

1st Samuel Ch 2

Ch 2 brings us into a contrast with ch 1 in that ch 1 reveals to us the *prayer* of a *barren* lady by the name of Hannah who wanted nothing more than to give her husband Elkanah a son. And she was always being taunted by his other wife Peninnah, so much so that when they would go up to the tabernacle every year to offer peace offering to the Lord she wouldn't even eat, all she could do was weep. And so one year they were there and Hannah, broken and despondent went to the tabernacle and began to pour out her soul to the Lord, and she said, "Lord, if You'll only give me a son, I promise that I'll give him back to You that he might serve you all the days of his life." and It's not that she was making a bargain with God, but rather she was showing her devotion *to* God. And the bible tells us that God heard her prayer and answered her prayer because the Lord had been waiting for Hannah to get to this point, because Hannah's vision was just too small, she hadn't come around yet to God's heart in the whole matter. Hannah had wanted a son to give to her husband, but God wanted a prophet, to give to the nation. You see; He had something much bigger in mind than she did, and He was (through various heartaches and circumstances) bringing her around to this place where she was able to get beyond herself in the matter. And so now it's not God give me a son for my husband, it's Lord give me a son for *Your* sake, that *You* might use him all the days of his life, for *Your* glory. And God said, "Great, that's a prayer I'll answer in the affirmative, because I've been wanting to do something that's much bigger, much more wonderful than what you had previously conceived in your mind."

And you know often times the same thing can be true for you and me, God would have us believe Him for big things, He wants to do a work in your life that even if He told you, you wouldn't believe it. But too many times when God would have us believe Him to move the Mts, we stumble over the mole hills, God's wanting to part the Red Sea, but we're not sure how we're going to get around this mud puddle. He wants to give us the nations, but we can't see beyond these walls, and so we wonder, why isn't the Lord answering our prayers, they seem to be reasonable, I'm staying practical. When the Lord might be saying to you (even tonight) "it's too small", "I want to do something bigger, something greater, something grander, or more wonderful in you, or through you, or by you." and In due time you'll come to that place, like Hannah, where you're finally in line with God's desire, and you're ready, or prepared and equipped for what God wants to do in you, or through you, with you, for you or whatever and God will begin to move Mts.

Hannah finally came to that place, and she conceived, and bore a son, and called him Samuel, so as to where in Ch 1 we hear the cry, we hear the prayer of a barren woman, ch 2 reveals to us the *praise* of a *blessed* woman. The spontaneous worship that she offers up to the Lord in appreciation of the Lord and what He's done in her life. And you might find it interesting sometime to compare this song with the song of Mary in Luke ch 1 that she erupted into as well upon hearing that she was going to have a very special Son. She too was to have a Son supernaturally, miraculously, not because she was barren, but because she was a virgin.

And the Lord spoke to her through the angel and gave her that great news that she was going to bare a Son who would be the Savior of the world, and you know the story she didn't know how it could happen since she was a virgin. And the angel told her of the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit and that she would conceive and He'd be called the Son of the Most High, the Son of God, and Mary believed and received and broke forth in song, and it amazingly resembles this song.

Which tells me that Mary was a student of the Word of God, even though she was but a young girl, probably around 15yrs old, the Word of God was very real and personal to her and moving powerfully in her life even at such a young age. Now more than likely she was illiterate, in that she was probably unable to read, but when she went to synagogue, she soaked up the reading of the scriptures in a way that profoundly impacted her life, as evidenced in her praise prayer that so closely resembles this one here that Hannah utters.

And so now that we come to chapter 2 Hannah has just fulfilled her vow in dedicating Samuel to the Lord and has given him over into the service of the Lord under the apprenticeship of Eli the high priest. And her response is very intriguing to me .

Vs1

The horn in scripture being a picture of strength, so her strength in the Lord is being exalted, and of course you're familiar with the fact that Jesus said that the one who humbles himself will be exalted, and the one who exalts himself will be brought low. And in chapter 1 we find a broken and humbled Hannah before the Lord whom God is now exalting before the pride of Peninnah.

But what I found interesting emphatic expression of joy in her song. If I just dropped off my only son at the tabernacle, probably around 3yrs old or so, never to live in my home again, and as a matter of fact I'd probably only see him one time or so a year, I'd probably go off and have a good cry! But instead we see a remarkable disposition in Hannah in that she bursts into a song of praise. There's a peculiar relationship between sacrifice and song that the world doesn't understand when it comes to your life as a believer. As a believer a song can move you to sacrifice, or sacrifice can move you to song. In 2 Chron 29:27 we read where, "*Hezekiah commanded them (them being the Levites) to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD also began.*" W/the sacrifice; came singing, before Jesus went into the Garden of Gethsemane to be arrested and offered as the sacrifice for the sins of the world, we read where He and His disciples sang a hymn. It seems like David was always worshipping and praising God even in the midst of some of the most difficult circumstances of his life. And so we see this relationship between song and sacrifice in the scriptures, and here Hannah as it were is sacrificing her only son over to the Lord in giving him to her, and she erupts in a song of praise.

Now understand that her heart didn't rejoice in giving up her son, we don't rejoice in the actual difficulties of the circumstance, but she rejoiced *in the Lord*. Paul would echo this all throughout his epistle to the Philippians, Neh 8:10 says, "*the joy of the LORD is your strength.*"

And here where we read, "I smile at my enemies" literally it says, "my mouth is enlarged." And again this is no doubt in regards to her situation with Peninnah, and it speaks of boasting, defeated people have to keep their mouths shut, but the victors have something to talk about.

Vs2-3

No one is holy like the Lord, for there is none besides you, Isa 43:10-11 says, "*Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. I, even I, am the LORD, And besides Me there is no savior.*" Isa 44:6 "*Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel, And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts: 'I am the First and I am the Last; Besides Me there is no God.'*" and Of course the "rock" being a picture of stability, immovability, shelter, something that is consistent and doesn't change. In the OT the Lord is referred to often as a rock, and of course in the NT the chief cornerstone.

And then here in verse 3 we see another rebuke that was probably intended for Peninnah regarding pride and arrogance, 2 things the Lord hates and the point here is that even though you may scorn or flaunt your arrogance in secret, God sees it as though it were done in the open. "*The Lord is the God of knowledge.*"

Last Wednesday evening during our time of prayer and worship and young man gave a word, and in that word was the reminder that nothing is too hard for God, there's nothing to big for Him, nor is there anything so small that it goes unnoticed. He even sees those secret things of shame that we've talked so much about lately, He's the God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed. Or to understand it another way, He searches our motives, the reasons why we do what we do, and the fact is, that our motives are more important than our actions themselves. You remember that the Lord told Belshazzar through Daniel, "*You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting.*" Prov 16:2 "*All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits.*" and Again Jer 17:10 "*I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.*" So God is searching the deep recesses of our hearts, why do you do the things you do, if it's to be seen of man, you have your reward, if it's to spite or scar someone's integrity, God sees it, and it doesn't go unnoticed. If it's done in secret for the glory of God, then He knows that to and will reward you openly.

Vs4-8

Paul would put it like this, *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God--and righteousness and sanctification and redemption--that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.”* (1 Cor 1:26-31)

Vs9

Or as Zech 4:6 would say, *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” “Says the LORD of hosts.”*

Vs10-11

In vs 10 there’s a couple of interesting little things, #1 it shows Hannah’s knowledge of the Word as well, because she mentions God giving strength to His king at a time when Israel was still a theocracy, they didn’t have a physical king yet. And how would she know that they were going to have a king? Because God had told them in His word that there would come a day when they would tire of Him being their King and they would want to emulate the pagan nations around them with a man as king over them and He made provisions in advance for that in the Law. So the very fact that she mentions a king for Israel here is pretty amazing, but then 2ndly this word “anointed” here is the Hebrew word “mashiyach” or “messiah” translated into the Greek as “Christ” and the English as “anointed.” and What we have here is the 1st mention of Jesus in the OT referred to as the Messiah and Hannah was the one to apply it to Him, and in reality this reference to His king could be pointing to Christ as well, so it’s really an amazing utterance that she’s giving here.

But now we turn the page back to Eli’s sons, now last time we mentioned the fact that they were losers and the original rip-off artists of the ministry and here you’ll see why, but take note of the purposed contrast between these boys and Samuel throughout the remainder of the ch.

Vs12

And this is the reason for everything else they do, they’re in the ministry, but they don’t even know the Lord and there are people like this today, they choose the ministry, not because they’re called, but as a career choice and it breeds turmoil, trouble, and contempt.

Vs13-14

So the custom that they’d engaged in was to take a 3-pronged hook and when the meat that was to be sacrificed was being boiled so as to remove the blood, they boys would send their servants along to thrust in their flesh hooks and take a portion of the sacrifice.

Now the law had prescribed a portion of the meat to the priests but the problem was, that it was to be ascribed *after* the sacrifice, and it was a designated portion, not just what they randomly came up with out of the best parts of the meat.

Vs15-16

And so it gets even worse, now they're not wanting boiled meat, they want it raw, they want to grill it or something themselves, and if the person says hey, let's at least offer the fat 1st, lets give God His portion 1st, then they'd say you better *give* us what we want or we'll *take* what we want.

Vs17

It got so bad that people began to hate bringing their offering to the Lord, because of the greed and fleshly inclinations of Hophni and Phinehas, these representatives of the Lord. It's been said that, "some ministers have a wealth of thoughts, but other ministers only have thoughts of wealth." and It's a sad situation, but these 2 guys were ripping the people off for their offerings, they were taking that which had been set aside for God, and using it for their own fleshly inclinations. And it'll get worse still, but notice the contrast with Samuel.

Vs18-21

Not only physically but spiritually as well, now don't think that Samuel didn't see what these guys were doing. But he didn't get disheartened and think well, if this is what goes on in ministry, then I'm out of here. He just kept plugging along, regardless of what anyone else was doing and he served the Lord, he stayed focused on what God had called *him* to do, and let God deal with the sins of others. But notice you can't out give God, Hannah gave the Lord 1 child, and the Lord gave her back 5 more. So many people have a problem with the tithe, "c'mon, you don't know how much I make, surely you can't expect me to tithe according to my income." Or, "You don't know how little I make, surely you don't expect me to tithe according to my income." Let's just say that a man once said, "If you don't tithe according to your income, may God make your income according to your tithe." In other words if you purpose to only give 5% then may God cause that to be 10% for you by cutting your salary in 1/2. And though I say that sort of tongue in cheek there's a real sense of reality to that principal. Some people just don't get God's ways, His math or economy, and they go through a life time not understanding you can't out give God, if you give to the Lord, He will not be a debtor to you, He will repay in many ways and dimensions, I'm not implying you'll be made rich necessarily, but you'll be made rich, if you get what I mean.

Vs22-25

These guys were having relations with the church secretary, and everyone knew it, they were total hirelings, not in the ministry for what they could give to God's people, but what they could get from God's people. And really Eli's response was weak at best, he was the high priest, he should've talked less and acted more, and had them removed from the ministry. And in answer to his question, thank God we have Jesus Christ the righteous to intercede for us when we sin against the Lord.

But the bible says that God's Spirit won't always strive with man, if you want to sin, and you have no heart within you to repent, then eventually God will give you over to what you desire and your own choice will seal your fate (so to speak.) And these guys had gotten to that point where like the Pharaoh their hearts were hardened against the things of the Lord and God honored that, they'd filled up the wine cup of the wrath of God, and He was going to make them drink it, just like the inhabitants of the land of Canaan when the children of Israel was to inhabit it.

Vs26

Mom's and Dad's do what you can do to teach this to your kids, now no doubt as a Christian period there's going to be a certain amount of ridicule that we all take, our kids included. But the way to have a successful life is to serve the Lord faithfully, and as you grow in favor with Him, He'll cause you to grow in favor with men as well. You see Hophni and Phinehas were bad dudes, they listened to rap music, they were gang bangers, rip off artists and sexually immoral men, and they're going to die, but Samuel in contrast served the Lord with integrity and the result was to grow in favor with the Lord and with men as well. Because most kids have the mistaken concept that if they're to commit to the Lord whole-heartedly and serve Him with their all in all. Then somehow they'll be taken for a geek, or a nerd or something, put down or whatever, and to a degree that's inevitable for every Christian, but Samuel shows us the results of a man who walks with the Lord. He gains favor with man as well, the same thing is said of Jesus as He was growing up. Ps 1 says, "*Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful; But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.*" You see the blessed life isn't found in hanging out and being around sinners and imitating them, but rather in serving the Lord, studying His word, and meditating on it, the Psalmist says whatever that man does shall prosper. And Samuel shows this, and more importantly, Jesus shows it, now undoubtedly Hophni and Phinehas taunted him for being a holy roller, or a bible thumper, but he went ahead and lived for God, and God blessed his life.

Vs27-35

Now for times sake I'll cut straight to the chase, there are partial fulfillments of this in a couple of fellas, but the key word in this vs is the last one, "forever." This can only apply to 1 man, Jesus Christ our faithful high priest after the order not of Aaron, but of Melchizedek. And He did according to all that was in the Father's heart while on this earth and will minister in the order of Melchizedek, forever, the book of Heb speaks candidly about this.

Vs36

So Judgment falls on the house of Eli, and Samuel will continue to step out into the forefront in being used of God in realigning the heart of Israel.