

1st Samuel 2:1-10
The Psalm of Hannah

Introduction

1. Last week we began the book of 1st Samuel with an intimate look at Hannah and her plight, and saw how God remembered her by answering her prayer and giving her a son
2. We also saw how, in response, she gave up Samuel and dedicated him to the Lord's service
3. In chapter 2, we find what we might refer to as Hannah's Magnificat
 - a. It's basically Hannah's psalm of rejoicing and thanksgiving, and it has a lot in common with Mary's Magnificat from Luke 1:46-55:
 - 1) They were both from women rejoicing over the Lord blessing them with a child
 - 2) They both include themes of deliverance and salvation, God's holiness, His sovereignty, and His mercy toward the humble and judgment of the proud
 - b. It also has a lot in common with David's song of praise in 2 Samuel 22
4. Hannah's psalm and David's in some respects serve as bookends to the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel, and provide a theological framework through which we are to ultimately understand them
5. In other words, Hannah's words reflect the underlying truths that we will see played out in 1st (and 2nd) Samuel
6. These are:
 - a. The Lord Saves
 - b. The Lord opposes the proud, but exalts the humble
 - c. The Lord protects His people, but destroys those who oppose Him

A. The Lord Saves (2:1-2)

1. It's interesting that Hannah's rejoicing, David's psalm and Mary's Magnificat all begin with a reflection on God's deliverance and salvation:
 - a. Hannah (1): **"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 Your salvation."**
 - b. David (2Sa 22:1): **"He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; 3 My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence."**
 - c. Mary: **"And Mary said: "My soul exalts the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior."**
 - d. This makes sense because if there is any one thing that stands out about God above all other things, it is this one simple fact: God is a God Who saves (both temporally and eternally):
 - 1) In fact, that is the overarching theme of the Bible which spells out God's redemptive plan for mankind all the way from Genesis to Revelation—it reveals God as savior
 - 2) It begins in Genesis 3 with the protoevangelium (first gospel) where God first promised that He would destroy the enemy, Satan, through the offspring of Eve, which we now know what the God-Man Jesus Christ

- 3) He then saves the world through Noah, saves them again by scattering them at the Tower of Babel; he rescues Jacob, Joseph and his brother from famine, saves the Jews from the Egyptians, protects them in the wilderness, saves them from their enemies in Canaan during the Conquest, delivers them time and time again throughout the period of judges, time of the kings and even preserves them in their captivity in Babylon, and then ultimately sends His Son to be the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles
2. In Hannah's case, the Lord's salvation was temporal in nature—delivering her from barrenness and providing her with a child—and it caused her to rejoice (1):
 - a. **"My heart exults (rejoices) in the LORD"**—the Lord's deliverance brought her inner joy
 - b. **"My horn is exalted in the LORD"**—it gave her strength
 - 1) The horn is used metaphorically to refer to power or strength
 - 2) When one's horn is lifted high or exalted by the Lord it is a reference to being raised up and strengthened, given power (1Samuel 2:10; Psalm 89:18, 25; 112:9)
 - 3) When one raises his or her own horn it is an act of pride and arrogance (Psalm 75:4-5)
 - c. **"My mouth speaks boldly against my enemies..."**—it gave her boldness
 - 1) Hannah doesn't mention her enemies by name but one has to believe this is a veiled reference to Pininnah, the one who constantly tormented her
 - 2) It may have included other women from the community since barrenness was seen as a defect and women who could not provide offspring for their husbands were looked down upon
 3. Hannah also reflects on two aspects of God's character that are closely tied to His work in salvation:
 - a. Holiness (2): **"There is no one holy like the LORD, Indeed, there is no one besides You"**
 - 1) When God delivers or saves, it manifests His holiness
 - 2) In fact, it is precisely because He is holy that He saves
 - 3) And, as Hannah rightly declares, there is no one else (no other god) that is holy like Him, and therefore no God can save like He saves
 - b. Security (2b): **"Nor is there any rock like our God."**
 - 1) There are dozens of reference to God as a rock in the Bible
 - 2) In fact, there are over 20 in the Psalms alone
 - 3) In most of these instances, the metaphor is used in the same context as deliverance or salvation
 - 4) It communicates the idea of security, trustworthiness, reliability
 4. As I stated above, Hannah's words here lay the theological foundation through which to understand the events of this book and God as savior is a critical one:
 - a. In the years prior to Samuel's birth, Israel experience God's deliverance time and time again
 - b. And in the opening chapters of this book we will see God deliver them once again from their enemies, the Philistines
 - c. However, in spite of this, Israel begs for a human king to rule over them and protect them from their enemies, and in essence rejects God as their deliverer
 - d. In the same way, as we examine the lives and events of the first two kings—Saul and David—we will see a stark contrast in their dependence (or lack of dependence) on God for deliverance, both in their role as king, personally, and in how they handle sin

