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Hannah’s Song

First Samuel 2: 1-11

Hannah’s song DIG: Who were Hannah’s enemies? How was she delivered? What three ways show her transformation? Who did Hannah rejoice in? How did Hannah describe God in her song? What are some of the things she says that God does? How did the LORD continue to bless Hannah? How does Hannah’s song describe His sovereignty? How is Hannah’s understanding of God’s control different from the world’s?

REFLECT: What is most inspiring or instructive to you in Hannah’s praise and prayer? Why is that? Do you value God only for what He can do for you? Do you sometimes feel disappointed that God didn’t do what you thought He should do for you? What is the remedy for that disappointment? Where in your life now are you inclined to trust in your own strength instead of God’s? What has been your greatest role reversal?

Hannah’s song provides a forward-looking summary of what ADONAI was about to do in her period of history and ours.

After **Hannah** left **Samuel** with ‘**Eli**, **she** could have gone off alone and had a good cry; but instead, **she** burst into a **song** of praise to **ADONAI**. The world doesn’t understand the relationship between sacrifice and **song**, how **God’s people** can **sing their** way into sacrifice and sacrifice **their** way into **song**. **And when the burnt offering began, the song of ADONAI began also (Second Chronicles 29:27)**. Before going to the Garden where **He** would be arrested, **Yeshua sang the Hallel with His apostles (Matthew 26:30)**, and **Paul and Silas sang songs to the Lord** after **they** had been humiliated and beaten (**Acts 16:20-26**).⁴⁹

We become especially aware of the importance of **Hannah’s song** when we see how perfectly it corresponds to **David’s song** of praise (see the commentary on **the Life of David, to see link click Eh - David’s Song of Praise**). These two praise **songs** serve as a pair of bookends to cover everything written between

them. The themes **Hannah** anticipated in the birth of **Samuel** reappear as **David** looked back to see **Hannah’s** hope wonderfully fulfilled through **his** own reign. For both **Hannah** and **David**, **the God of Isra’el** was **their Rock**. What **Hannah** foresaw that **the LORD** would do; **David** celebrated as accomplished.⁵⁰



Hannah’s God (2:1-2):

Then Hannah prayed, saying: **My heart rejoices** (Hebrew: *alats*, meaning *to feel extreme joy*) **in ADONAI!** This is the first time **rejoice(s)** is used in the TaNaKh, as if **the LORD** kept it for this special occasion. **Hannah** showed us what a difference it makes when we turn to **God** in our time of need. The last time we saw **her praying**, **her** situation was very different. **Hannah** recorded **her** transformation in terms of **her heart**, **her horn**, and **her mouth**. First, earlier, **her husband Elkanah** had asked **her**, “**Why is your heart so sad**” (1:8a)? At that time **Hannah** described **herself** as **a deeply troubled woman** (1:15). But now **she** declared: **My heart rejoices in ADONAI.**

Second, some English translations obscure **Hannah’s** next point, substituting the word “strength” for the original word **horn**. **My horn has been restored by ADONAI!** Those who lived in **Hannah’s** agricultural world knew that a beast held its horns high as a symbol of victory and power. In this same way, **Hannah** referred to the removal of **her** disgrace; now **she** could hold **her** head up high because of what **YHVH** had done for **her**.

Third, **Hannah** announced: **My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies.** The Hebrew literally says, “**My mouth** is wide open.” The ideas seem to combine the devouring of one’s foes, along with a gloating over defeated **enemies**. Given **Hannah’s** refusal to complain about Peninnah or to seek **Ha’Shem’s** revenge, it is unlikely that **she** had suddenly turned bitter and hateful. Rather, thinking theologically (as **she** does all the way through **her song**), **Hannah** saw Peninnah

as an example of **the enemies** of **the LORD** and **His people**. **Hannah** rejoiced, as **she** saw the voice of unbelievers silenced because of **God’s** saving grace.⁵¹

