadvantaged and acts on their behalf. Verse three starts with “*Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth.*” God sees all things and knows how to respond to them. The end of verse 3 says, “*And with Him actions are weighed.*” “God has a response, calculated by infinite wisdom, for every situation; God acts and permits actions in accordance with His perfect knowledge of past, present, and future, always achieving His sovereign will for His own glory and the highest good of His people.” (Richard Phillips) This is a verse of warning against pride. The all-knowing God sees the powerless and disadvantaged and acts on their behalf. God weighs the hearts and minds of men. **Proverbs 16:2** says, “*All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives.*” **Proverbs 21:2** says, “*Every man’s way is right in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the hearts.*” Beware of pride. **Proverbs 16:18** says, “*Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.*” Don’t think you know more than God. You and I are not God. That’s good news. There is one God. He is holy. His is our rock. He is omniscient. Hannah praised God for who He is. Will we do the same?

Look at verses 4-9...

II. Hannah praises God for what He does.

She praises God for his sovereignty. That is “God’s absolute rule and authority over all things.” **What does God do?** We are going to see a reversal of Human fortunes in verses 4-9. **First...**

A. He replaces emptiness with fulness. V 4-5

Notice the contrast found in verses 4 & 5. In verse 4 we see the mighty and the feeble. In verse 5 we see the full and the hungry. Then we see the barren and the mother who has many children. God acts according to His sovereign will. This is often beyond human understanding and common sense. He makes the weak strong and the strong weak. He makes the hungry full and the full hungry. He makes the barren give birth and those who have many children languish. In the Bible, 7 was a number of perfection. To have 7 children was a blessing. To have 7 sons was an even greater blessing. This was very real to Hannah. She had no children and now God has given her a son. Later in her life, she went on to have at least five more children that we know of. Hannah trusted God in all things.

Charles Spurgeon says, “What a clear view Hannah had of the sovereignty of God, and how plainly she perceived that God overrules all mortal things, and doeth as He wills! How she seemed to glory in the power of that almighty hand whose working unbelievers cannot discern, but which, to this gracious woman’s opened eye, was so conspicuous everywhere! With what jubilation she sings of the way in which God deals with men, putting down the mighty and lifting up the lowly!”

When something horrible happens in our lives, it may be a surprise to us, but it is never a surprise to God. That brings me comfort. That brings me peace. I trust that God knows what is best for me. I may not understand it. There is peace when one trusts in God. **Philippians 4:4–8** says, *“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses*

all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” We can praise him for what He does. He replaces emptiness with fulness. Also...

B. He reverses a person’s status in life v 6-9

Again, we see God’s Holy Sovereignty in verses 6-9. Notice the extremes in these verses...kills and makes alive, brings down to Sheol and raises up, makes poor and rich, brings low and exalts, and He puts the poor and needy to a seat of honor. **Deuteronomy 32:39** says, *‘See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; It is I who put to death and give life. I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.* God has authority over life and death and everything in between. Hannah knew that and praised God for all that he does. At the end of verse 8 Hannah prays, *“For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s and He set the world on them.”* The pillars in this verse represent the foundation. God is the one who upholds the place where we live as well as the moral order of this world. Does that bring you peace? Does that give you hope? **Look at verse 9.** *“He keeps the feet of his godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness; For not by might shall a man prevail.”* Nobody can prevail by his own ability. Only when God guards their feet can the faithful ones stand and prevail against the power of darkness. One commentator asked some very good questions related to verse 9. I included them on the back of the outline. *“Not by might shall a man prevail,” but by the Lord!* Have you learned this lesson? Have you learned that God is the One who ultimately matters, to whom you must ultimately give account, and by whose grace alone you can hope to be saved? Have you realized that even if you succeed in climbing to the top of life’s ladder, unless you are righteous before God all must ultimately be lost, if not sooner, then in the final judgment? Have you learned that all who humble themselves and come to the Lord in faith receive from Him the saving care they need, so that they may prevail in the end “not by might” but by the Lord, who shows mercy and gives grace?”