B. The Lord opposes the proud, but exalts the humble (2:3-8a)

1. The second major theological theme we discover in Hannah's psalm is that the Lord opposes the proud, but exalts the humble...and it starts with a warning (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."**
 - a. You're probably familiar with the idiom, "Pride comes before the fall"—it comes from Proverbs 16:18-19: **"Pride goes before destructions, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. It is better to be humble in spirit with the lowly than to divide the spoil with the proud."**
 - b. Many attribute this to karma—you get what's coming to you—but Hannah's warning about boasting and arrogance is tied to the facts that God is omniscient (all-knowing) and weighs the actions of man: **"For the LORD is a God of knowledge, And with Him actions are weighed."**
2. Hannah first describes the different fates of the arrogant and the humble (4-5):
 - a. **"The bows of the mighty are shattered, But the feeble gird on strength."** (4)
 - b. **"Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, But those who were hungry cease to hunger."** (5a)
 - c. **"Even the barren gives birth to seven, But she who has many children languishes."** (5b)
 - 1) Earlier when Hannah referred to her enemies it was likely a veiled reference to Pininnah, the one who constantly mocked her for being barren
 - 2) Here we see another veiled reference to Pininnah who had multiple "sons and daughters" but would ultimately languish because of her prideful boasting
 - 3) It also foreshadows the fact that Hannah would have more children (five more according to 1 Samuel 2:21)
3. Hannah then reveals that God is ultimately the one who brings down the proud, but lifts up the humble (6-8a):
 - a. **"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up."** (6)
 - b. **"The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts."** (7)
 - c. **"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; "** (8a)
 - d. There is no missing the fact that Hannah attributes these things to the work of God (e.g. He brings down and raises up; He makes poor and rich, brings low and exalts; He raises the poor and lifts up the needy)
4. In James 4:6, he reminds us of this theological truth that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble when he summarizes Proverbs 3:33-35: **" 33 The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the dwelling of the righteous. 34 Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted. 35 The wise will inherit honor, But fools display dishonor."**
 - a. Hannah saw this in her own life as God honored and blessed her humility
 - b. We will see this same truth played out in the rest of the book as we see how God judges the corrupt priest Eli and his wicked sons, and rejects Saul as king for his arrogance and pride
 - c. In contrast, we will also see how He honors and lifts up His humble servants, Samuel and David

C. The Lord protects His people, but destroys those who oppose Him (2:8b-10)

1. The final theological theme is found in vs. 8-10 where Hannah reminds us that God protects His people, and destroys those who oppose Him
2. It begins with a statement regarding God's omnipotence and sovereignty (8b): **"For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, And He set the world on them."**
 - a. This is reminiscent of God's words to Job in Job 38-41 where He asks Job, **"Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding,"**
 - b. This begins a four chapter dialog whereby God establishes His right as Divine Sovereign over His creation, and ultimately His right to judge and reward the motives and actions of man
3. Hannah reflects on this as she contemplates God's protection of His people, and the condemnation of those who oppose Him (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."** (NET: "for it is not by one's own strength that one prevails")
 - a. This is also a theme that is repeated throughout the Scriptures
 - b. God protects those who love Him:
 - 1) Isaiah 41:10 (NIV): **"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."**
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 3:3: **"But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one."**
 - 3) Romans 8:37-39: **"But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."**
 - 4) In the last letter he wrote, the Apostle Paul reflected on the Lord's ability to guard and protect him to eternal life (2 Timothy 1:8-12): **"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 10 but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. 12 For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day."**
 - c. But, just as God protects those who love Him, He also judges those who oppose Him (10a): **"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) This is also a theme repeated in the Scriptures, and is true in both a temporal or earthly sense (e.g. when he destroys Israel's enemies) and in an eternal sense
 - 2) It's ultimate fulfillment, however, is seen in the establishment of Jesus Christ as Judge and King over all the earth (10b): **"And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed."**

4. As with the two previous theological themes pointed out in Hannah's psalm, this third one helps us interpret the events of 1st Samuel:
 - a. Hannah experience the favor and protection of God in her own life with not just the birth of Samuel, but additional children
 - b. David also experienced the protection of the LORD throughout his life as he faced opposition from his enemies (the Philistines, King Saul, his own son, etc.)
 - c. In contrast, others like Eli, his wicked sons, and Saul all faced God's judgement for their opposition to Him and disregard for his commandments

Conclusion

1. I am constantly amazed at how clearly the Gospel is foreshadowed in the Old Testament
2. Our passage to day is just one example
3. You could, in essence, share the Gospel from this one passage
 - a. Hannah recognized that her deliverance was found in the One True God who saves—this reflects the Gospel as we, too, find our salvation in the One True God who sent His only Son, Jesus, to deliver us from our sins and save us
 - b. She recognized that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble—is this not the same message preached by Jesus as He resisted the arrogant and proud religious leaders of His day but extended grace to the humble?
 - c. She also recognized that God protects those who are His and destroys those who oppose Him—is this not what Paul claimed when declared at the end of Romans chapter 8 that NOTHING can separate us from the love of God?