



# Community Group Discussion Guide

August 25, 2024

1 Samuel 2:1-11 | Hannah's Triumph

## MOTIVATE

Starter Question:

⇒ *What is a song you are inclined to sing when you are in a celebratory mood?*

## DISCUSS

In 1 Samuel 1:1-11, Hannah continues to play a significant role in helping to further characterize the prophet Samuel and to prepare us for what follows in the rest of the book of 1 Samuel. After Hannah gave birth to Samuel, she thanked the LORD for His goodness in what is called both a jubilant prayer of thanksgiving and a beautiful song of praise.

With its hymnlike qualities, Hannah's words are an eloquent expression of the significance of the birth of Samuel. Old Testament historical narratives occasionally insert poetry to supplement a particular event. Such poems are usually a prayer, a song, or a speech of the central character, and they frequently crystallize important theological themes.<sup>1</sup>

Hannah's triumphant words, affirming that God had blessed her and answered her prayer, are similar to "Mary's Magnificat" in Luke 1:46-55 when Mary learned she would give birth to the Messiah. Hannah's is the longest prayer by a woman recorded in the Bible. It took place while she and her family were still at the worship site in Shiloh. Hannah also continued to use the title LORD in all capital letters in her prayer. This is the sacred, personal name, Yahweh or Jehovah, that God revealed to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:13-15).

⇒ *How many times does Hannah use the name LORD in her prayer?*

⇒ *Why is this use and repetition significant?*

**1 Samuel 2:1** *And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my horn is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.*

Hannah's prayer spans the height and depth of Israelite theology and relates it to her circumstances. She begins on a high note with personal expressions of joy and delight in the Lord and His salvation.<sup>2</sup> Her barrenness had caused her humiliation and shame, but God had delivered her from all that.

⇒ *Why is it noteworthy that Hannah used the phrase "in the LORD" twice in reference to her exultation?*

⇒ *What had He done for her to receive her highest praise?*

"My horn is lifted up" is an expression that can refer to the renewal of strength. Samuel was a gift from God. He was not the product of Hannah's strength or her own achievement. In Bible times, an animal's lifting of his head and his horn was also a symbol of power, triumph, and dignity. Using this imagery was Hannah's poetic way of expressing that God had lifted her out of her despair by allowing her to have a child.

When one's horn is elevated, it seems to involve visible distinction or exaltation and sometimes designates perpetual distinction through one's offspring. It is especially meaningful here that Hannah rejoiced in Yahweh, who had lifted her horn, implying both her visible vindication before Peninnah and

<sup>1</sup> Arnold, B. T. (2003). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (pp. 68–70). Zondervan.

<sup>2</sup> Arnold, B. T. (2003). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (pp. 68–70). Zondervan.

her lasting strength through her offspring.<sup>3</sup> Hannah could boast over her enemy, but her boasting was in the deliverance of the LORD and in His great works.

⇒ **Can you give an example of a way in which God has lifted you up?**

**1 Samuel 2:2-3** *“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.*

Ancient Canaan where Hannah lived was full of idols that were prayed to and worshipped with a hope that they would increase the fertility of their owners. But Hannah did not pray to an empty figurine; she prayed to the LORD. He was her rock, and He had established her lineage. With her strength and dignity restored, Hannah rejoiced in God’s greatness, uniqueness, steadfastness, and holiness.

⇒ **How has God proven to you that there is no other like Him?**

⇒ **How are you rejoicing in the LORD today?**

In verse 3, Hannah’s prayer had a more public dimension, allowing others to consider her words and join in. Since her prayer was spoken in public worship at Shiloh, Hannah cautioned those who boast and arrogantly exalt themselves, reminding them that God knows their thoughts and judges their deeds.