A question is raised by some commentators as to whether **Hannah** overstated the significance of **her** own deliverance. The answer is that **Hannah** represented **Isra’el** in the barrenness of **her** wilderness wanderings. **Her salvation** was designed to encourage all **Isra’el** to hope for a greater deliverance. Looking at herself as representing **the nation of Isra’el**, **she** seems to have felt that what had happened to **her** on a small scale was to happen to **the nation** on a large scale. That **ADONAI** would redeem **Isra’el** as **He** had redeemed **her** (see the commentary on [Romans Da - The Redemption of Isra’el](#)); to make **Isra’el** **His** servant to humble the proud and malignant nations around **her**, and to rejoice in **Him**.⁵²

It is of great importance that the source of **Hannah’s joy** and strength was **ADONAI Himself**. **She** stated: **I rejoice in Your salvation**. **Hannah** did not merely **rejoice** that **she** had received something **she** wanted. More significant than the gift in **her** eyes was **the Giver**. **ADONAI** was **her song** and **her salvation**. The object of **Hannah’s** delight was neither in **herself** (that **she** had overcome the disgrace of barrenness), nor in **her son**. Instead, **her** delight was in **ADONAI**, who was the source of both **her**, **her son**, and **her salvation**. As much as **Hannah** loved **her son**, **he** was not **her Savior**, and **he** could not provide **the salvation** for **God’s people** that **she** sought. **Salvation** is always of **the Lord**, and our praise should be focused on **Him** rather than merely on the blessings **He** has provided. **Hannah** had not merely received **a son** – as if a baby would solve all **her** problems – but had received help from **God**. **He** was the solution for everything **Hannah** and **Isra’el** needed.⁵³

Just as **Hannah** earlier was a model of **heartfelt prayer**, **she** now models godly praise, glorifying **God**, first for who **He** is, and then being in awe at **the salvation** **He** has given. **Her** first thought turned to **the LORD’s holiness**. For **no one is as holy as ADONAI**. 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 especially carries the idea of **Ha’Shem’s** moral perfection. Since **YHVH** 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**, especially toward **His** own **people**, **His eyes are too pure to look upon evil; he cannot tolerate wrong (Habakkuk 1:13)**.⁵⁴ To the wicked this

attribute does not bring comfort, only fear. Yet to those who can appreciate it, **God’s holiness** is such an incredible blessing. There is no darkness in **Him**, no corruption, no infirmity; being absolutely pure, **He** governs with absolute purity.⁵⁵

Having praised **God** for **His holiness**, **Hannah** added: **There is none to compare with You**. Hebrew poetry often uses parallelism in which one statement is followed by another that develops and expands the initial thought. Not only is **God holy**, but **He** is so unique that **no one** else can **compare** with **Him**. **The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** is the only true **God**, alone among all those worshiped as divine, yes, **Hannah’s LORD** was truly **God**. Therefore, there is none to thwart **His** marvelous plans; **ADONAI’s** will is always being done, since **there is none to compare with Him**.

Then **Hannah** came to the culmination of **her song/prayer**. Not only is **ADONAI holy** and the only true **God**, but **Hannah** declared: **There is no Rock like our God (2:2c)**. **The Rock** is one of the repeated images of **YHVH** in **the Song of Moses (Deut 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31)** and in **David’s Song (2 Samuel 22:32)**. **The Rock** speaks of **the LORD’s** strength, stability, and **chesed** (see the commentary on **Ruth Af - The Concept of Chesed**), and emphasizes the fact that **He** does not change (**Malachi 3:6**). **ADONAI** is the immovable **Rock** on whom all our hopes are safe and secure. **He** is **the Rock** in which we can always trust, because **He** cannot be overthrown.

Hannah’s God-centered prayer sets a vital example for us. If we place a greater emphasis on the blessings that **ADONAI** gives than on **YHVH Himself**, we commit idolatry, placing more value on ourselves rather than on **Him**! Thus, our foolishness will eventually lead to our own destruction. **Hannah** was right. There is **no one as holy as ADONAI**. Therefore, like **Hannah**, we should always focus on the fact that we know **God** and have been accepted into **His** loving care through the atoning sacrifice of **His one and only Son, Yeshua (John 3:16)**.

