

Rejoicing in the Lord (1 Samuel 2:1-11 & Luke 1:46-55)

10-Jun-2018

We're continuing our series on the OT book of 1 Samuel.

Please have your Bibles turned to 1 Samuel chapter 2 - we're looking at the first 11 verses.

You can take notes on the outline in your Bibles.

Let's pray before we take a look at this passage

Recap

Hannah is married to Elkanah

[PowerPoint 1-Recap]

Hannah can't have children

Elkanah's other wife Peninnah torments Hannah because she can't have a child

Hannah prays to the Lord for a son and promises that if the Lord answers she will dedicate her son to the Lord's service for his whole life

The Lord graciously answers her prayer

A baby boy is born - called Samuel - whose name means "*asked of God*"

And after the child is weaned - about 2-3 years - Samuel is brought to the

Lord's service at the tabernacle at Shiloh

Where he will work with the priest Eli

Intro/Rejoicing

That brings us to today's passage from chapter 2 - verses 1 to 11

And it's amazing that Hannah can write this song/prayer and rejoice when she has just handed over her son to the Lord - and she won't see much of him for the rest of his life - because he will be serving the Lord at the Tabernacle. How can she rejoice like this?

Illustration:

At a conference at a Presbyterian church in America. People were given helium-filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they felt like expressing the joy in their hearts.

As they were Presbyterians, they didn't feel comfortable just shouting out "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord."

Instead - all through the service balloons ascended when people felt joyful

But when the service was still over one-third of the balloons hadn't been released!

So how can we rejoice in the Lord like Hannah says in v1 "My heart rejoices in the Lord" and like the Apostle Paul tells us in Philippians 4:4 to "Rejoice in the Lord always"?

Hopefully, as we look at Hannah's prayer/song - we'll get an answer

How often do we begin our prayers with God - and in rejoicing and giving thanks to Him?

Or do we go straight to ourselves and to praying our shopping list? (pause)

Let's look at Hannah's song/prayer

Who the Lord is (vv1-2)

[PowerPoint 3-Heading]

First, Hannah begins with **who the Lord is** in verses 1 and 2 - she says:

The Lord is someone we can rejoice in - literally jump for joy

Hannah can jump for joy even though she has handed her son over to the Lord

Why can she rejoice like that?

[PowerPoint 3a-Strength]

Because her horn (symbol of strength of animal) - her strength comes from the Lord - not herself - she has learnt that the Lord is the one that gives strength to cope with anything - and she has learnt to rely on the Lord's strength not her own

Something we need to do in the tough times

(pause)

She can rejoice because at end of v1 - God has delivered her from her enemy

Here Hannah is referring to Peninnah (Elkanah's other wife) who has been tormenting Hannah because she couldn't have a child

[PowerPoint 3b-The Lord delivers us from our enemy of sin and death]

App - For us God delivers us from the torment of sin - by sending Jesus - and delivers us from our enemy - sin - and its punishment - death!

[PowerPoint 3c-holy]

Look then at v2 - how she describes the Lord

No-one is Holy like Him - holy meaning set apart - unique - God is the one and only true and perfect and holy God - one of a kind

[PowerPoint 3d-none like Him]

She says there is no one besides him - because no one is able to be as awesome as God is - who is capable of doing everything and anything

[PowerPoint 3e-a rock]

And she describes the Lord as a rock - again symbolising strength and dependability - a rock that is a firm foundation that we can build our whole lives on

(pause)

What the Lord does? (vv3-10a)

Second - Hannah in her prayer/song looks at **what the Lord does** in vv3-10a

[PowerPoint 4-Heading]

In v3 - she singles out the proud and arrogant - it's like Hannah is singling out - Peninnah initially - who is proud and arrogant because she can have children and Hannah can't -

But Hannah is also speaking of everyone who is proud and arrogant and her point is that proud and arrogant people come across as know-it-all's - but the truth is that it is only God who knows it all - **He really is the only know it all** - because he is omniscient

[PowerPoint 4a-Knows all]

And because He does know all - He even knows our secret thoughts - what's in our hearts - what no one else knows about us - even the nasty thoughts, words and deeds we do - that we think we have got away with - but God knows

[PowerPoint 4b-weighs our deeds]

And so as Hannah says end of v3 - God weighs those deeds - he judges what are behaviour is really like - we can't hide from God and His judgment

[PowerPoint 4c-God of reversals]

Next she identifies the Lord as the **God of reversals** - He reverses fortunes Hannah herself knows this - she was barren - and now she has a child

She says in v4 - armies and warriors might rely on their strength but their strength is nothing compared to God

Remember the story of Gideon (Judges 6-8) - when Gideon fought a battle with the Midianites - God made Gideon reduces his army to 300 men - against thousands of Midianites and Gideon still defeated them - all to prove that the Lord was fighting the battle and that the Lord is stronger than any army!

