

An Invitation Through Pain
Hannah's struggle
Invitation to Leadership Series - Part 1
1 Samuel 1:1-2:11
April 12-13, 2025

Introduction

- Brand New Series starting this weekend – Invitation to Leadership – a walk through 1st Samuel story-by-story. It's a book primarily about a prophet and the 1st 2 Kings of Israel: Saul and David. We get an inside look at who God selects and how they do.
- The Title – Invitation to Leadership is a series for all of us. Leadership is influence. If anyone looks up to you, or if your choices affect others, you are in a sense, a leader. It could be that you are a stay-at-home parent, even maybe homeschooling, and it dawns on you that you are shaping lives. It could be that you are a leader amongst your friend group, or classmates. It could be that you are influential at work and others take cues from you. Whatever it is, it's a version of leadership and that means that your choices affect more than just you. Your decisions and the ramifications of those decisions are amplified. It's not just about you anymore. It's about a lot of people.
- Is God inviting you into greater influence? – a question that I would like all of us to consider through this series is whether or not God has recently or is about to invite us into greater leadership, into greater influence. Whenever He increases our responsibilities, He tends to stretch us. He allows the tensions of those changes to reveal where we really are and expose the areas that we need to grow. Many times we think that when we fail in our influence or leadership that it means we shouldn't do it, when in fact it may mean that God is simply highlighting an area that we need to grow in so we CAN lead there.
- Stories in the Bible – stories in the Bible aren't just there for enjoyment but to learn from the experience of others. Whenever you read a story, ask yourself along the way, am I like that? What can I learn from this? Is God trying to tell me something?
- Today's Lesson
 - The Brilliance of God's guidance - Today I want to talk about the brilliance of God who can guide us through just about anything that happens in our lives. He can teach us through good times and in bad times. Let's talk about tough times.
 - Learning through tough times
 - Blinded by Pain - How many of us have been hit by tough times and our whole goal was just to survive it and make it out the other side? It's like the tribulation was blinding and all we could see is pain.
 - Learning from Pain – But then there's some of us who have gone through incredible struggles but somehow along the way either because we sought the Lord or in His grace He just did it, we LEARNED something through the difficulty. Anyone had that experience? That's because...

Even our PAIN can be an invitation tool in the hands of God

- The Pain of Infertility – Today we are going to talk about specific struggle called infertility. **Many, many of us in this room have either personally walked through that pain or been close to someone who has walked through that pain.** It's terrible. We've prayed to have a child, we done everything we know how, but the pregnancy stick still reads negative. Within the pain is fear of what it means long-term. **Will I ever have a child of my own? Does this mean I never get to see what a little mini-me will look like? Does this mean my nurturing nature and gifting is going to waste? Did I mess my body up so I can't bear a child? So, many doubts, fears, and questions. Even when good-meaning people bring up adoption at the wrong point, it agitates. To understand this story, we need to enter into what this pain is like...**
- Fertility in the Ancient World – Infertility in any generation is difficult but there are **some eras that are less pressure and some eras that are more pressure.** In ancient Israel, and we are going back in this story roughly **3,000 years ago**, the pressure to have children, especially males was particularly high. Let me explain.
 1. Family Name & Land – The major reason why it was important to have children in the ancient Middle East, and especially Israel, was that **land rights, with the ability to have a home, to till your own ground in an agricultural economy, make your own living, support your family, etc., was all restricted to family name and lineage.** For anything to pass down, it passed down through family.¹ If you didn't have family it can end with you and your family name can lose their rights. **Israel was small and every bit of it was marked out to tribes and families.** You weren't allowed to switch.
 - Abraham's struggle (Gen 11) – if you remember, the father of the Jews, Abraham, didn't have any lineage and all of his wealth was going to have to be handed over to a servant. **It was the tension of all of that which tempted him into making the decision to have another woman have his child** (Hagar, Ishmael) so that at least a version of his offspring would keep the rights. Now, we know that God was in control and that long after childbearing years, He and Sarah would have the promised child, Isaac to carry on the lineage, but he didn't know that.
 2. Retirement Security – **In an agricultural community that is predominantly living off the land and poor in other regards, if you don't work, you don't eat.** There was no retirement program, not social security, no 401k's. The poor and widows MAY be provided for, but it was hit and miss depending on the era. **Family supported family, period. Therefore the only way you could be supported in your older years is through your children. No kids, no support.**
 3. Social Status – It sounds less important from the outside, but we all deeply know that when our community looks down on us, it makes life harder. In the Middle East where many **children were a status symbol, especially boys, if you didn't**

¹ "In the ancient Near East, having an heir was very important, for lacking an heir meant the end of one's "house." For example, King Keret of the Ugaritic epic, though he had gold and silver, lost all his male children and so his dynasty was about to be extinguished. It was common in real life for a well-to-do man to take a second wife if the first did not bear him an heir. Sarah, of course, advised Abraham to take her slave-girl Hagar as his second "wife" (NEB; or concubine) so that he might have an heir (Gen. 16:1–6)." David Tsumura, NICOT Commentary

have any children, you were looked down on. The women would make fun of the barren women. The men would taunt the guys who couldn't bear kids. It made an already difficult life, worse.

4. Superstition – Finally, there was a common view in ancient Israel that many children were a sign of blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3-5 is a good example; Ex 23:26). Lots of scriptures make this point. Unfortunately, with the good comes the bad and ancient society started viewing infertility as a curse from God (although it COULD be, it didn't mean it always was – Dt 28). It began to cast a shadow on what the couple must have done wrong to have the hand of favor of God pulled from them.
 - Biblical characters that struggled with infertility (6 major ones) – Oddly enough, a number of biblical couples struggled with infertility. I have already mentioned Abraham & Sarah, but so did Isaac & Rebekah for a time. Jacob's wife Rachel was barren for a while. Samson's parents struggled with infertility (Manoah & wife). John the Baptist's parents were infertile (Elizabeth & Zechariah). That's a HIGH percentage of patriarchs and significant couples in God's plan. It indicates that God doesn't always keep His people from struggle but certainly works with it and through it.

