

The Song of Hannah:

God's Victory Through the Humble

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The time of the Judges was one of Israel's darkest periods. Scripture says, *"There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."* (Judges 21:25) Amid this chaos, God heard the cry of a barren woman named Hannah. Her story marks another significant turning point in God's plan to bring forth His promised deliverer.

A Barren Woman and a Promise

Hannah was married to Elkanah, a man with two wives—Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not. Every year, they went to worship at Shiloh, where Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, served as priests (1 Samuel 1:1–3).

Like Sarah and Samson's mother before her, Hannah's barrenness became the backdrop for a miracle. God was about to raise up a new deliverer from an empty womb. Even Elkanah's name means "God has created [a son]."

Hannah's Desperation and Prayer

Year after year, Hannah endured ridicule from her rival, Peninnah. Overwhelmed with grief, she prayed in the temple and made a vow to the Lord:

"O Lord of hosts, if You will look on my affliction and give me a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life." (1 Samuel 1:10–11)

This is the first time in the Bible that God is called "YHVH Sabaoth"—*the Lord of Armies*.

Her vow followed the pattern of the Nazirite (Numbers 6). Like Samson and later John the Baptist, her son Samuel would be set apart for God's purposes—a symbol of spiritual warfare and holy devotion.

God Answers the Cry

Eli, the priest, misunderstood Hannah's silent prayer and thought she was drunk. But after hearing her explanation, he blessed her, saying, *"May the God of Israel grant your petition."* (1 Samuel 1:17)



The Song of Hannah

Not long after, the Lord remembered her, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, meaning “heard by God.” When he was weaned, she fulfilled her vow, bringing him to the tabernacle at Shiloh:

“For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has given me my petition ... so I have also dedicated him to the Lord.” (1 Samuel 1:27–28)

The Song of Hannah

Hannah then sang a prophetic song—a hymn of victory. The song celebrates her own personal joy, but looks past it to God’s ultimate triumph. Her song mirrors others like the songs of Moses and Deborah, but it also points forward to the coming Messiah. She begins:

“My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord... There is no one holy like the Lord, indeed, there is no one besides You, nor is there any rock like our God.” (1 Samuel 2:1–2)

The “horn” symbolizes strength, and the “Rock” points to God as the unshakable foundation. This Rock would later be revealed as the Messiah, the stone that crushes the kingdoms of man (Daniel 2).

God’s Great Reversals

Hannah’s song celebrates how God overturns human pride and power:

- The strong are shattered; the weak are strengthened.
- The full go hungry; the hungry are filled.
- The barren give birth; the fertile fade away.
- The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down and raises up.

Through these reversals, Hannah proclaims a truth that will echo throughout Scripture: God exalts the humble and brings down the proud. Her words even hint at resurrection, long before prophets like Isaiah or Ezekiel spoke of it:

“The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up.” (1 Samuel 2:6)

The Lord Who Judges and Reigns



The Lord Thunders in the Heavens

Hannah continues:

“He raises the poor from the dust... The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His King and exalt the horn of His anointed.” (1 Samuel 2:8–10)

This is the first explicit mention of a “King” and “Anointed One” (Messiah) in the Bible. Hannah’s vision looks beyond David to the eternal King who will rule all nations. Her prophecy links the Seed of the Woman (Genesis 3:15) with the King of the World.

The Lord who “thunders from heaven” (1 Samuel 2:10) is the same one seen by Moses and Enoch—the divine warrior who comes with His holy ones to judge all the earth.

The Two Seeds

The story quickly contrasts two lines of descent:

- Hannah’s son Samuel—the seed of faith, dedicated to God.
- Eli’s sons Hophni and Phinehas—the seed of rebellion, called worthless, “sons of Belial,” a term later associated with Satan (2 Corinthians 6:15).

When Eli’s corrupt sons die, God raises up a faithful priest—first Samuel, later Zadok, and ultimately Jesus, the eternal High Priest who perfectly fulfills God’s promise.

The Streams Converge

Hannah’s prophecy unites two great themes of Scripture:

- The Skull Crusher of Genesis 3:15, who defeats the serpent.
- The Cloud Rider of Deuteronomy 33, who comes in glory to judge the nations.

These two pictures merge in the person of the Messiah—both humble and divine, the suffering servant and sovereign King.

From Hannah to Mary

Centuries later, Mary, the mother of Jesus, echoed Hannah’s song:

“He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble.”
(Luke 1:52)

Both women were chosen by God to bear miraculous sons. Both rejoiced in His mercy and celebrated His power to lift the lowly and bring down the proud.

Hannah's song was the first Messianic hymn—and Mary's Magnificat fulfilled it. Together, their songs proclaim the same promise: God brings victory through the humble.