⇒ **Why is it imperative that we heed Hannah’s warning?**

**1 Samuel 2:4-8** *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.*

Hannah’s joy and triumph were firmly rooted in the singular holiness of the LORD and His righteous justice. From this certainty flowed her confidence, and in a series of contrastive actions, Hannah described five areas of life where God proves Himself to be the great “reverser of fortunes.” These areas include military might, famine, fertility, life and death, and economic status.

The LORD can make the weak strong, the hungry full, the poor wealthy, the humiliated honored, and the barren woman fertile. He possesses the power to bring death and life. He alone provides the resources for success and honor in life. God weighs the deeds of man, humbling and exalting as He sees fit, ensuring that the proud and the haughty will not stand.

⇒ **Which of these verses is the most meaningful to you today? Which is the most convicting? Explain your answers.**

⇒ **In what other areas is God the “reverser of fortunes?”**

The very foundations of the earth belong to the sovereign LORD. He has set the world upon them. Hannah saw God’s justice prevailing because He had created and established the world. God is on the throne of life, and His heart is with the poor and lowly. God chooses to work this way, and He did so in Hannah’s life.

⇒ **What do these verses reveal about God? With this knowledge of God, what application can you make to your life?**

<sup>3</sup> Arnold, B. T. (2003). [1 & 2 Samuel](#) (pp. 68–70). Zondervan.

**1 Samuel 2:9-10** “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.”

In verse 9, Hannah rejoiced in her future hope. Travel in the ancient world was accomplished mostly by foot over long and difficult trails. Hannah proclaimed that the LORD guards the feet of those who are faithful to Him and He keeps them on the right road. The wicked, unable to succeed by their own strength, will perish by God’s thunderous hand.

⇒ **How do Hannah’s words bring you hope? What caution do her words hold?**

The final sentence of Hannah’s prayer is remarkable for several reasons. Hannah lived in the time of the judges. She stated that God would give strength to His king, even though Israel had not yet had a king, and would not have one until her son anointed one. Hannah’s song emphasized the LORD’s anointed as especially chosen by Him and empowered for the task of leading Israel. This is the kind of king Israel longed for and needed.

Hannah’s words prophetically looked forward to the time when a king would rule the nation. Hannah’s reference to God’s “anointed” was also a messianic prophecy. This idea of the “exalted horn” was fulfilled in part in the reigns of David and Solomon, but would be realized fully through Jesus Christ—the eternal King and Judge of all the earth.

⇒ **Discuss the missional significance of the phrase, “The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.”**

**1 Samuel 2:11** Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

Elkanah and his family returned home, but Samuel remained in Shiloh under Eli’s care. Ministering to the LORD is what Samuel will do for the rest of his life.

- ⇒ **What is the profound contrast between Hannah’s prayers in 1 Samuel 1 and 1 Samuel 2?**
- ⇒ **What does Hannah teach us about praying in both difficult and joyous times?**

## TRANSFORM

**1. Make personal application:** Hannah’s prayer is a remarkable passage of Scripture containing a song of praise with prophetic and messianic significance. Hannah eloquently celebrated the holiness, power, and sovereignty of God. Not only is Hannah’s prayer a testimony of God’s handiwork in her own life, but it is also a foreshadowing of His actions in the lives of the prophet Samuel, King David, the nation of Israel, and the coming Messiah.

- ⇒ **How does Hannah provide us with a faithful role model of trust and commitment?**
- ⇒ **What do you think is the major theme of Hannah’s prayer in 1 Samuel 2?**
- ⇒ **What is the major theme of your praise at this time in your spiritual journey?**

**2. Pray:** Express your confidence in the loving sovereignty of God. Thank Him for specific prayers He has answered and for blessings He has brought into in your life. Praise Him for the hope He gives through Christ.

## STUDY

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Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

- *Holman New Testament Commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel, pages 17-23.*
- *The Illustrated Guide to Bible Customs and Curiosities, George W. Knight, page 79.*
- *The NIV Application Commentary, 1 and 2 Samuel pages 65-76.*
- *Shepherd's Notes, 1 and 2 Samuel, pages 6-7.*