

# Prayer 01 1 sam.2:-Hannah's Song

by Bob Clark

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*Hannah's experience teaches us the importance of turning to God in prayer during difficult times and trusting in His sovereignty and providence.*

**Duration:** 37:18

**Scripture:** 1 Samuel 2:1-7

**Topics:** "Hannah"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the providential government of God and how He rules over all circumstances of life. The speaker highlights the story of Hannah, who experienced pressures and difficulties in her home life. Despite these challenges, Hannah turned to God in prayer and poured out her heart to Him. As a result, God showed her great grace and help, and she eventually gave birth to a child. The speaker emphasizes the importance of turning to God in times of trouble and allowing Him to turn our problems into spiritual blessings.

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## Transcript

Good morning. When I was a young man, I lived in New Jersey, and as typical of some young Christian men, we would make some little comments about preachers that went to Florida during the winter time. Now that the Lord has given me the privilege of serving Him for a number of years, it's winter time and I have to come north from Houston to get to the Park of the Palms.

Can you imagine that? My big opportunity to go to Florida and I still have to go farther north. This is very nice for me to be here, and I trust that our stay will be spiritually profitable and that we might, like Samuel, hush our hearts and hear the voice of God. But it's rather interesting that we want to first think about Samuel's mother.

So won't you turn to the first book of Samuel, please, 1 Samuel, Chapter 2. 1 Samuel, Chapter 2. What we want to read together is a Hebrew poem. It's actually a prayer. Some people have felt that it has been put to music, but at least we do know that it's written in the Hebrew language in poetical form.

And not only is its structure most remarkable and a very advanced form of literature for the time in which this was written, but far more important than its literary value, it's a very deep exercise of heart on the part of a woman who has had an extraordinary experience and relationship with God. It's really impossible to properly measure these words and as we read them to think of the depth of emotion that must be involved

and the fullness of a deep kind of triumphant joy and also a remarkable insight into the character and the person of God. Now, we're not surprised that this should be included in Scripture, but these are not the words that we would think of coming from the mouth of a woman that has been bereaved of her only son.

We might expect that this mother would be very grieved over the circumstances that have just been imposed upon her. And we want to take just a moment to capture the kind of background that goes with this reading and then come to realize what a profoundly deep exercise of soul is going on in the heart of this woman who for years had suffered a grave offense against her own person and she learned to accommodate herself and apparently the reason is because she has a definite, genuine, personal relationship with God. The era in which she lives is lamentably poor.

The history that we have behind this particular event and situation is just a wretched circumstance in which the woman is living. In her home it's a poor situation. She endures pressures in her home that are humiliating and aggravating and has driven her not to frustration but to prayer.

Many of us at times of difficulty in our lives have learned to give vent to our ill feelings. We sometimes express it toward others in the family or our loved ones, various kinds of irritation. Sometimes we have a little root of bitterness that harbors in our own spirit and we're apt to be impatient or unkind or at least looking for somebody to whom we can give our feelings and pour them out upon someone else.

And yet this is a woman who apparently has learned to genuinely turn to God and in her unique relationship with the Lord evidences to us a very deep secret about prayer. Prayer is not the rehearsal of words. Prayer is not merely the stating of exercises of soul.

But one has very well said, prayer is the expression of the human heart in conversation with God. That's a very lovely sentence. Prayer is the expression of the human heart in conversation with God.

And Hannah learned to converse with God. She learned to express her soul. She learned to absorb the difficulties and the problems of the life in which she lived and then turn toward her God and pour out her heart and listen for God's words, for something to come to her, something to be ministered to her inner being and person.

And from this, there was woven into the kind of warp and woof of her very life a very integral experience of companionship with God and getting to know the Lord. And so when she writes or expresses, rather, in chapter 2, this prayer, this remarkable outflowing poem, she declares the glory and the character of God, the very things that are hymn that we have been singing and spoken of. Chapter 2 of 1 Samuel, verse 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. There is none holy as the Lord.

For there is none beside him, neither is there any rock like our God. Talk no more so exceeding proudly. Let not arrogancy come out of your mouths.

For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty men are broken. They that stumbled are girded with strength.

They that were full have hired themselves out for bread. And they that were hungry cease. So that the barren hath borne seven, and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.

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. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, 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.

He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness. For by strength shall no man prevail. 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. Now that's an interesting reading of Scripture.