Lesson

- Void of Hope
 - Hannah is barren
 - 1 Samuel 1:1-2 – *“There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. ² He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.”*
 - There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim² – later this city name (Ramathaim means “two hills”) was shortened to Ramah (famous later for being the birthplace of the great prophet Samuel who is about to be born). Zophim is the plural of Zuph, the clan area of Samuel's people (Elkanah's clan).
 - of the hill country of Ephraim – the tribe his family is from. There are 12 tribes and Ephraim is a major one. Ephraim & Manasseh were brothers and sons of Joseph (double portion as favorite son). Joseph's territory went to his two boys (since Levi didn't get an allotment there was one spot free). Later when the nation split north and south, Ephraim became the core of the North, while Judah became the core of the South.

² “The location of Ramathaim is a matter of dispute. McCarter identifies it with modern Rantis, about 16 miles east of Tel Aviv on the western slope of the hills of Ephraim. Later in the book it is called Ramah (1 Sam. 1:19; 2:11; 8:4; 25:1; 28:3), the usual name for Samuel's home town (7:17), which is presumably “the city where the man of God was” (9:10), the Zuphite Ramah (9:5). Eusebius associated it with Arimathea of the NT and identified it with the village of Rempthis, whereas Jerome located it in the region of Timnah, about 9 miles northwest of Bethel. On the identification of Ramah, see on 1:19. The city was called Ramathaim (lit. “two hills”) probably because there were two hills associated with it; one for the city itself and the other for a high place. According to 1 Samuel 9, the high place, which was presumably on a hilltop (see 9:25), was located outside the city, which was itself on the top of a hill (see 9:11f).” David Tsumura, NICOT Commentary

- whose name was Elkanah – Elkanah means, ‘God created’. He seems to be a wealthy guy whether that’s due to him or family money.
- the son of Jeroham, - No clue who this is other than to say that it highlights how important family name and lineage is.
- son of Elihu, - same as above.
- son of Tohu, - same as above.
- son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.³ – Zuph is the Clan he’s from. Ephraim is the Tribe his people are from. There is some question whether or not Ephrathite refers to people from Ephraim (more likely) or those from Bethlehem (common). The second explanation would mean that Elkanah’s group was from the Bethlehem area in the south but now lived in Ephraim territory. It doesn’t really matter.
- He had two wives – Elkanah had two wives: Hannah and Peninnah. That makes him a polygamist. Is he wrong for that? How should we read this? Should the reader automatically know something is wicked, dangerous, concerning? Is it a foreshadowing or just a matter of fact?
 - Polygamy - Okay let’s talk about polygamy. Interestingly enough the Old Testament is rather quiet about rules regarding polygamy.⁴ There is no clear prohibition of it, for the regular person. The first polygamist mentioned in Scripture comes very early in Genesis. It’s Lamech (Genesis 4:23). It does seem odd that most of the Patriarchs of Judaism were polygamists: Abraham; Jacob; Esau; David; Solomon; Moses; Judah; Gideon; Samson. If God was so against it, why was He allowing it in His core families?
 - Confusing Codes - In the codes of sexual morality in the book of Leviticus, it has a prohibition of marrying a second sister as a rival wife (Lev 18:18 - which suggests multiple wives was assumed but be smart about it and strategic, don’t hurt people). Yet, there is one clear approval and command FOR it: Levirate Marriage – if a married man dies without leaving a male heir, his brother was required to marry the widow regardless of whether he already had a wife or not. The first general prohibition, or shall we say curbing, is found when talking about kings not amassing wives for themselves (Deuteronomy 17:17 – although the context is the same with money so perhaps it’s about the focus on earthly accumulations that is forbidden, or taking from others in selfishness, not polygamy per se). A similar concept is found in the New Testament (it’s relatively silent - it’s hinted at a couple of times – namely the singular in 1 Cor 7:2) when elders or deacons

³ “Zuph is the ancestor of a local clan, while Ephraim is the tribal ancestor.” David Tsumura, NICOT Commentary

⁴ “evidence for polygamy among Jews in the 1st century is found in Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.14; Mishnah, *Yebamoth* 4.11; *Ketuboth* 10.1, 4, 5; *Sanhedrin* 2.4; *Kerithoth* 3.7; *Kiddushin* 2.7; *Bechoroth* 8.4; and Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 134; for polygamy among non-Jews, see 2 Macc. 4:30; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities* 17.19; Tertullian, *Apology* 46.” ESV Study Bible notes.

(leadership – 1 Tim 3:2) are mentioned as being restricted to people of one spouse.

- Le 18:18 – *“And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her nakedness while her sister is still alive.”*
- Dt 17:17 – *“And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.”*
- 1 Cor 7:2 – *“But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.”*
- **A Lean Toward Monogamy** – Probably most telling, Scripturally, is that God created a one-to-one ratio with Adam and Eve making them ‘one flesh’ (Gen 2:24 is singular ‘wife’) and telling mankind not to ‘separate’ that. The very principle of multiple wives confuses the ‘one flesh’ concept. Additionally, almost always whenever more than one wife is mentioned it leads to trouble in the home.⁵ One interesting sidenote is that when Christ is said to be the husband and the Church is His bride, we think of many of us as ‘brides’ of Christ (polygamy), yet it seems more appropriate to say that the whole Body is the Bride (singular = monogamy) not the individual members of it.
- **Historical Jewish Polygamy in a Roman World** – Fascinatingly, it seems that **the Roman Empire squashed polygamy for the Jews**. When **they took over Israel/Palestine in 63BC** (only 60 years before Jesus was born) they began to impose their beliefs, which included **prohibiting polygamy** (even though they still did it, they didn’t approve of it as a culture, although they embraced adultery and other sexual-relational dynamics). When they found resistance by the Jews, who wanted to practice it further (some groups didn’t agree with it like the Qumran sect forbade it), they acquiesced and **allowed it only in Palestine** (they renamed it Palestine and put King Herod in charge when they took over). In the succeeding years **polygamy fell out of style** for the Jews, although the **Jews didn’t outlaw polygamy for themselves until the 11th century!**⁶ **Oddly enough one of the holdout groups that wanted polygamy were the Pharisees.**
- **Historical Jewish Polygamy in a Roman World** – In an article called “Moral Questions of the Bible: Timeless Truth in a Changing World”, written by David Instone-Brewer and Lexham Press (recommended by Logos Bible software), it says, *“Polygamy had been considered perfectly normal and proper until the Romans took over and said it was disgusting and immoral. The Romans allowed Jews to continue practicing polygamy in Palestine, but elsewhere in the empire monogamy was strictly enforced. Many Jews living outside Palestine, therefore, got used to the principle of one wife, and it seemed natural to them. By Jesus’ time, many Jews had come to agree with*

