

# Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving

*"My heart will rejoice in the Lord..."*

– I Sam 2:1

# Background

- At the very end of the period of the judges:
- **I Sam 1:2,5** – Hannah was the most beloved wife of Elkanah, a Levite living in Ephraim (cf. I Chron 6)
- **I Sam 1:6-7** – Hannah was tormented by both her infertility and the other wife, Peninah
- **I Sam 1:10-11,15-16** – Hannah goes to the tabernacle to pray, and makes a vow to the Lord
- **I Sam 1:19-20,26-28** – Samuel is born and dedicated to serve the priesthood in Jerusalem

# What An Impact This Prayerful Woman Had!

- Israel has been through 400 years of rebellion and captivity.
- The nation is surrounded by enemies, especially the mighty Philistines to the East.
- There is no unity among the tribes (they almost wiped out Benjamin in Judges 20).
- Worship and the priesthood have become corrupted and despicable to God.

“It was at this point that a ray of hope appeared through the ominous black clouds of disaster. God placed His hand on a young lady who was without children and heartbroken. It was the faith and the prayers of this inconspicuous figure that brought about a turning point ...”

– **Israel from Conquest to Exile**

John J. Davis & John C. Whitcomb

# Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving

I Sam 2:1-10

Note the transforming power of prayer:

- I Sam 1:10 "...in bitterness of soul...wept in anguish"
  - **I Sam 2:1** "My heart rejoices in the Lord..."
- I Sam. 1:15 "...a woman sorrowful in spirit"  
(tormented by Peninnah)
  - **I Sam 2:1** "I smile at my enemies..."
- I Sam. 1:16 "...out of the abundance of my complaint and grief..."
  - **I Sam 2:1** "...I rejoice in Your salvation."

# There Is A Time To Simply Be Thankful

- Praise and prayer are sometimes offered out of the depths of grief and despair (cf. Ps 3,6,35,51,etc.) – **but this is not always so!**
- How do the righteous respond to answered prayers?
- See Psalm 116 – **The righteous respond with a concrete memorial of praise!**
- “*Thanksgiving*” is not found in Hannah’s prayer: but thankfulness is there on every line!
- Hannah did not ask God for anything: it was simply a time to be profoundly thankful!

# Thanksgiving Is Offered With The Confidence That Comes From God

- **vs. 1** – *“I smile at my enemies because I rejoice in Your salvation...”*
- **NOT** a happiness/confidence that depends on outward circumstance!
- Hannah received her prayer; often we do not!
- This confidence comes from salvation in a loving, merciful, wise and powerful God!
- **There are always reasons to smile and be thankful in the Lord!**

# Thanksgiving Is Offered In Humility of Spirit

- **vs. 2** – No one approaches God as an equal
- **vs. 3** – Wisdom knows not to speak in arrogance or pride (see **Prov 8:12-13**)
  - We did not earn these blessings or gain them with our own strength (cf. Jam 1:17)
  - We may be good, even best, at some things...but God sees everything, even our sins, secret faults
  - “...by Him actions are weighed” – even our intentions: **we are never misunderstood by Him!**

# Thanksgiving Is Offered In Humility of Spirit

- **vs. 4-8** – God exalts the humble but humiliates the proud. Examples:
  - Israel defeated in Num 14:39-45 (cf. Deut 32:4)
  - Israel defeats the Midianites with only 300 men (Judges 7)
  - Hannah casts herself totally on God and is lifted up
  - Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey, washes the disciples feet, is crucified...and is resurrected as King of kings!
  - See Jam 4:6, I Pet 5:5

# Praise God for His Power and Providence!

- The Lord holds the whole world in the palm of his hand!
- From His place in the heavens, He watches and guides each one of your steps! (See Ps 33:13-15; Prov 5:21; Ps 40:2; etc.)
- Today, Christians are the Lord's saints! See **II Cor 6:16-18** (w. I Cor 1:2; II Cor 2:1; etc.).
- But those who reject God for iniquity will dwell in darkness (cf. Ps 34:15-16).