

The Mighty One has done great things for me (sermon on 11th December-22)

Before we begin, what great things has God done for you? Share with your group, if comfortable

Worldly speaking: God has blessed me with a wonderful loving wife (Heather), parents who doted on me; four wonderful children (Christopher, Bryony, Jennifer and Samantha) and eight grandchildren (Josh, Olivia, Lachlan, Cruz, Alvey, Flynn, Savannah and Elliot) and a wonderful church family at St. David's, Toukley.

Spiritually speaking: God called me out of the darkness at age 33 and introduced me to Heather, a devoted Christian; who was God's instrument to lead me to the Lord. In His grace, God sent Jesus to die on a cruel cross, for my sins, to take my punishment, to offer me the gift of forgiveness of my sins, and God raised Jesus to life, so I can have the certain hope of resurrection and of eternal life. God led me into ministry and to serve Him and His people at Toukley. Praise be to God! To Him be the glory!

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10

1. What is Hannah's prayer in response to? (Refer to 1 Samuel 1)

In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah was barren; and so, she prayed to God to give her a son (1 Samuel 1:11) and prayed that if God answered her with a son; she would dedicate him to the Lord's service. In due course (1 Samuel 1:20), God answered her prayer and she gave birth to a son called Samuel, which means "God has heard" or "his name is God". When Hannah had weaned baby Samuel, she took him to the Temple, and dedicated him to the Lord (1 Samuel 1:28). Therefore, Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10 is in thanksgiving to God giving her a son!

2. How does Hannah feel about God and why?

Hannah rejoices in the Lord (v1). She does not rejoice in giving up her son, but in what the Lord has done in answering her prayer. She is thankful to God because she is able to boast against her enemies; particularly the women who had ridiculed her for not being able to have a child, especially her husband's other wife, Peninnah (1 Samuel 1:6-7 who ridiculed her). Hannah rejoices in the Lord because the Lord had delivered her from this ordeal by granting her request for a son.

3. What's the significance of 'my horn' in verse 1?

A "horn" is often used as a picture of strength in the Bible (Psalm 75:4-5; 92:10) because the strength of an ox or bull could be expressed in its horn. So, Hannah speaks of her strength "my horn" being lifted high in the Lord.

4. How should people respond to God and what reasons does Hannah give?

People should not talk proudly or arrogantly (v3).

Because:

- *God is holy – which means completely set apart; unique (v2)*
- *There is no one like God (v2)*
- *He is a rock-solid foundation to build our lives on (v2)*
- *The Lord is a God who knows [everything] and He is able to weigh up [measure by His standards] people's actions (v3)*

5. What examples does Hannah use to prove God brings down the arrogant and raises up the humble?
- The weapons of the strong are smashed while the weak are infused with great strength (v4)*
 - The well-fed are out begging in the street for crusts, while the hungry are getting second helpings (v5)*
 - The woman who was barren has many (seven) children while the woman with many children is pining for them (v5)*
 - The Lord is in control of life and death (v6)*
 - The Lord brings poverty and wealth (v7)*

In other words; God can reverse people's fortunes as He sees fit.

6. Who does God humble?

He humbles the proud and arrogant. He humbles the wicked (v9) and those who oppose the Lord will be broken (v10)

7. Who does God exalt?

He exalts the poor and needy (v8). He guards and protects His faithful people (v9).

8. Who does verse 10 refer to? (cf. Luke 1:69)

V10 says: "God will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed". At that time, Israel did not have a King yet; Hannah looks forward to the Messiah King to come; i.e., Jesus.

In Luke 1:69 Zechariah [father of John the Baptist] says this about the Messiah child promised by the Lord to be redeemer "He [God] has raised up a "horn" of salvation for us in the house of His servant David".

Read Luke 1:39-45

9. Where does Mary go and why?

Mary had heard from Gabriel that her relative Elizabeth was pregnant (Luke 1:36); so, she travelled 80-100 miles from the region of Galilee to the hill country of Judea, to visit her. Why? Because Mary also had news of her "unlikely" pregnancy.

10. What 2 amazing things happen in verse 41?

- Elizabeth's unborn child [John] leapt in her womb as Mary [with her unborn child in her womb] entered Elizabeth's home*
- Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit – so that she is able to say what she says in verses 42 to 45.*

11. **Ponder:** How does Elizabeth know all that she says in verses 42 to 45?

Because she is filled in the Holy Spirit in verse 41; she is able to reveal:

- Mary is blessed among all women – because God has chosen Mary to bear the Son of God (v42)*
- The child [Jesus] that Mary will have, will also be blessed (v42). Even though Elizabeth's husband Zechariah is mute; it has been revealed to her by the Holy Spirit that her promised son [John] will be the one preparing for the Lord [Mary's baby] – see Luke 1:17.*

- c. *Elizabeth feels favoured by God because the mother of the Lord [promised Messiah] is visiting her (v43)*
- d. *Elizabeth felt her baby leap in her womb as soon as Mary greeted her! (v44)*
- e. *Elizabeth recognized that Mary's faith played an active role in receiving the promise from God of a child through the power of the Holy Spirit (v45)*

Read Luke 1:46-56

12. How does Mary feel about the Lord in verses 46 to 48?

Mary sings a song – known as the Magnificat – after the Latin translation of the first few words of the song. The words of Mary's song resemble Hannah's song/prayer. The song suggests that Mary was well versed in the Scriptures.

So, Mary magnifies [makes great, enlarges] the reputation and character of the Lord. In other words, she gives God all the glory and honour for what He has done for her (v46)

And she rejoices in God – as her Saviour! (v47)

Mary realizes that God – even though mindful of Mary's humble status – took one look at her – and changed her life forever – such that all future generations (including ours) will call her blessed by God (v48)

13. What great things has the Mighty One done for Mary? (Verse 49)

Mary is blessed as being chosen to bear the Son of God.

14. To whom does God show mercy? (Verse 50)

God's mercy extends to those who fear Him – i.e., genuine faithful obedient believers.

15. Who does God humble in verses 51 to 53?

He scatters those who are proud in their innermost thoughts (v51)

He brings down rulers from their thrones (v52)

He sends the rich away empty (v53)

16. Who has God lifted up in verses 51 to 53?

He has lifted up the humble (v52)

He has filled the hungry with good things (v53)

17. Who has God helped in verse 54 and why does God do this according to verse 55?

God has helped His servant Israel [His people] by remembering mercifully His promise to Father Abraham and his descendants. A promise that one of Abraham's descendants would be a blessing to all nations!

18. What reason might there be for Mary staying 3 months with Elizabeth and then leaving? (v56)

Mary was told she would conceive and have a child at the time when Elizabeth was six months' pregnant (Luke 1:26, 36). Mary then immediately went to visit Elizabeth and stayed 3 months (v56); making Elizabeth's pregnancy now in its ninth month! Therefore, Mary probably left as Elizabeth had her baby!

19. Discuss: How are Hannah and Mary's songs/prayers similar? Is this a coincidence?

- *Both songs are sung in response to the good news that the woman involved will have/have had a son*
- *Both songs praise God for who He is and what He has done*
- *Both songs rejoice in how God has blessed the women involved*
- *Both songs praise God that He is a God who reverses fortunes*
- *Both songs speak of how God brings down the proud and arrogant – and lifts up those who are weak and humble*

It is no coincidence that Hannah and Mary's songs are similar – all of God's word is inter-related. Remember all scripture is about Jesus (Luke 24:27) – so Hannah's song about the birth of her son Samuel is pointing forward and foreshadowing the birth of the Son of God.

Finish in prayer: Thanking God for the great things He has done for us.