And it's an interesting portion. But once again, the important thing is everything that has preceded it that has given this woman such a profound insight. In the first few verses of this prayer, or the first few expressions that we have in verse form, she describes the very nature of God and gives some simple, direct statements as to the attributes of God.

Then she notes his providential care for all and the circumstances of how God entwines himself into the life of all people. Then she alludes in just a sentence or two to the gracious, providential government of God caring for his own people. And lastly, a most remarkable statement of eulogy, of worship, of anticipation, where she describes God's anointed coming king and his ultimate destiny to rule over the world.

And you know there is no king in Israel at this time. The nations of Israel haven't even thought about having a king unless it's undercurrent and it's not been recorded. And yet this woman knows that there's a king coming.

This is long before David. She's never read any of his songs. How does she know so much about God? How is she able to express from her soul the integration of thought and harmony of God and his plans and his purposes? And why is this awesome experience in her life as she become a worshipper and a speaker of the great things of God? It comes from genuine prayer.

It comes from honest exercise of heart and going through some very difficult times she has turned to God. Now may I ask you, all of you here have gone through difficult times in your life. They come to your mind right now.

Pressures in the home, financial, economical pressures and problems, emotional drain, and during these times, really, genuinely, to what do you turn? Some of us find outlet in activities and social contacts, television, business, maybe our grandchildren or our own family, and God wants us to learn a very valuable lesson from Hannah, that he is the one that's the resource of divine revelation, of the deepening of our lives, and God, our God, desires in your heart and mine to turn the problems and the pressures of family life and whatever situation that we go through into spiritual blessing and enrichment, but it requires our turning to him. Now there was pressures in the home in which this woman lived. They were wretched experiences.

Elkanah, her husband, apparently she was the first wife, at least by the text of chapter one, if he implied, and having not born a child, he took a second wife, who became very productive and had a family. It was not only embarrassing, it was hurtful, it was wounding to her spirit, and it was bad enough to have to live

under these circumstances and tolerate a second woman and her prosperity and her well-being, but then the condescending affection of her husband, who then began to very ingratiatingly say, well, don't you see how much I love you, dear? I'll give you twice as much, I'll give you extra benefits and extra things to token my love to you, and that was not what she wanted, was it? Now any sensible person knows that that's not the way of affection and love. Things grew worse because the family's tensions and problems were experienced, and Penina then began to needle and mock and tease Hannah because she had never had a child, and began to raise questions about her relationship with Elkanah, and all kinds of difficulties and problems became surging into the family, and she was hurt and wounded.

Then, of course, there were the regular trips up to the temple at Shiloh, and when they gathered in Shiloh to worship the Lord and go through the holiday season, she went with the family. She was no protester. She modestly, humbly accepted a very wretched, miserable experience in which she was living, and when everybody else in the family would eat bountifully, and there would be goading and teasing, and this is all recorded in chapter one, and there would be this exchange of needling and mockery and embarrassment and discomfort, she would wait until the feast was over, and she didn't want to interrupt the holiday and destroy it for everyone else, but she very discreetly waited until the meal was over, and others were going about her way, and then she would withdraw herself.

And into the hurt, wounded experience that was hers, and she'd make her way into the presence of God, and pour out her soul before the Lord. She had a very difficult situation, but it was not just that situation, it was the whole environment of the day in the time. Her home situation was a terrible problem, fretted her, burdened her, and drove her to tears before God.

Added to it was Eli the priest, who was a very aged, weak, and physically frail person, and apparently, just as the hymn we sang, very mild of temperament, he forgot how to discipline his own children. And his boys, doing the worst work of priests, became very vile and offensive to any that were around, and they had corrupted the priesthood, and the terrible situation that was existing then in the priesthood gave her very little respite, there was no loving counselor, no comforting pastoral heart around to whom she could talk. She certainly couldn't talk to those priests, or the aged, imperceiving priest, the high priest Eli.

Things were in a very bad condition, and have you ever felt that you were locked up to finding help only from God? I am sure that the Lord brought her into this position, in order not only to give us a remarkable introduction to one of the most unusual historical figures in the Old Testament. From her, and from this woman, there came forth Samuel, the last judge, the first prophet, the trainer and teacher of prophets, the designer of the kingdom, the one who, by legal systems, lay out a pattern of life that would affect the nation for many long years. And she was the mother.