Hannah continues describing God as the God of reversals

Still in v4 - those well fed go hungry - example of that is the plagues of Egypt

And she says the hungry are fed - example of that is the story of Joseph

The barren have children - lots of examples of that - 90 old Sarah and 100 year old Abraham have a child, Rachel eventually has Joseph and Benjamin, Samson mother has Samson, Hannah herself - and Elizabeth and Zechariah in their old age have John the Baptist

God reverses fortunes - and all these births have a deeper meaning than just having a child - because each child born - plays a huge part in God's big picture and plan

Hannah also says those who have children - have sorrow - having children is not just about having children - they have to be raised godly and if not - they're may be trouble in the family -

[PowerPoint 4d-God is in control]

Next Hannah **identifies God as being in control**

He is the one in control of life and death - as smart as we are medically - ultimately God decides when people are born and when they die

He decides who is poor and wealthy

What we have to realize is that whatever we have or don't have - is because God has allowed it - and he can take it all away just like that - and give it all to us - just like that

He can humble those who are getting too big for their boots

And he can lift up/exalt the one who is humble

How many times does God use the lowly to achieve His purposes?

Abraham & Sarah (the very old couple)

Joseph (the rejected brother - PM of Egypt)

Moses (poor in speech)

Rahab (prostitute)

Ruth (Moabite)

Jonah (the runaway)

David (shepherd boy becomes King)

Mary (the poor virgin)

Matthew (tax collector)

Paul (the persecutor)

All this should teach us - that God is in complete control - nothing is impossible for Him - and we need to depend totally on Him - and not get too proud when we have much - and trust Him ever so much when we have little

In fact - God is ALL we need - everything else is a bonus

Hannah goes on to say in v6 - God raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap - and seats them with princes - and has them inherit a throne of honour

Sounds a lot like Jesus day - when the poor, the disabled, the outcasts, the "sinners" and the tax collectors who are seen as cursed by God - and unloved by Him - and seen as the losers of society

But Jesus says no!

I've come to seek and save those Lost from God - I've come as the physician for those who are sick - and lost from God

Jesus says my Kingdom is for everyone - not just the religious

He turns everything upside down!

He removes class distinctions, gender distinctions, race distinctions

And so people can enter His Kingdom if they believe in Him

And they can then inherit a throne of honour - by having a promised place in Heaven - that Jesus has gone ahead to prepare for each believer

All this is possible Hannah says - because at the end of v8 - the foundations of the Earth are the Lords - He created it all! - He is in full control

[PowerPoint 4e-God is the judge]

Next Hannah says - **God is the judge of all**

See v9 - God's faithful servants (believers) will be guarded by Him - and receive a place in Heaven - but the wicked (non-believers) who have rejected God - will be silenced - in a place of darkness - where there's no presence of God - that place is Hell!

God is the final judge of all of us - at the end of v10 - Hannah describes Him as a thundering Judge

You see because at the end of v9 - we can't achieve acceptance by God - by our own strength - but only by the strength of our Lord Jesus - who came to this earth - and took the sin of the world on His shoulders - paid the price for sin - took our punishment - and in God's strength was raised to life - so we can obtain eternal life

We can't earn forgiveness or eternal life in the strength of anything we might do - only in the strength of what Jesus did for us

You see **ultimately God had a plan** which Hannah identifies in v10

He gave strength to His King (which King? there are no kings in Israel yet?)

Hannah is pointing to King Jesus

We can say that because of the rest of v10 which says God will exalt the horn (strength) of His anointed - the Hebrew word for anointed is Messiah

God's plan was to send Jesus - the Messiah and give Jesus the strength to accomplish His rescue mission to save people from sin and death

Conclusion & Challenge

So to conclude then

[PowerPoint 5a-Conclusion]

Hannah's song/prayer has a striking similarity to Mary's song/prayer in Luke chapter 1 - our NT reading

- Both Hannah and Mary have miraculous births which they rejoice in
- And both look beyond the present circumstances of the birth of their child - miraculous though it is

They look beyond that

To see who the Lord is - and what the Lord does

Hannah sees that the Lord is providing Samuel who will be a godly spiritual leader that Israel is crying out for because of the corrupt priests of the time - a spiritual leader who will reverse Israel's fortunes - bring them back to the Lord - and usher in a period of Kings - the pinnacle being King David and King Solomon

And Mary looks beyond the miraculous birth of her son

To see what God's plan is - and to see who God is and what He does

She sees that there is a need for a saviour - a saviour for the whole world

We all need to be saved from sin and death

Jesus came for the lost - to reverse the fortunes of all those lost from God

Jesus is available for all - Jew/Gentile - male/female - slave/free - rich/poor - sick/healthy

Both Hannah and Mary looked beyond the birth of their sons to God's purpose of sending a Messiah - His Son Jesus - as John 3:16-18 puts it - and we'll finish there...

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.

[PowerPoint 5b-Challenge]

Let me leave us with a challenge - will we make Hannah's prayer our prayer - will we look beyond our present circumstances towards God's perfect plan for us in Jesus - and living with Him forever.

That's surely worth rejoicing in - whatever our present circumstances

So it's time to let off your balloon of joy!

Let's pray...