

—{1}. **1 Samuel 2:1–10** **Hannah's Prayer**

- A. The Background to This Prayer we find in 1 Samuel chapter 1
 - 1. the time
 - a. took place during or shortly after the period when Samson was judge
 - b. Eli
 - (A) a descendant of Ithamar, Aaron's youngest son
 - (B) was the high priest,
 - (C) himself was judge for forty years (judges overlapped)
 - c. his sons Hophni and Phineas were sons of Belial
 - d. Eli knew this but didn't impose DISCIPLINE needed (2:22ff)
 - 2. Elkanah and his two wives
 - a. Elkanah was of the tribe of Ephraim
 - b. Peninnah who had children
 - c. Hannah who was barren
 - 3. Their annual trip to the tabernacle at Shiloh
 - a. where they would sacrifice
 - b. and then they partook of the sacrifice as a feast
 - c. a portion given to Peninnah, her sons, her daughters
 - d. a double portion was given to Hannah whom he loved
 - e. but every year Peninnah would provoke Hannah bitterly to irritate her so that Hannah could not eat
 - f. the subject of this provocation (1:6) was that the Lord had closed Hannah's womb in that she did not have children
 - g. CRUELTY of people ... jabbing at the vulnerable
 - h. Elkanah, "am I not better than ten sons," not much help

4. So Hannah went to the Lord
 - a. bitter of soul, she prayed for a child
 - b. 1 Samuel 1:11 (NAS): *And she made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if Thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of Thy maidservant and remember me, and not forget Thy maidservant, but wilt give Thy maidservant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head."*
 - c. Nazirite — vow; temporary; regulated eating, — but this, like Samson, was to be a life-time vow
 - d. she prayed with such fervency, her lips moved soundlessly
 - e. Eli, thinking her drunk, reprimanded her; she explained
 - f. 1 Samuel 1:17-18 (NAS): ¹⁷ *Then Eli answered and said, "Go in peace; and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of Him."* ¹⁸ *And she said, 'Let your maidservant find favour in your sight.'" So the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.*
 - g. Eli, as High Priest, could speak from God
 - h. Hannah, a woman of FAITH, believed and was comforted

5. The child is born
 - a. called "Samuel" because he was "asked of God"
 - b. she does not go up at the next annual feast because the child is too young
 - c. although Samuel is her first-born, no mention of the five-shekel redemption – not an oversight – redemption was in place of Levites who were dedicated to God – which tells us how Samuel later qualified for priestly duties
 - d. so Hannah brings Samuel, perhaps not much different in age from Amanda here to Shiloh, to the tabernacle, to Eli
 - e. In 1 Samuel 1:27–28 (NAS) she reminds Eli: ²⁷ *"For this boy I prayed, and the LORD has given me my petition which I asked of Him."* ²⁸ *So I have also dedicated him to the LORD; as long as he lives he is dedicated to the LORD." And he {Eli} worshipped the LORD there.*
 - f. to give him to the Lord for the rest of his life – so Samuel is separated from his mother – how is she feeling ... sad, regretful, sorry for her vow? ... but

B. Now Hannah Prays – Let's Listen

1. no, she is not regretful, but rather rejoicing

"Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; My horn is exalted in the LORD, My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, Because I rejoice in Thy salvation." (1 Samuel 2:1 NAS)

- a. she exults, she is made strong, why? because of the Lord
- b. in the Lord; it is He who has given victory

2. what makes this Lord worthy of such worship

² There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides Thee, Nor is there any rock like our God. ³ Boast no more so very proudly, Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth; For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed. (1 Samuel 2:2-3 NAS)

- a. He is Holy – completely transcendent; completely pure
- b. He is Unique – there is none like Him, none beside Him
- c. Holy, Holy, Holy/.../There is none beside Thee/Perfect in power, in love and purity – Reginald Heber (1783-1826)
- d. He is the Lord of Knowledge, the perfectly fair Judge

3. Lord defends poor, humble, downtrodden

⁴ The bows of the mighty are shattered, But the feeble gird on strength. ⁵ Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, But those who were hungry cease *to hunger*. Even the barren gives birth to seven, But she who has many children languishes. ⁶ The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts. ⁸ He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honor; For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them. 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. ¹⁰

Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; Against them He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; ..." (1 Samuel 2:4-10a NAS)

- a. Peninnah blessed by God proudly used it to provoke Hannah; spoiling the sacred family time of sacrifice
- b. but it is not the proud that the Lord listens to, but humble
- c. 1 Peter 5:5b–6 (NAS): ... God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time
- d. for those who will seek God in this fashion, we have this assurance (verse 9) that God keeps the feet of His godly
- e. yet these verses also warn those who remained too proud to turn to God, too self-satisfied to seek His face: "but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness" – a dire warning

4. The Climax of the Prayer

"... And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed." (1 Samuel 2:10b NAS)

- a. this took place 50 years or so before Saul was made King
- b. and, the structure of this verse, tells us that the last word, "anointed" refers to the king
- c. climax of prayer is the Anointed, King, Messiah, Christ
- d. beginning and end of our every prayer should be Christ
- e. Lord's supper in a few moments is to remind us of this

C. Conclusion

1. from a human standpoint, this almost looks silly, foolish
 - a. Hannah, so long wanting a child, and now that she has her desire, she gives him up, is voluntarily separated from him
 - b. so what was the point?
 - c. just this: Hannah, as a woman of faith, has trusted her Lord against the one who provoked her, and He has justified her and her faith in the very matter in which she was provoked
 - d. so Hannah can indeed rejoice in her Lord who has looked upon her humble state and has blessed her

e. ¹⁸ Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD, as a boy wearing a linen ephod. ¹⁹ And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come 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 from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD." And they went to their own home. ²¹ And the LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD. (1 Samuel 2:18-21 NAS)

2. no, Hannah was not foolish

a. Luke 18:29-30 (NAS): ²⁹ And He {Jesus} said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, ³⁰ who shall not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

b. no, there is no way that we can ever give so much to God as to put Him in debt to us

c. so if this morning you are holding back from the wooing of the Holy Spirit for fear of what you will lose — forget it, give in, give in now — you will never regret if all your life

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in *square brackets*. The versions are identified as:

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| ASV | American Standard Version of 1901 |
| AV | Authorized (King James) Version |
| NAS | New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation |
| NIV | New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society |
| NKJV | New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers |
| PHIL | New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips |
| RSV | Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. |
| WEY | The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth |

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