She pled with God that she might have a child. In verse 9 of chapter 1, Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon the seat of the post of the temple of the Lord, and she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

And something that she is going to say stands out in Scripture. For it is the first time recorded in Scripture that anyone has spoken to God, and declared Him to be the Lord that is Jehovah Sabaoth, the absolute covenant-keeping, eternal existing One that rules over all things. And she, this woman, this very modest, humble, unaffected, simple Jewish woman, is the one that first declares that our God is the Lord of hosts.

And she vowed avowed and said, O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man

child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. In effect, she was saying he shall be a Levite. In Numbers chapter 6, the law of the Levite declares eight times over that he would be unto the Lord, and one of the three prohibitions in his life would be that there be no razor come upon his head.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. Now, this is the priest. Now, Hannah, she spake in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard.

Therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. Oh, my! To suffer, to be embarrassed, to be bitter, to be brokenhearted, is quite one thing.

Then to be totally misunderstood and accused of overindulgence at the holidays and the festival days, what a hurtful, wounding experience. And yet notice the very modest and gracious woman. Know, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit.

I have drunk neither wine nor a strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thy hand made for a daughter of Belial, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. And there's no apology from Eli.

Characteristic of some in leadership roles, unable to admit that they were wrong, immodest enough and not really perceiving their own condition, just unwilling to say, Oh, I am sorry, Hannah. Sometimes the burdens that people bear and the griefs that they carry and the direction that they want to turn to find help, how often has a child turned to a parent and been misunderstood and refused? How often has a member of the body turned to one of the oversight and longed for understanding and compassion and been misunderstood and maybe even accused and dealt with harshly? Sometimes we can be so thoughtless, so impatient, so unkind, and all of us have experienced something of these kinds of offenses. But Hannah talks to God.

She is a woman of prayer, a woman of pouring out her conversational needs and expressing them to God. A heart in fellowship with God, conversing with God, expressing herself and God ministers to her great grace and help. The child is born, as you would expect.

She entered back into that family experience. She admitted to her... trying to look for the word... yielded herself or submitted herself to that situation again and goes back into the home experience and there's a child born out of the relationship. She carefully nurses and cares for and trains the child.

Now, because he's a Levite, he will have to, at 20 years of age, be given to the temple work and services to be trained and at 30 enter into the practical activities and then at 50 graduate into maybe more mediatorial instructing and teaching ministries. That is the purpose of her child and that is what will come as an issue out of that young one. But, here, she says that she will give this child early in her life.

Give him back to God. Present him and put him into the trust of God. Certainly not Eli.

Certainly not those priests. To be separated from this in whom she had poured her whole heart and affection. But she gladly gives this child back as a Levite Nazarite back to God to live unto the Lord.

When the time comes, how old the child is, we don't know. There's no way of knowing. It's surmised it must be maybe 6, 7 years old.

Something of the kind. His actual age is relatively unimportant. The significant thing is that she comes and gives this child back to God at the end of the chapter.

Verse 24, When she had weaned him, she took him up with her in three bullocks, one ephah of flour, a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh and the child was young. And she slew a bullock and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my Lord, as thy soul liveth, my Lord, I am the woman that stood before thee or by thee here praying unto the Lord.

For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him. Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord.

And he worshipped there. Now she prays. And she's not bereaved.

She is not sorrowing. She is not grieved. There's no trace of tear.

How can she give this child into this kind of poor social structure to be cared for by a few women that hang around the temple there and be cared for by this aged priest? How can she do this? By the rich experience she must have with God. To trust Him. And she lifts up her heart to the Lord.

And rather interestingly enough, our authorized version just keeps using the term Lord or God. And yet there is a varying use of the titles of the great God and creator of the universe that she kind of weaves into her thinking and expression. Can you put yourself in that kind of a position? Sacrificing and giving up this child and she begins now to speak about the nature of God in her prayer.

And Hannah prayed and said, My heart rejoices in Jehovah. The eternal, everlasting, covenant-keeping God who revealed Himself to Moses back at the bush and said, I am! And He is ever that way. He is always the promising, covenant-keeping, ever perpetuating, consistent Jehovah God, and I exalt in Him.

It's in the Hebrew short tense, which means there is a period in her life where she has made a decision and she's going on with this experience. I am rejoicing in Jehovah. My horn, every expression of my strength is exulting in Jehovah.

How can she use such language? language. Many of us would gain a lot of sympathy with a handkerchief, with tears, with introverted sullen, solemn walk, and here is a woman that bursts into poetical anthem of praise to God revealing various aspects of His great nature. My mouth is enlarged over my enemies because I rejoice in thy salvation.