⁵ see Genesis 16; 29–31; 1 Samuel 1; 1 Kings 11; note the prohibition in Deut. 17:17 – ESV Study Bible notes

⁶ It was officially banned for Ashkenazi Jews, by Rabbeinu Gershom circa 1000 AD. The ban then spread to other communities of Jews. (see <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/polygamy-in-judaism/>)

the Roman view, and polygamy fell out of practice during subsequent generations, although the Jews did not actually outlaw polygamy until the eleventh century...Jesus took the side of the Romans against the Jewish establishment on this occasion. Most Jews outside Palestine and some in Palestine disagreed with polygamy. For example, the Qumran sect regarded polygamy as one of the three great sins of mainstream Judaism. They called these sins "the nets of the devil" by which the "smooth-speaking" Pharisees entrapped the people. They couldn't actually find a verse in the Old Testament that spoke against polygamy, so they combined two different verses that both contained the phrase "male and female"—[Genesis 1:27](#)^L and [7:2](#)^L. The first says, "God created them; male and female," and the second says, "two and two, male and female, went into the ark" (ESV). Since "male and female" were called "two" in Genesis 7, the Qumran community inferred that it also meant "two" in Genesis 2 and concluded from this that only two people could marry. They referred to this doctrine as "the foundation of creation." We may not be convinced by their logic, but as far as they were concerned it was case proven. Jews outside Palestine used a different method to show that polygamy was wrong—they added a word to [Genesis 2:24](#)^L. This says "a man ... is united to his wife"—which implies one man and one wife, so they emphasized this conclusion by adding the word "two" to the next phrase: "and those two shall become one flesh." We find this additional word in all ancient translations of Genesis—in Greek, Aramaic, Syriac, and even in Samaritan—showing that it had very widespread support. Presumably, it also had some support among Hebrew speakers, but no one in Jesus' day would deliberately change the original text, so no Hebrew Bible has this word. When the Pharisees were questioning Jesus about divorce, he took the opportunity to set them straight about polygamy, too. Jesus used both sets of arguments used by other Jews. He quoted the key verse used by Qumran Jews ([Gen 1:27](#)^L) and even said this was what happened "at the beginning of creation" ([Mark 10:6](#)^L), which presumably reminded his listeners that Qumran Jews called this "the foundation of creation". Then he quoted the verse preferred by Jews outside Palestine—[Genesis 2:24](#)^L—including the additional word "two" ([Mark 10:8](#)^L; [Matt 19:5](#)^L). By deliberately using both arguments, Jesus emphasized that he agreed with those Jews who taught monogamy, contrary to the Pharisees. Paul took the teaching against polygamy further by reversing the command that a man had to marry his dead brother's wife. This had always been a difficult rule, though it made sense in the world of the early Old Testament. In Hittite law (and probably other ancient Near Eastern laws), a widow could be married against her will to any male relative—even to her husband's elderly grandfather or infant nephew. But Moses' law restricted her marriage to someone of roughly her age—that is, she should only marry a brother of her husband—and she was allowed to refuse. Paul later decided that this law was outmoded. He said that a widow could marry whomever she wanted ([1 Cor 7:39](#)^L)—though he added that she should marry a fellow believer...Despite their official condemnation of polygamy, many respectable Romans had multiple marriages because divorce was easily obtained and mistresses were openly accepted. Eurydice, a newlywed Roman wife in the first century, was given advice about a happy marriage by Plutarch: "If your husband commits some peccadillo with a

paramour or a maidservant, you ought not to be indignant or angry, because it is respect for you which leads him to share his debauchery, licentiousness, and wantonness with another woman." In other words, extramarital sex was so normal that she shouldn't take offense."

<https://www.logos.com/grow/does-jesus-contradict-the-old-testament-on-polygamy/>

- Why Modern Christianity is Against It – It's worth asking the question why Christians are against it today. The main reason is that **when Jesus set out the Christian way He highlighted a few core principles about marriage and about women.** He taught that **marriage was precious.** He taught that a **Christian marriage should reflect both the nature of God as well as God's original intention in Adam and Eve.** He taught that **women were equal spiritual heirs** to men and that **all human beings had inherent value due to His image** in them. **All of this created a foundation whereby polygamy didn't fit anymore.** The idea of a man accumulating multiple women as if they were property, seemed wrong. The idea of lack of equality seemed wrong. The purity of the original monogamous garden scenario became the goal. In other words, Jesus didn't have to say that polygamy was outlawed. He set the very principles and foundation that forced it to be outlawed (kind of like He did with slavery and with equality for women in ministry).
- The name of the one was Hannah, - Hannah seems to mean, 'favor with God' but that is questioned.
- and the name of the other, Peninnah. – she turns out to be a mean woman. Unknown what her name means.
- And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children – this is going to be a major plot of the story. Immediately the original readers would see a disequilibrium in the house (status and value) and wonder how it was going to be handled.
- Unhappy Wives; Unhappy Life
 - The tension in Elkanah's home
 - 1 Samuel 1:3-8 – *"Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the Lord. ⁴ On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. ⁵ But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. ⁶ And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb. ⁷ So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. ⁸ And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"*