Hannah praised God for who He is and what He does. Also...

Look at verse 10...

III. Hannah praises God for what He will do.

A. God will be victorious over His enemies.

Look at the first part of verse 10. *Those who contend with the Lord will be shattered.* They will be completely destroyed by God. God is a God of justice. Justice is one of God's attributes that flows out of His Holiness. God intervenes from heaven with thunder. Thunder is a term that speaks of God's destructive power in the context of battle. In verse 9 we see that the Lord keeps the feet of His godly ones, so they do not tremble or stumble. **Psalm 56:13** says, *"For You have delivered my soul from death, Indeed my feet from stumbling, So that I may walk before God In the light of the living."* **Psalm 116:8** says, *"For You have rescued my soul from death, My eyes from tears, My feet from stumbling."* The wicked, who oppress and persecute the godly ones will perish in darkness, in adversity when God withdraws the light of His grace, so that they fall into distress and calamity. No man can be strong though his own power to meet the storms of life. *Those who contend against the Lord will be shattered.* Hannah knows that God will be victorious over His enemies and in that she rejoices.

She also praises God for a second thing He will do...

B. God will judge the ends of the earth.

God is going to judge the entire world. **Isaiah 45:22** says, *"Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other.* According to biblical tradition, God is the King of the Universe. **Psalm 29:10** says, *"The LORD sat as King at the flood; Yes, the LORD sits as King forever."* **Exodus 15:18** says, *"The LORD shall reign forever and ever."* **Psalm 96:10** says, *"Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be*

moved; He will judge the peoples with equity.”” Hannah praised God for what He will do. Again, He is a God of justice. He will judge the ends of the earth.

But there is one more thing that Hannah praises God for that might not make a lot of sense.

C. God will bless the King

“And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed.” You see, at this point in history, Israel has not had a king. God was Israel’s King. In verse 10, Hannah speaks of a king and an anointed one or messiah. How could Hannah speak of a king and messiah before the days when Israel had a king? **Genesis 17:16** says, *“I will bless her, and indeed I will give you a son by her. Then I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”* **Genesis 35:11** says, *“God also said to him, “I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.”*

Genesis 36:31 says, *“Now these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the sons of Israel.”* **Deuteronomy 17:15** says, *“you shall surely set a king over you whom the LORD your God chooses, one from among your countrymen you shall set as king over yourselves; you may not put a foreigner over yourselves who is not your countryman.”* Those three verses mention the office of kingship as mentioned in the law of Moses. The idea of a king was not foreign. It just hadn’t happened for Israel yet. God was their King.

In the larger scope of biblical history, one can see that Hannah was speaking prophetically of the day when Israel would have anointed kings—the first two, in fact would be anointed as such by her son Samuel. Or her words can even extend to the coming of Jesus Christ.

Hannah foresaw that God intended to meet Israel’s need by providing “His king.” 1 and 2 Samuel tell the story of how Hannah’s prophecy

would be fulfilled. God would give strength to King David as he led God's people.

God didn't stop with David. God will exalt the horn of His anointed. That is Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who would come to save God's people and rule forever in righteousness and peace. Hannah's prayer is the first direct reference in the Old Testament to God's promised Messiah, Jesus Christ.

No wonder Hannah could rejoice in what God would do. God did send His Son, Jesus, to earth. Do you know Him?

One day we are all going to stand before God. If He were to say to you, why should I let you into heaven, what would you say? If you don't know, please talk to me or one of the pastors or elders. Or talk to your community group leader. They would love to tell you how you can get into heaven.

I will give you a hint. Jesus said in **John 14:6**, *I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father.*

** except through Me. '**

We have looked at Hannah's prayer this morning. Hannah praises God for who He is—He is holy, He is omniscient, He is the Rock. She praises Him for what he does—He is sovereign. And she praises God for what He will do—He is just.

Today is Mother's Day. Hannah was an amazing mother. And she prayed an amazing prayer. Hannah rejoiced in an Amazing God.

Let's Pray