What a remarkable woman is Hannah. What a grasp of God. How she has truly grappled with problems and difficulties and pressures beyond our experience, at least my experience, in her life up to this juncture, and yet she is just absorbed and preoccupied with the Lord.

And in her preoccupation, she says in verse 2, His holiness is an important feature for her life. There is none holy as Jehovah. He is pure and uncorrupt.

His representatives on earth, I won't say anything about them, but He is pure. Do you see how she is merged out of her problems and absorbed with God, and speaking this beautiful Hebrew poem, almost like a song, she is praying and speaking to God, and she said, Oh, the holiness of Jehovah. He is so pure and so right, so untainted, so perfect, He deserves my praise.

There is none besides Thee, the absoluteness of Jehovah God. There are many gods being worshipped in and around the land. There are many amongst gods, people that are preoccupied with the gods.

And in these times, these difficult times in which they are experiencing, they have had the last, or are getting near the end of the judges, and there is much to be seen, to be needed in the ministry of Samson, and there are many flaws amongst the people. They are being overridden by the pagans, and they are turning to their gods, and worshipping their gods, and serving their gods, and she says, but there is none but Thee. The integrity of her heart, because she turned the pressures of home, and the problems of society into prayer.

Genuine prayer. Communion prayer. Exercise of soul.

Embracing God Himself. Now, you can close your eyes, and I can speak, but I don't know if I have that kind of genuine, deep, inner commitment that buoys me through a traumatic experience like this, and would cause me to worship and praise Him. Wonderful lesson.

Piety and godliness is not the norm of society. She is the exception. She stands out in the pages of scripture as a unique soul in this era in the nation's history.

It's been well called by some expositors, the dark ages of Israel. And here is a little gleam. There is none beside Thee.

Neither is there any rock like our Elohim. Elohim is the Hebrew word, and the connotation is absolute deity. Deity in its absolute form.

The gods that they have around, there is none to be compared to Him. Thou art our rock. I have found security and stability and strength in this blessed one.

Isaiah chapter 40 was read to us. Do we not have any understanding? This morning at the Lord's Supper, we had our minds directed to the One that could minister to us His greatness in the grasp of His eternal character. He sits on the very peripheral of eternity, and the earth is but His footstool.

And she says, My Elohim, my God, I have made Him my God. I know Him to be holy and pure and strength giving. But she doesn't stop there.

She goes further. There is none holy as Jehovah. There is none holy as Jehovah.

There is none beside Thee. There is no rock like our Elohim. Talk no more so exceeding proudly.

Let not arrogancy come out of your mouth. O Lord, when I am before You, I am humbled. For Jehovah is an L of knowledge.

L is the singular of Elohim, and it means the personal deity. Not some little wooden thing or some stone thing that you have covered away in a closet that you bring out to please the pagans. But our great L, my personal God, is a God of knowledge, and by Him actions are weighed.

This is exactly what is said by our Lord Jesus. You see, you and I can only make assessments by the things that we see and the things that we hear. But when our blessed Lord comes and establishes His kingdom, something is very uniquely said about Him.

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, in Isaiah 11, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge and reprove. What does that mean? That means that He has so much knowledge, He doesn't go on the basis of what He sees and what He hears, the way puny judge in this world does, and the way we make evaluations.

He goes on the basis of His deep, essential deity, His knowledge of everything. What a God is our God. And Hannah has long been lifted out of the dreary burdens of tent life with Elkanah, into communion with God.

And although she never steps out of harmony in her role and posture with her husband, yet she is the one that soars in spirit and writes for us, or says for us, and allows to be recorded a profound expression of what prayer in conversation with God, exercise of soul, can do for us. It's not a matter of wielding influence on the mission field, here, and it's not a matter of gaining for yourself, here. What it is is an appropriation of the Lord Himself, a deeper understanding.

Now she moves from God's justice and His dealing with humanity into verse 4 to 8. She now begins to talk about His providential government. The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they stumble, and they are girded with strength. They that were full have hired themselves out for bread.

God is ruling in all the circumstances of life. They that were hungry cease, so that the barren hath borne seven, and she that hath many children is waxed feeble. The military, the hunger, the mothers, the dead, the living, all are under the providential care of God.