Hannah’s Warning (2:3): In a rebuke to scornful mockers, **Hannah** declares: **Stop your proud boasting** or **you** will be humbled! **Don’t let arrogance come from your mouth! For ADONAI is a God of knowledge (He knows what you are thinking), and He appraises actions (He will judge)**. There’s no place for **pride** and **arrogance** when you stand before a **God** who knows you through-and-through, everything you’ve ever thought, spoken, and done! **He** heard all of Peninnah’s haughty words spoken against **Hannah**, and **He** also heard **Hannah’s prayer** from **her heart**.⁵⁶ **She** was filled with the knowledge of **God**, **her** faith was

anchored in **His** character and attributes. This was not only **Hannah’s** hope and joy, but as **Jeremiah** would later put it: **Let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD (Jeremiah 9:24).**

Hannah’s relationship with **ADONAI** exposes those who show little interest in **the Lord**. Do you come to your place of worship primarily to meet **God**? Or, is your primary concern in a message with some practical value to yourself? If that is the case, then you are missing the point. If we desire a faith that burns even in dark places and a character that honors **YHVH** at all times, our faith should be focused on **the Lord Himself**, seeking first **the Kingdom of God**, who gives **eternal life (John 17:3).**⁵⁷

Hannah’s Judge (2:4-7): **Hannah** rejoiced because **she** knew that **ADONAI** is a just **Judge**. Unlike the people involved in human judicial proceedings, **the LORD** knows everything and is able to weigh us and our actions perfectly. **God** is able to weigh us and our actions correctly. **He** weighed **Belshazzar** and found **him wanting (Dani’el 5:27)**. **Ha’Shem** weighs our motives (**Proverbs 16:2**) and our hearts (**24:11-12**), and **His** scales are always accurate. Like **Hannah**, we may be misunderstood by others, but our **Lord** will always act justly.⁵⁸

The bows of the mighty are broken, while the feeble are armed with strength. The well-fed hired themselves for bread, while those who were hungry hunger no more. The barren woman has borne seven, while the mother of many wastes away. ADONAI makes poor, and He makes rich; He humbles, and He exalts (2:4-5 and 7). This, of course, related to **Hannah’s** personal situation. **The LORD** continued to bless **Hannah** with five more children: **three sons and two daughters (2:21)**. But then why does the Bible say **the barren woman has borne seven**? The point, expressed poetically, is that **ADONAI** had thoroughly blessed the one who was **barren**, with **seven** being the symbolic number for fullness of blessing (**Ruth 4:15**). **God** is to be praised because **He** lifts up the lowly and casts down the arrogant and ungodly.

According to **Hannah**, **the Lord’s salvation** involves a reversal of fortune in which the proud and violent are humbled and **the poor** and meek are lifted up. This was the very message taught by **Yeshua** when **He** said: **Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven . . . blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth (Matthew 5:3 and 5).** **God** is to be praised because

in a world where it seems that the rich get richer and **the poor** get **poorer**, **ADONAI** takes up the cause of the downcast, and gives **salvation** to the weak. Then **Hannah** expanded **her** thought to **God’s salvation** as it pertains to the ultimate issues of life and death. **ADONAI kills and makes alive; he brings down to the grave, and he brings up (2:7)**. In a world such as ours, in which we all must face death – a world where anyone can suddenly become **poor**, sick, needy, and lowly – **YHVH** wonderfully lifts **His people** from death to life.⁵⁹

Hannah’s Prophecy (2:8-10): Those reflections led **Hannah** to prophesy: **He raises the poor from the dust, lifts up the needy from the trash pile; He gives them a place to sit with princes and assigns them seats of honor** in the Messianic Kingdom. **For the earth’s pillars belong to ADONAI** because **He** is sovereign; **on them He has placed the world. He will guard the steps of his faithful, but the wicked will be silenced in darkness. For it is not by strength that a person prevails – those who fight ADONAI will be shattered; he will thunder against them in heaven – ADONAI will judge the ends of the earth** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Jy - The Sheep and the Goats](#)).

Perhaps it was because **Hannah’s** thoughts had turned to **God’s judgment**, in which every one of us is rightly condemned as a sinner, that **she** concluded **her** prophecy with a remarkable reference to **God’s King** and promised **Messiah. He will strengthen His King and enhance the power of His Messiah** (Hebrew: *mashiach*). This highlights the importance of **Hannah’s song** as an introduction to the books of **Samuel**. Whether through some insight from the Scriptures or through the prophetic inspiration of **the Ruach Ha’Kodesh**, **Hannah** foresaw that **YHVH** would provide **the King of kings** to rule on **His** behalf. The chapters that follow tell the story of how **Hannah’s near historical prophecy** was fulfilled with the coming of **David** (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Ai - The Genealogies of Joseph and Mary](#)).

