

1 Samuel 1:19-28 to 1 Samuel 2:1-10

The Birth of Samuel

1 Samuel 1:19 - "And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her."

Hannah had prayed "remember me, and not forget thine handmaid" in **verse 11**. This verse shows God's answering her prayer.

1 Samuel 1:20 - "Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD."

The name "Samuel" means "heard by God." (Similar to Ishmael = "God hears")

1 Samuel 1:21 - "And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow."

Rashi - This refers to one of the pilgrimage feasts. "The vows which he made between pilgrimage festivals, he would sacrifice on the following festival."

1 Samuel 1:22 - "But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever."

Only the males were obliged to appear at the three festivals

"weaned" - Rashi says: "after twenty-two months (other versions, twenty-four), for that is the time of nursing a child." But Samuel could even have been up to three years old at this time.

Rashi - "and there abide for ever" - "Forever" in the Levitical sense means fifty years, as it says, (Num. 8:25), "and from the age of fifty years he shall return from the host of the work." Figuring as follows, we determine that Samuel's lifetime was fifty-two years. Eli judged Israel for forty years (see 4:18), and on the day of Hannah's prayer, he was appointed judge (See above v. 9). By subtracting the year in which Hannah conceived Samuel, there remain thirty nine years. Samuel governed Israel from the time of Eli's death for thirteen years, figuring thus: On the day of Eli's death, the Ark was abducted, and it remained in the field of the Philistines for seven months (below 6:1). From there, it was brought to Kiriath-jearim, where it remained until David took it out of there after he had reigned seven years in Hebron over Judah, and all Israel had accepted him as their king. And it is written: And it was, from the day that the Ark abode in Kiriath-jearim that the time was long, for it was twenty years, etc. (below 7:2). Subtract from them seven years which David reigned in Hebron. We find that from the time that the Ark was abducted until Saul's death, were thirteen years and seven months, and Samuel died

four months before Saul.

1 Samuel 1:23 - "And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him."

"Do what seemeth thee good" - Although this is similar to the sad comment about the times of the judges, "every man did what was good in his own eyes," when the righteous do this, only good can come of it. Recall St. Augustine's dictum: "Love God and do what you will."

Rashi - "only, may the Lord fulfill His word" - What word? According to the Midrash Aggadah: Every day, a divine voice would resound throughout the world, and say: "A righteous man is destined to arise, and his name will be Samuel." Thereupon, every woman who bore a son, would name him Samuel. As soon as they saw his deeds, they would say, "This is not Samuel." When our Samuel was born, however, and people saw his deeds, they said, "It seems that this one is the expected righteous man." This is what Elkanah meant when he said, 'May the Lord fulfill His word,' that this be the righteous Samuel.

1 Samuel 1:24 - "And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young."

"...with three bullocks" - for three sorts of offerings, burnt offering, sin offering, and peace offering;
 - or, since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with while there;
 - or, as a present to the high priest, to whose care she committed her son:
 ... "and one ephah of flour" - if the bullocks were all sacrificed, three tenth deals, or three tenth parts of the ephah, went for a meal offering to each bullock, which made nine parts out of ten, and the tenth part she had to dispose of at pleasure; see Numbers 15:9, though that seems to be restrained to a burnt offering only:
 ... "and a bottle of wine" - part of which might be for the drink offering which always attended a meat offering, and the rest for her own use, and that of her friends and family.

1 Samuel 1:28 - "Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there."

"he" = either Elkanah or Eli. (Some say it was Samuel)

Rashi - i.e. Hannah said, Take care of him that he become your disciple. And according to the Midrash of our sages, not to punish him with death. Do not say, "This one shall die and another one shall be given to you... you have no right to punish him, for the Lord has become a borrower over him, since I have lent him to Him, and He must return him to me."

To give up Samuel at three years old or younger must have been a tremendous sacrifice for Hannah!

For Eli to take on the responsibility of raising him would also have been a sacrifice. Normally new Levites didn't come until they were 25.

Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving

Parts of Hannah's song of were incorporated by David into the Hallel and were quoted by Mary in the Magnificat (**Luke 1:46-56**)

The Targum says Hannah prayed by a spirit of prophecy. hence she is reckoned by the Jews (T. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.) as one of the seven prophetesses.

Also, Hannah is the first to use the term "His Anointed" in reference to Messiah, the Christ (**verse 10**)

1 Samuel 2:1 - "And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."

On the surface, this refers to her "enemy" Peninnah and deliverance from the reproach of her barrenness. But by prophecy she speaks of eternal salvation by the Messiah, through a Son being given.

- **Psalm 20:4-6** - "May He give you the desires of your heart and make all your plans succeed. May we shout for joy at your victory and raise a banner in the name of our God. May the LORD grant all your petitions. Now I know that the LORD saves His anointed; He answers him from His holy heaven with the saving power of His right hand."

"My horn" refers to a person's strength and honor. "To exalt the horn" signifies "to raise to a position of power or dignity."

But the Sages associated the horn also with the anointing of kings. While Saul and later king Jehu were anointed using a leather flask of oil, King David and his son Solomon were both anointed using a horn of oil, indicating their reigns would extend for posterity. The Targum says this is one reason Hannah is credited as a prophetess.

"My mouth is enlarged or opened wide" - it is implied that Hannah originally made no answer to Peninnah's previous taunts.

This is an important truth to remember when we are confronted by slander, rumor or false accusations.

- **Psalm 38:12-15** - "They also that seek after my life lay snares for me: and they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things, and imagine deceits all the day long. But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. For in thee, O LORD, do I hope: thou wilt hear, O Lord my God."

Exemplified by Jesus, by "turning the other cheek":

- **Matthew 5:39** - "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

- **Isaiah 50:6-7** - "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me..."

- **Matthew 27:12-14** - "And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing. Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly."

When God's faithfulness has been revealed, Hannah's mouth is opened wide over her enemies, - not for cursing, mocking, defensiveness or in bitterness, but for joyful praise of the God who has answered her prayers. God's action in response to Hannah's prayer has put to silence the enemies' accusations.

(Remember that one line of rabbinical commentary says Peninnah was accusing Hannah of unconfessed sins, blaming her barrenness on that).

1 Samuel 2:2 - "There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God."

The real reason we don't respond to accusation is because we're all guilty. Only God is holy. Even the holy angels cover their faces while they celebrate His holiness, from which their own holiness is drawn. God's holiness is unique.

- **Isaiah 6:2** - "Above him were seraphs, each with six wings, with two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying."

"...no one may see me and live." (**Exodus 33:20**) and "...the place where you are standing is holy ground." (**Exodus 3:5**).

When Isaiah saw the awesome majesty of God's holiness, he said, "Woe to me!" Confronted with God's holiness, we can only fall on our faces as if dead:

- **Revelation 1:17** - "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man."

- **Ezekiel 1:28** - "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell facedown and heard a voice speaking."

- When the angel Gabriel speaks to Daniel: **Daniel 8:17** - "As he came near to where I stood, I was terrified and fell facedown."

"neither is there any Rock like our God" - God as a rock or fortress, or hiding place of protection, is used throughout the Bible:

- **Psalm 18:2** - "The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer. My God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

The Targum relates **1 Samuel 2:2** to the time when Sennacherib's army was wiped out in one night (**2 Kings 19:35**). It is said that at that time all the nations exclaimed, "There is none as holy as the Lord, for there is none beside you." And the Jews exulted, "There is no Rock like our God."

1 Samuel 2:3 - "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed."

Again, this refers on one level to Peninnah. But all who oppose God's Kingdom are meant. And especially our foolish selves - We speak arrogantly and with pride about our own rightness, our abilities and what we think we know. The voices in our head constantly murmur that God has forsaken the earth, and that we need to put our own agendas into play. Self-justification and rationalizing cascade out of our brains without any prompting at all

The Targum renders "arrogancy" as "blasphemies."

The Jewish translation has "the LORD is the God of thoughts"

"by Him actions are weighed" - or proven or "meted out." The actions of men cannot be performed unless He wills or permits; and all are disposed of, overruled, and directed, to answer His own ends and purposes. - *Gill's Exposition*

Another interpretation: Hannah is saying, "Let not the haughty person assume that his success means he has met with God's approval, for the Lord is a God of deep and hidden considerations, which are often incomprehensible to man." - Me'am Loez, an 18th cent. commentary by Rabbi Yaakov Culi

"Everything is foreseen, yet freedom of choice is given. The world is judged by grace, yet all is according to the amount of action."

- Pirkei Avot 3:19 (*Ethics of the Fathers*, from the Mishnah)

1 Samuel 2:4 - "The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength."

"Every power which will be something in itself is destroyed by the Lord: every weakness

which despairs of itself is transformed into power." - Otto Von Gerlach, German theologian

The bow as a military weapon was the height of human ingenuity and destructive power at a distance. It is also used as a metaphor for verbal attacks -

- **Psalm 64:2-4** - "Hide me from the scheming of the wicked, from the mob of workers of iniquity, who sharpen their tongues like swords and aim their bitter words like arrows, ambushing the innocent in seclusion, shooting suddenly, without fear."

- Psalm 11:2 - "For behold, the wicked bend their bows. They set their arrow on the string to shoot from the shadows at the upright in heart."

When self wants to "be something," God will break our "bow" of human strength. But when we despair and are helpless in our weakness, He will respond. Sennacherib's host is annihilated: Gideon's handful triumphs.

"they that stumbled" takes in a lot of territory. "*kāšal*" can mean stumble, cast down, feeble, tottering, ruined, bereaved, decayed, failure, weak

Do any of us fall into one of those categories? When you realize you have no strength, that the foundation of your life is falling apart, God promises to "gird you with strength."

1 Samuel 2:5 - "They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble."

"Hired themselves out for bread" as in the case of the prodigal son, **Luke 15:13**.

The hungry "ceased," i.e. they "ceased to be hungry"

Prophetically, this looks forward to Christ and how He satisfies those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." (**Matthew 5**)

"the barren hath born seven" - this is a Biblical theme

- **Isaiah 54:1** - "Shout for joy, O barren woman, who bears no children; break forth in song and cry aloud, you who have never travailed; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband," says the LORD."

Also, after the demise of Haman and his 10 sons, 70 of his sons remained alive. They were reduced to poverty and had to beg for bread. (Megillah 15b)

Rashi points out that the word "seven" has the same numerical value as the word "Samuel."

God's Sovereignty

1 Samuel 2:6-7 - "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up."

- **Amos 3:6** ... "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done it?"

"bringeth up" refers to the Resurrection from the dead according to the rabbis.

It also alludes to Korah's children. Hannah's words "and bringeth up" are to be understood as a prayer on their behalf. "Lord, You who bring death, bring life [in the World to Come]." The company of Korah was sinking gradually into the abyss of Gehenna, until Hannah petitioned for them and saved them." Korah had seen prophetically that Samuel would be his descendant, and erroneously assumed that meant he was right and would prevail. Hannah felt somewhat guilty about this, and thus prayed for his children.

All "Fate" is determined by God.

God rejected Saul from being king, and took David from the sheepfold, He debased Haman, and raised up Mordecai.

1 Samuel 2:8 - "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them."

The rabbis see "the world" referring to "the world to come."

Spiritually, these are the "poor in spirit" - those who realize they're sitting on a dunghill - mired in sin and pollution - and cry out to God.

Hannah's words are echoed in the Hallel:

- **Psalms 113:7-9** - "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord."

... And by Mary:

- **Luke 1:52-53** - "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away."

"those who are enriching themselves" - instead of pouring out their lives for others

We don't ever need to see ourselves as victims, since God is in control!

1 Samuel 2:9 - "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail."

- **Proverbs 2:8** - "He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints."

Echoed in a Psalm of Ascent:

-- **Psalm 121:3** - "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber."

"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts" (**Zechariah 4:6**)

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (**2 Corinthians 12:9**).

Hannah ends her prayer of praise with a vision of God's final victory of all that oppose Him:

1 Samuel 2:10 - "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."

And the "anointed" here is a prophecy both of King David and also the Messiah, the Christ (anointed as prophet, High Priest and King of Kings)

- **Psalm 2:6-7** - "I have installed My King on Zion, upon My holy mountain. I will proclaim the decree spoken to Me by the LORD: 'You are My Son; this day have I begotten thee.'" (also **Acts 13:33, Hebrews 5:5**)

The Targum paraphrases the words, "he shall give strength to his king and enlarge the kingdom of his Messiah." Other Jewish sources agree: Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 3. R. Saadiah Gaon, Comment. in Daniel 7.13.

The Septuagint version is, "the Lord ascended to heaven and thundered..." which predicts Jesus' Ascension (**Luke 24:50, John 3:13, Acts 1**).

The last vial of the wrath of God, poured out upon his adversaries, will be attended with thunders and lightnings (**Revelation 16:17**).

Hannah's song is associated with the Day of Judgment. The nine blessings recited on Rosh Hashanah correspond to the nine mentions of the Lord's name. Also, Hannah conceived Samuel on Rosh Hashanah. (Talmud, Berachos 29a)