She sees that God is overruled, and Panina has borne the children, but now God has given to me. There was a purpose in it, I have accepted it from God, His wisdom and His greatness. Do you see the worship, the adulation, the praise that comes from her soul, her deep enjoyment of her God? Do we pray this way? Not at public meetings for others to hear, but in your own soul, in the musings of your heart.

Do we have these kind of themes occupying our soul and mind, because we have come to grips with reality, that we are speaking to Elohim, our God, who knows everything, who has all powerful, controls everything that's going on in the world around us. Jehovah killeth and maketh alive. He bringeth down to the grave, the unseen world, and bringeth up.

Jehovah maketh poor and maketh rich. He bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, to make them inherit the throne of glory, for the pillars of the earth are Jehovah's, and He hath set the world upon them.

Now I have often wondered why the first song that's recorded in Revelation is a worship of God the Creator. I always thought that the first thing that I would do would be worshipping the Lord because He was my Redeemer, and God has began to give me a little bit of an insight, at least to accommodate my thinking, or maybe to answer my own questions. But I need to go very back to the origin of things and see that He is the Creator, and He has established the invisible pillars upon which the habitable earth, for that's the word here, not just the cosmos, not just the world, but the habitable earth where man is going to live, telek, this habitable earth rests upon the pillars of God, and everything that happens in this world are under His control.

Do you mean He's even interested in Elkanah, and Paninah, and Hannah? Yes, indeed, says Hannah. I understand that. And He raises up the humble and the poor, and He establishes all things.

And it's not just kings, and neither is it merely just the rich, but His influence and touch is upon the poor, and His grasp and understanding of all things, His great providential government. And how sweet and lovely that she looks back upon her circumstances and is able to muse and in verse 9 say, His gracious treatment for all the saints. He will keep the feet of His godly ones.

He will preserve the feet of the saints. I wonder if she has in mind how the Lord helped her to walk discreetly in that home, how the Lord had kept her from unwise travel and attitudes and manners. He will keep the feet of His saints.

The psalmist takes the same expression up in Psalm 25. He says He'll keep our feet from the net. The snare of the net is there.

The tempter is here in this world, like a roaring lion, or like the wiles of the evil one. But if our eye is upon the Lord, He will keep our feet from falling into the net. I wonder if this is possibly the thought of what she is expressing.

His wonderful, gracious care, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness, for by strength shall no man prevail. There was no one in all of Israel more mindful of her own weakness, her own frailty, as a wife, as a woman, as a mother, and now she says because of this He is blessed and cared for me. Do we pray this way? Are any of these attitudes surfacing in our soul? We may not be able to say it so eloquently.

We may not be able to just put it into those phrases, but are they there in our heart? His nature, His grace, His government, and lastly, His anointed. God opens up the mind of this woman, and she looks down through the corridors of time prior to any that have a grasp of a coming reigning king. That's not the language in the talk of the day.

That's not in the conversation. That's not in the themes at all. In fact, Samuel, her son, later seeks and fights to resist it.

But Hannah knew a king was coming, and she says in verse 10, the adversaries of Jehovah shall be broken to pieces. Out of heaven shall He thunder upon them. The Lord Jehovah shall judge the ends of the earth.

He shall give strength unto His king and exalt the horn of His anointed. And here we are introduced in her little homey dedication prayer at the temple, after the giving of her son, the nature of God, His providence of dealings in government, His gracious care for all of the saints, and then lastly, the great coming conquering king, and her mind is occupied with him. There's no longer a link with humanity and God once the king comes.

This priesthood will be done, and then there shall be great strength and blessing, and our strength shall be unto His king and exalt the horn of His anointed. A remarkable prayer, a remarkable woman, and deep profound exercises of soul. Now, beloved of God, do we pray this way? Are we learning about the Lord? Are our hearts being sprinkled with the gentle dew of God's blessing and grace that we begin to produce within our own spirits sweet fruits of worship and praise and adoration? Hannah, shall we pray? Our God and our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus we come to Thee and pray that Thou would speak to our hearts through Thy word, and by the ministry of Thy Holy Spirit we ask that we might indeed be good

ground hearers.

We beseech Thee, our loving Father, that Thou wouldst touch our lives, and through the trials and pressures and difficulties that we experience, we ask Thee, our God, to give us strength, to help us lean upon Thyself. Help us to draw from Thee deeper insights as to Thy person, and that our hearts, even in times of hurt and sorrow and trial, we would be worshipers in spirit and in truth. In this we pray, in the name and for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

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