- Now this man – Elkanah.
- used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice - At this point in history the traditional festivals are not in play. This seems to be a seasonal sacrifice trip of honoring the Lord, but it can't be tied to any specific national holiday. It could have been a time that his tribe and people traveled there together. It demonstrates that Elkanah is a godly man. He wants to honor the Lord in what he does. He seems to be making offerings of thanks for his blessings.
- to the Lord of hosts at Shiloh,⁷ - the phrase 'Lord of Hosts' is the name Yahweh and tied to 'hosts' which can either mean: angels, stars & planets, all creatures, or armies. The key is that they are innumerable in amount. The concept seems to mean, 'the God who is served by innumerable beings at his call.' It's a praise and power statement. Shiloh is an ancient holy site.⁸
- where the two sons of Eli, - Eli was the official priest of the holy site at Shiloh. (using the term, 'temple' is a bit tricky. There is no official large permanent building called the temple, that comes later with Solomon. This seems to be a tent concept following after Moses' Tent of Meeting. Regardless, it's the holy site where people go to hear from God.). Since he is older, he has transitioned most of the practical leadership to his two sons who we will meet in a second.
- Hophni – one of Eli's sons. Not a good dude. I don't know what his name means.
- and Phinehas, - another of Eli's sons, who are currently running things at the Tent of Meeting (temple) for their dad. Not a good guy either. I would assume that he was named after Aaron's grandson who was a zealot for God and righteousness in the Old Testament many years before this story (Numbers 25). I would imagine his name became famous and since he was in the line of Aaron he was a famous priest. Lots of priestly kids were probably named Phinehas.
- were priests of the Lord. – A priest's job was to be a mediator between God and mankind. They were to talk to God for the people and return God's word to the people. They were to offer sacrifices to maintain relationship of the people with God. They were to care for people and help them understand the will and way of Yahweh. They were to keep the

⁷ The phrase the Lord of Hosts (YHWH š'ḇā'ôt) is a construct chain, with a proper noun as the first noun in status constructus like the Ugaritic DN il brt "El of covenant" (KTU 1.128:14–15) and il dn "El of judgment" (128:16). Such a genitival explanation can be supported by the phrases "Yahweh of Teman" and "Yahweh of Samaria" in the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions. The "hosts" (š'ḇā'ôt) can refer to heavenly bodies (Judg. 5:20; Isa. 40:26), angelic beings (Josh. 5:14f.), the armies of Israel (1 Sam. 17:45), or all creatures (Gen. 2:1). The noun (f.pl.) has probably an abstract meaning such as "plentifulness, numberlessness" and is intensified by plural form. Hence, it refers to numerous entities such as heavenly bodies and earthly armies. As 1 Sam. 1:3, 11 imply, "the original connection was evidently with worship rather than with battles, in which case the 'hosts' were angelic beings." This is the first occurrence in the Bible of the phrase." David Tsumura, NICOT Commentary

⁸ "Shiloh, the modern site Khirbet Seilun [MR177–162], is situated 1.5 miles east of the Jerusalem-Nablus (Arabic name for Shechem) road and 20 miles north of Jerusalem. The first occurrence of this name in the OT is Josh. 18:1. As A. Mazar notes, "Shiloh seems to have been a sacred place long before the Iron Age, and perhaps this tradition led to its choice as the religious center of the Israelites during the period of the Judges." It remained so during the period of tribal history (e.g., Josh. 21:2; Judg. 21:12), and a yearly feast of the Lord was held there (Judg. 21:19–21). Its destruction in the eleventh century B.C. is later mentioned in Jer. 7:12–14 and Ps. 78:60, and traces of the destruction have been discovered in excavations." NICOT

nation on track in holiness. At this point in history they were in terrible shape. Eli dropped the ball during his leadership and his sons were products of that.

- On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters – This is significant. It means that when they all went to celebrate and worship at Shiloh the husband doled out to his two families (each wife had her crew) stuff to offer and to celebrate with. When you offered a large animal to God, you kept the majority. Some was burned to God. Some may have been kept by the priests, but most of it was returned to the family so they could eat a feast in God's honor. It was a joyful thing to bring something fancy and offer it and then celebrate with it. You give enough for the crews to eat and offer.
- But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the Lord had closed her womb. – Interestingly, Elkanah gave Hannah, who didn't have a big group of kids like Peninnah, twice the amount to offer and celebrate with. Usually you give that to the group that needs it, but this was about favoritism and kindness. Elkanah loved Hannah a lot and wanted to honor her in the time when it was highlighted that she didn't have any children.
- God closes wombs? – Talking about the sovereignty of God and yet the fall of mankind is tricky. On one hand we need to realize that we broke our world and are suffering for it. On the other hand, God is still in control. So, how do we know when God intentionally does something to us that is painful and when do we chalk it up to being broken people in a broken world? When someone miscarries, does that mean God killed their baby since He's in charge? When someone gets a disease, did God give them the disease? Not really. Yet, since He's in charge, He certainly allows it (nothing can happen without His say so). So, do we blame God for all the bad stuff in our lives? Is all infertility because God is blocking us? No. The Bible is clear that we aren't to do that. God wants to bless His people. The answer lies in the multiple layers of things going on. One layer is that God is sovereign and in control. The second layer is that sin ruined stuff. The third layer is that there are aspects of this world that God has allowed to be managed by evil and some areas that He directly rules in (Kingdom of God vs. Kingdom of this world). This simple explanation is not complete, but it helps us see the complication of what is going on in any given scenario.
- And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the Lord had closed her womb – Things got heated fast. Peninnah is called 'her rival,' so clearly Hannah is going to be the main character of this story, and things are not good in this household. It uses very intense terms to say 'grievously irritate' which means getting mean strategically in a way that tears down Hannah. Again, we see the phrase, 'the Lord had

closed her womb.’ Is this a foreshadowing that God was going to ‘open her womb’, as if it’s a plan?

- So it went on year by year – this means a long, long time. It’s year AFTER year. This is not a simple, one bad year, but a bad series of years. You can imagine that Hannah had been praying about it the whole time and nothing was changing.
 - As often as she went up to the house of the Lord, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat – During a time when they were all supposed to travel and thank the Lord for His good things, and a time when they were going to celebrate their family, Peninnah used it as an opportunity to pour salt in Hannah’s wounds. She would provoke her about her infertility and nothing to celebrate. It was so terrible that Hannah was reduced to tears and couldn’t even eat.
 - And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, “Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons? – Instead of addressing the terrible treatment that Hannah was receiving, her husband tries to ‘mansplain’ it away and say that he should be enough for her. This has nothing to do with him. Should Hannah have let it wreck her life? No. But while it was, this wasn’t helping. I find it irritating that he’s asking the questions as if he doesn’t know. I figure they are rhetorical, but it just makes him sound ignorant. The addressing of 10 sons is a reference that sons were considered greater than daughters and 10 would be a HUGE number. Boys were more valuable since they carried the family name and they could help with physical labor.
- Prayer Bargaining
 - Hannah makes a deal with God
 - *1 Samuel 1:9-11 – “After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord. ¹⁰ She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly. ¹¹ And she vowed a vow and said, “O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head.”*
 - After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose – After doing the sacrifice and celebration that Hannah didn’t want to do, she waited it out and then went on her own to pray in another part of the holy Tent of Meeting area.
 - Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat⁹ beside the doorpost of the temple of the Lord – We are reintroduced to Eli who was sitting (we find out later that sitting is a sign of higher status since most people sat on the ground, but I think it also had to do with his alleged role as minister and

⁹ “A chair was a sign of honor in a society where most people sat on the ground.” NICOT

monitor of the 'temple' (ready to get up and do his job), and the fact that he was very large (fat) and getting up and down was difficult. The mention of a door post means that it wasn't ONLY a tent, but was more of a framed tent structure.

- She was deeply distressed and prayed to the Lord and wept bitterly – Miserable and in despair, **Hannah prays. How often do we pray when we are angry at God for not answering our prior prayers? How often do we allow a variety of things to get between us and Him? How often do we insult Him for not handling our prayers according to the system in our minds? Yet, here she is praying. In my opinion that is where the story hinges. She could have given up and it's a tragedy story. But she didn't. She cried AND prayed.** It wasn't that she was able to pray and feel all better. She was weeping bitterly in her soul but yet still called out to God. This is what Job did. This is what Daniel did. This is what Noah did and they were highlighted by God as some of the greatest most faith-filled men on the planet (Ezek 14:14, 20).
- And she vowed a vow – I'm not a fan of vows. In the Bible they are hit and miss whether people just spout stuff off and try to get God to sign off on it and agree to it, and it fails miserably. We will read about some of these with King Saul later in the series. A vow means a contracted promise. It means, if you do this, I will do that. With God it means if He will answer our request, we will do something radical for Him. It's a bargaining tool. I'm not saying that it's terrible, but I don't like it because it smells of manipulation and gives the impression that we need to 'rouse our God's interest' to get Him to hear us and that's a pagan thought. Nevertheless Hannah made a vow.
 - God takes vows seriously – I know that a lot of us say stupid things that we don't mean and think that everyone else should just accept that and move on and forget it, but that doesn't work with God. God doesn't forget. Like a parent holding their child accountable, God holds His people accountable for the vows and promises they make. That's why I don't make vows. It's way too serious for me. Now, if we actually did a vow in stupidity, can God understand and grant us mercy? Yes. Does He sometimes? Yes. But more often than not He allows it to be a learning situation and holds us to it. There are 92 references to vows in the ESV Bible.
 - Nu 30:1-2 – *"Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the people of Israel, saying, "This is what the LORD has commanded. ² If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth."*
- and said, "O Lord of hosts, - Here's that description again. Hosts can be angels, creatures on earth, armies, or stars & planets. (see above).
- if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, - **When the Bible talks about God 'looking on' or 'remembering', it doesn't mean that God looked away and forgot.**

It's always referring to activity. It means that God turned His attention toward in order to do something about it. Her prayer is, 'God if you would see this scenario, as you do, and act on my behalf, to demonstrate that I still matter to you.' Of course she matters. Of course God sees her. But when we are suffering it sure doesn't feel like it.

- but will give to your servant a son, - what does she really want? A son. Not just a child, but a son. Why? So she would have all the benefits that children brought in that day.
- then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life,¹⁰ - what is she saying? It's really extreme. She is literally saying that if God gives her a son then she will dedicate him into the ministry to live his whole life in the temple serving God and that means he doesn't get to live with her. She doesn't even get most of the benefits of having a son, per se.
 - The intensity of a barren woman giving up her son – the reason why this is so intense is that the ONLY thing she wants is a child and now she's desperate enough to say, 'I'll let him go to God.' She is willing to give over the one gift, the one treasure, that means the most to her.
- and no razor shall touch his head¹¹ - She seems to be indicating that she is going to put a lifelong Nazirite vow on the boy. Some scholars disagree because the rest of the vow stipulations aren't mentioned (e.g. no alcohol), but it makes sense to only mention that parts of the vow that she as a mother would be responsible for during her time with him (which will be only 3-4 years). She would be in control of his hair initially but later in life if he decides to keep the vow in the other areas, that's on him.
 - Nazirite Vows – The plan for a Nazirite vow is laid out in Numbers, chapter 6. It is intended to be a TEMPORARY extreme vow for extreme promises. Only a few named figures in the Bible had a lifelong vow, the most famous was Samson. Paul, the apostle used a version of the Nazirite vow in a temporary way. Basically the gist is this: if you want to do an extreme vow you are to abstain from wine or strong drink, eat no grapes, not cut their hair the whole time, not go near a dead body and certainly not touch one. At the end he is to come to the priests and make an offering, shave off his hair, and cleanse himself to get out of it.

¹⁰ "The phrase all the days of his life signifies life-long dedication, though the Nazirite consecration was normally a temporary one (see Numbers 6)." NICOT

¹¹ "Scholars are divided as to whether the MT here describes Samuel as a Nazirite. Some say it does, for there are correspondences between the present episode and that of the birth of Samson the Nazirite in Judges 13. For No razor shall touch his head, see Judg. 13:5; 16:17; cf. tá'ar lō'-ya'ābōr 'al-rō'šō (Num. 6:5). McCarter, based on the LXX and 4QSam⁹, even restores before the razor the phrase: "and wine and strong drink he will not drink." But others argue that the Nazirite was due to the later growth in LXX and 4QSam⁹. The fact remains that explicit reference to the Nazirite is not made and the abstinence from grape products (see Num. 6:3–4) is not mentioned here in the MT. Without contesting the first possibility, R. P. Gordon suspects that the narrator presents here "a deliberate contrast" with the Samson story. He holds that "Hannah's reference to the razor ... may be expressing the conviction that the same depilatory disaster as befell Samson (Judg. 16:17–21) will not overtake [her] son." However, one might need to read the text in a more immediate context before reading it in a wider context "with an eye on intertextual concerns." Taking note of the "aural" feature of the narrative (see "Introduction" [Section VI, D; VII, B]), especially in direct speech, it would not be strange if Hannah mentioned only a part of the Nazirite customs. A sentence may stop even in the middle of an utterance and hence be grammatically incomplete, leaving an incomplete feeling: that is, "aposiopesis" (see v. 22 below). Also, perhaps she limits herself to the hair provision because the prohibition of cutting his hair would begin in infancy, while the prohibition on wine drinking would come into force later." NICOT

- From Condemnation to Prophecy
 - Eli misunderstands Hannah's condition and blesses her
 - 1 Samuel 1:12-19a – *“As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. ¹³ Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. ¹⁴ And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” ¹⁵ But Hannah answered, “No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. ¹⁶ Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation.” ¹⁷ Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” ¹⁸ And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. ¹⁹ They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah.”*
 - As she continued praying before the Lord, Eli observed her mouth. – desperate people tend to pray longer than others. Their passion, fear, and sorrow are like an engine keeping them before the Lord begging for His help. And this was the situation with Hannah. She was desperate and praying for a long time. Eli, who is the monitor of the sanctuary, was keeping an eye on her and noticed that her mouth was moving but he couldn't hear anything. Usually Jews prayed aloud.
 - Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. – Hannah was praying silently (an oddity for Jews) and desperately so her mouth and lips were forming the words, but there was no breath behind them that made a sound. Eli thought this was weird at first and determined that she must be drunk, which he found to be repulsive (to come to the sanctuary drunk was a no-no). But she wasn't.
 - Snap Judging People – It is so tempting, especially for certain personalities, to automatically think that we know what's going on and we know all things. We judge people quickly because we are sure we know their scenario, especially when we think that it's inappropriate. Those of us who are concerned with righteousness, try really hard in our own lives to do the right thing, so we get bitter when we see someone else not trying. We want to lay into them. But what if we are wrong? What if we are watching someone who is going through something intense? What if them coming to church is the greatest step they could make? What if they are a mess and they barely made it there in the first place? Do we want to be the ones to judge them unfairly and deter them from the Lord? Certainly not.
 - And Eli said to her, “How long will you go on being drunk? Put your wine away from you.” – Eli, as the sanctuary security, and self-righteous

know-it-all, says, 'how long are you going to be a drunk? Stop drinking, you loser!' He launches into correction mode.

- But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the Lord. – Hannah, in her desperation, has to stop talking to the Lord and pouring out her wounded heart, to talk to this arrogant know-it-all, and correct his ignorant view. I would have lost it, but she remains humble and kind in her response (which makes her extra amazing, IMO). She explains her situation that she just praying silently and not drunk at all.
- Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my great anxiety and vexation." – she even begs him to change his opinion about her and further explains that she is really, really struggling. The ESV translates it as 'great anxiety and vexation.' What does that mean? Great anxiety means obsessing on bad thoughts and not being able to get out of it and worrying about it. Vexation means anger at how things are going. It's frustration at circumstances.
- Then Eli answered, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him."¹² – Thankfully Eli is smart enough to realize that he blew it and turns the situation around. I don't know if he said it nicely or rudely, but he knowingly or unknowingly prophesies a blessing and answer to her prayer. He says, 'be peaceful now, for God will (or God MAY) answer your request'. It's unclear if he knew that he was calling it out that God WOULD, or that God MIGHT. She definitely took it as WOULD.
 - Eli didn't know the prayer request – there is no indicator that Hannah mentioned that she was praying for a son. All she said was that she was intensely praying for something. Eli was authorizing and saying yes, on God's behalf, to a request that he didn't know what it was. That's bold and could have backfired.
- And she said, "Let your servant find favor in your eyes." – This seems like something she would say to God but I think that she is just saying something nice back to Eli for his blessing. I think she is saying, 'yes please, let your kindness and words be true.'
- Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad. – In her sorrow, she couldn't eat. Her sorrow was affecting her appetite. Many of us have experienced that too. But now that she had HOPE, she was able to eat and her countenance (face) lifted in mood and expression.
- They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the Lord; then they went back to their house at Ramah – the next morning the whole crew

¹² "The expression Go in peace! marks "a successful conclusion of negotiation or assurance that the request for a desired state of relationships has been granted"; see also 1 Sam. 20:42; 2 Sam. 15:9. It is noteworthy that Eli invokes here the blessing of the God of Israel, while Hannah prayed to and before the Lord of Hosts, citing this intimate name of the covenant, Yahweh, quite frequently (vv. 11[x2], 15, 20, 22, 26, 27, 28a[x2]). The narrator seems to emphasize the personal and intimate relationship of Hannah and Elkanah with Yahweh (see vv. 3[x2], 5, 6, 10, 12, 19[x2], 21, 23, 28b) in contrast with Eli's formal association with the cult of Yahweh. The word the request anticipates the wordplay in vv. 27f. R. P. Gordon notes that this is the only place in the OT where a priest blesses an individual." NICOT

(Elkanah's family) got up early, had a worship time before God again, and headed back home to Ramah.

- **Miracle of Miracles**

- Hannah bears a child and brings him to the temple

- *1 Samuel 1:19b-28 – “And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her. ²⁰ And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the Lord.” ²¹ The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever.” ²³ Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. ²⁴ And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull [or three young bulls], an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord.” And he worshiped the Lord there.”*

- And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, - this is the biblical way of saying, they had sex. In other words, that part of their relationship either got started again, or continued on. It's key to the story because of the desire for conception.
- and the Lord remembered her. – here is that phrase again, 'God remembered'. God never forgets. This is a Hebrew way of saying, 'God went into action to do something about a situation.'
- And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, - In due time can either mean, in 9 mths (gestation), or that after a long time (a couple years), Hannah became pregnant. It's not clear to me. However long she didn't know the prayer was answered would have been difficult days, especially after getting her hopes up. But if she locked into the faith of what occurred, perhaps her hope carried her through the tough time.

- and she called his name Samuel, for she said, “I have asked for him from the Lord.”¹³ – it’s most likely that Samuel means, ‘God-given child’. She had the baby!
- The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. – That year, it was time for the annual celebration and offerings trip to Shiloh sanctuary (where Eli and his sons were priests). It’s not clear if it’s the following year, or A following year. Either way it was time to rally the troops and get going.
- But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned,¹⁴ I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the Lord and dwell there forever.” – This time and perhaps the first and only time, Hannah opts not to go. That was odd since she would normally do whatever her husband wanted to do. But this time she had a pretty good reason. She didn’t want to go to the sanctuary too early because she knew that her vow was that she would leave her child there and it wasn’t time. There is some question by scholars whether or not she was balking at the vow and waiting too long, but I don’t think it’s practical to leave a breastfeeding baby with a bunch of dudes at the temple area (babies are done breastfeeding roughly around 3-4 years old).
- Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the Lord establish his word.” – Elkanah continues to show kindness and love to her and backs her choice up. He says, ‘it’s up to you.’ It’s not clear what he meant by ‘may the Lord establish his word.’ The Lord already followed through on His side and gave them a boy. I think it’s just a fancy way of saying, let’s keep the vow solid.
- So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a

¹³ “The name Samuel and the narrator’s reason, that is, because (she said) from the Lord I have requested him, do not match etymologically, for it is impossible to explain the etymology of the name Samuel (š^emû’ēl) as being from the root *š’l (“to ask, request”) and thus to mean something like šā’ûl mē’ēl “Asked-of-God” (Qimhi). As S. R. Driver notes, the association of the two is probably meant to be conveyed by assonance, not by etymology. The name Samuel itself has been explained etymologically in various ways: (1) *š^emû’ā’ēl “Heard-of-God”; (2) *š^emē’ēl, “He-who-is-from-God”; (3) *šⁱmuhû-’il-, “His-name-is-El” (McCarter, p. 62); (4) š^emû’ēl “Name-of-God” (Gesenius, Driver). But the last view is most natural and does not require emendation. R. P. Gordon accepts the last view and translates “Name of El” or “El is exalted,” though he takes El as a divine name “in vogue in pre-Israelite Canaan.” Mettinger explains that the name “Samuel” contains a reference to the hypostatized name of YHWH-EL.¹²⁷ Another possible way to explain its etymology is “The Name is God,” like the royal names in the First Dynasty of Babylon: Sumu-la-ilu “The Name is verily God” and Sumu-Abu “The Name is Father” (cf. Eliab in 1 Sam. 16:6). However, the context has something to do with the meaning of the name, even if not etymologically. One might surmise that Samuel, the “child” (lit., “seed of men”; v. 11 and fn.) whom God gave Hannah as the requested gift, would bear the name, that is, the essence, of God, who gave Samuel. Though she conceived by her human husband Elkanah (v. 19), not by Yahweh, Samuel was given to the childless woman Hannah by God’s grace. Hence, the name Samuel (“name” or “offspring”¹³⁰ of God) would signify the God-given child. Though it is often said that the name Samuel displays archaic features and may already have been an ancient name in the time when the present story is set, there is no evidence for McCarter’s claim that “Samuel’s birth narrative has absorbed elements from another account describing Saul’s birth.” NICOT

¹⁴ “A child might not be weaned until three or four years old (2 Macc. 7:27); breastfeeding for three years is mentioned in the Egyptian “Instruction of Any.” NICOT

three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour,¹⁵ and a skin of wine,¹⁶ and she brought him to the house of the Lord at Shiloh. And the child was young.¹⁷ – It makes it sound like she only skipped that one year, but weaning could take 3-4 years or more. The point is that once she was done breastfeeding, she loaded up with the rest of the family to do their annual trip and she got stuff ready to sacrifice and honor the Lord for His great gift to her. She was going to honor her vow, well. She took a TON of stuff. Some scholars read it as a 3-year-old bull, but it's a more natural reading of 3 young bulls. Some scoff at such a big offering, but when you realize that her amount of flour is ridiculous. It's almost 6 gallons of flour (5.8). It's over 3x's the amount for one bull (1/3 of an ephah per bull is normal). Her wine offering was the same, almost 6 gallons of wine! (a bath = ephah = 5.8 gallons). Samuel was just a baby.

- Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. – They did the preparations and sacrificed the animals and got their offerings ready and headed in to see the main priest, Eli. She wanted to talk with him and remind him of the prophecy he said and her situation, to glorify God.
- And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord." And he worshiped the Lord there. – Lord means, 'sir' or 'master'. It's an honoring title. She is coming in humbly and saying, 'Sir, I'm the lady you thought was drunk, but I was desperately praying for a child, a son and God gave me one. Therefore, I'm dedicating him into your care that he might live and serve here for the rest of his life.' This is super intense. I have to imagine that there was a protocol for this. You can't just have a bunch of babies dropped off out front, then it's an orphanage. Eli must have known what to do and it was a thing that people COULD do. It seems that he seamlessly welcomed in the child and integrated him into the life of the sanctuary.

- Sing/Pray Hallelujah
 - Hannah's song/prayer of praise
 - [1 Samuel 2:1-11](#) – *"And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because*

¹⁵ "One ephah of flour is a tenth of a homer, probably about 3/5 bushel (about 22 liters). The flour represents a substantial offering. The priestly regulations regarding accompanying grain offerings specify 1/10 ephah for each lamb sacrificed (Lev. 14:10; 14:21; Num. 15:4; 28:4–9, 13; Lev. 23:13 states 2/10 ephah), 2/10 for each ram (Num. 15:6; 28:20, 28), and 3/10 for each bull (Num. 15:9; 28:12, 20, 28). So with three bulls, one would expect an offering of 9/10 ephah, just a little less than what Hannah offered. Hannah's husband, Elkanah, was presumably a well-to-do person who was capable of a substantial offering on the special occasion of the life-long dedication of the first son of his beloved first wife." NICOT

¹⁶ "The word for "jar," which is also translated as "skin," may refer to a large vessel for holding wine, oil, grain, etc. The nbl-jar could be quite large, holding a bath, a measure apparently equal to an ephah." NICOT

¹⁷ "Furthermore, the clause is a key expression, denoting "the boy" Samuel's early stage of growth; in other words, Samuel began his dedicated life in his extreme youth." NICOT

I rejoice in your salvation. ² "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. ³ Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. ⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. ⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. ⁶ The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. ⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them he has set the world. ⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. ¹⁰ The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed. " ¹¹ Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest."

- And Hannah prayed and said,¹⁸ - this seems to be part prayer and part song. It seems a lot like a Psalm and some scholars see it as a template for Mary's Magnificat song/prayer later in the New Testament.
- "My heart exults in the Lord; - Exult means extremely joyful. My heart is extremely joyful in the Lord (because of the Lord).
- my horn¹⁹ is exalted in the Lord. – the horn was an ancient way of saying strength, dignity and honor. She is saying my dignity (what people say of me in honor), is lifted up because of what God did for me.
- My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation. – She says my mouth derides my enemies (I don't think she was being personal against Peninnah, but maybe she was. I think it was general against enemies in life and enemies of God). She makes fun and mocks her enemies because she is so happy about how God has saved her from her sorrow.
- "There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; - Truly there is no one, no creature, no person, like Yahweh. There is no thing in

¹⁸ "The song, which became the prototype of the Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55), fits as well into the narrative, as does David's elegy for Saul and Jonathan in 2 Sam. 1:19–27. It serves as the TERMINUS to the story of Samuel's birth. At the other end of the grand narrative of the books of Samuel are the "songs" of David (2 Samuel 22; 23). Hannah's "song" and David's "songs" serve as a frame or inclusio around the entire narrative of 1–2 Samuel. Thus, the Song of Hannah serves as "a thematic and structural introduction to Samuel." The song is not a prayer of supplication but a psalm of thanksgiving. Yet it is not simply thanksgiving for the birth of a son. In fact, the subject of barrenness and birth-giving is mentioned only in v. 5. It is really a song of praise, or a hymn, to God who reverses human fortunes by his mighty power. As Labuschagne says, "The main emphasis is on the help received from Yahweh by one involved in an unequal struggle. For this reason, the song fits excellently in the mouth of Hannah as a woman involved in an unequal struggle." The concluding remark on king in v. 10b makes Hannah's song a worthy candidate for the so-called "royal psalms" (e.g. Psalms 45, 72), and the song is often compared with Psalm 113. Because of the militaristic moments in the song, it is sometimes proposed that its composition was occasioned by an Israelite victory over an external enemy. But, whatever its original life situation may be, the Song fits well into the story of Hannah and its universality makes it "an ideal introit to the history of the early monarchy as recounted in the books of Samuel." NICOT

¹⁹ "The animal horn here symbolizes both strength and pride, possibly of kingship, but not of divinity as sometimes in the ancient Near East. Here, Hannah's horn symbolizes her dignity." NICOT

the universe equal to God Almighty. He is the one true great and glorious deity.

- there is no rock like our God. – there is no solid resting place and foundation for living like building upon God’s word and His ways.
- Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; - Everyone and everything in me should be humble in reaction to who God is and what He has done. I should shut my mouth and everyone should lest they say something stupid and arrogant.
- for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. – Because God knows what He is doing in all things. He is right and just in all of His actions. He never does wrong.
- The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength. – all the mighty in this world are humbled and defeated by God, but the weak get strength from God if He empowers them.
- Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. – those who think they have everything in this life tend to see that they are more needy than they thought, but those who are desperate are rescued and filled by God.
- The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. – the empty womb has metaphorically born the perfect and full number (7) of children, while the one who has a lot of children find themselves lacking if they don’t have God.
- The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. – God is sovereign and in charge of all things. God kills and brings to life. He sends people to the grave and raises up from there and the womb. He is the author and sustainer of life.
- The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. – the Lord is in charge of who is rich and who is poor. He is the one in charge of who is famous and influential and who is not.
- He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. – If He so chooses, God can raise the poor from nothing, and lift the needy from the depths of despair to make them sit with princes and live in honor.
- For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and on them he has set the world. – For the very foundations and basis of the earth and reality are in the Lord’s hands. He determines what can and can’t happen in this universe.
- “He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. – He is good and will guard His people. The wicked will be cut off. Mankind’s strength can’t save them from the Lord, He is greater than they are in all ways.
- The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. – God’s enemies will be dashed to pieces. He will come screaming down in fury and power from heaven.

- The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; - God will determine what is right and wrong in all the earth and universe. His ways is right.
- he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” – He will determine which kings get his blessing and anointing and which ones don’t.
- Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest – And in the end they all went home to Ramah. Meanwhile, the boy, Samuel, lived at the sanctuary with Eli the priest. He couldn’t be a priest due to his family lineage (only those from Aaron’s lineage could be priests), but he could serve as a grunt and learn the ways of the Lord.

Conclusion

- Tie it together at the end by showing that Hannah’s pain, prayer, faith and obedience were all tools for God to reintroduce himself to the community. God’s plan is bigger than we understand.
- **Next Week is Easter – bring a friend!**