Hannah’s song is the first direct reference in the TaNaKh to **God’s** promised **Messiah**. How appropriate that this promise should come from **her** lips! Who better to foretell **God’s** gift of **His one-and-only-son** to be **the Savior** of sinful mankind, than **a woman** who freely gave **her firstborn son** to serve **ADONAI** and minister in **His Name**. How appropriate, as well, that **Hannah’s song** would find its counterpart in the B’rit Chadashah in **the song** of a godly young woman so much like **her** . . . the virgin **Mary**. Moved by **the Spirit of God**, **Hannah’s song** became the basis for **Mary’s song** (see [The Life of Christ An - The Song of](#)

Mary). **Hannah** believed that the birth of **her son** foreshadowed a new day of hope for the righteous of the TaNaKh. **Mary** came to realize that through the birth of **her Son** would come the hope of all the world. While **Samuel** would be a great **prophet** and **judge** for **Isra’el**; **Messiah’s** would be **the Savior** of all who would place their faith in **Him**, for **whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16)**.

How else, after all, can **God** lift up **the poor** and save the condemned, except that **His** own **Son** became **poor** for us, and **the One who knew no sin was made sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God** (see the commentary on **Second Corinthians Bf - Fifteen Words of Hope**). **Hannah’s far eschatological prophecy** has come near to us all through the coming of **Yeshua, the promised Messiah**. It is now in **His Name** that **the feeble are armed with strength (2:4)**. It is now that **those who were hungry, hunger no more (2:5)**, since, as **Yeshua** said: **For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world . . . I am the bread of life (John 6:33 and 35)**. Therefore, whoever believes in **Yeshua** as **God’s King** and **Messiah** will be given, as **Hannah** foresaw, **a place to sit with princes and assigned a seat of honor** in the Messianic Kingdom **(2:8)**. For as **Yeshua** taught, **whoever hears My Word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life** (see **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**).⁶⁰

Postscript (2:11 and 26): Then **Elkanah** (and **Hannah**) went home to **Ramah**, with joyful hearts and great expectation to see what **YHVH** would do. What a wonderful thing it is when a husband and wife are dedicated to **the Lord**, worship **Him** together, **pray** together, and trust **His Word**. **Hannah** went to the place of worship with a broken **heart**, but **God** gave **her** peace because **she prayed** and submitted to **His** will.⁶¹ **But Samuel ministered before ADONAI**, as far as **his** age permitted, **under** the direction of **‘Eli the high priest. And the boy continued to grow in stature and in favor with ADONAI and with men**, an appropriate description of **a son**, like **Mary’s**, who had come as a blessing of **God** to the world **(Luke 2:52)**.⁶² This sets the stage for **Samuel’s** call (see **Av - Here I Am**).

*Dear heavenly **Father**, praise **You** that **You** are always listening to the prayers of those who believe in **You**. **Hannah** was not an influential leader. **She** was only **a young woman** with a big burden on **her** heart, and **You** heard and **You** answered **her**! **You** are such a gracious and loving heavenly **Father** who delights in caring for*

and guiding **Your** children. **Messiah Yeshua** encouraged **His** children to continue to pray, for their heavenly **Father** hears and will help. **Then Yeshua told them a parable to show that they should always pray and not be discouraged, He said: There was a judge in a certain city who neither feared God nor respected people. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him, saying, “Give me justice against my opponent.” He was unwilling at the time. But afterward he said to himself, “Although I don’t fear God or respect people, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice so she won’t wear me out by her incessant coming.” Then the Lord said: Hear what the unjust judge is saying. Won’t God do justice for His chosen ones, who cry out to Him day and night? Will He be slow to help them? I tell you, He will quickly give them justice. But when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth (Luke 18:1-8)?** Thank **You** for being such a wonderful heavenly **Father** who hears and answers the prayers of those who believe in **You!** In **Messiah Yeshua’s** holy name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen