

Hannah's song

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[0 : 00] She rejoices in who God is, the God who has provided her with a child. And she says, in the Lord my horn is lifted high.

! What on earth does Hannah mean by horn? Well, to help us, have a look at these pictures of these animals, a cow, a deer, a rhino, a goat.

I wonder, can anyone, maybe younger people, spot what do each of these animals have in common? Hopefully you can see them. Oh, who haven't we heard from Samuel?

They do all have horns. Good spots. These four animals have horns. And a horn is a kind of sign of strength.

Imagine the power you can do with a horn on your head. Imagine the fights you can win. The things you can knock down. A horn is a sign of strength.

[1 : 11] Strength. And so when Hannah, in verse 1, prays and says, In the Lord my horn is lifted up. She's not talking about a horn which is coming out of her head.

She'd be a pretty weird human being if she had a horn coming out of her head. No, she's talking about her strength. Strength that the Lord gives her.

See, in her situation in chapter 1, she was feeling far from strong. She was feeling very weak, very flat.

But she prayed and she saw that God was a God who could answer her prayer. She probably found it very hard to get out of bed in the morning.

As she longed for a child as she wept. But now she could get out of bed in the morning because God had changed her situation.

[2 : 11] Because God was working in Hannah. And so her strength, she knows, comes from God.

And so she can continue and say, My mouth boasts over my enemies for I delight in your deliverance. No longer can Penina say to her, Look, I've got children you haven't.

God has brought her deliverance, salvation, an answer to prayer. A wonderful answer to Hannah's prayer. And so she rejoices in him.

And as we get to verse 2, We see what she has seen to be true about God. Verse 2 says, There is no one holy like the Lord.

There is no one besides you. There is no rock like our God. She sees that God is unlike anybody.

[3 : 19] God is in a complete league of his own. Nobody can rival him. Nobody is like him. No one can match him. Last night, I wonder if anybody watched Eurovision.

There's a few hands up. Some people did. I was listening to it as I was driving in my car. I'm not usually into Eurovision. But this year, because it was in Liverpool, in our own country, I thought I better pay some attention to it.

And there were some really good acts. There were some really good singers. There were some that I didn't particularly like. But there were really good acts. And they were all able to compete together in a competition.

And this year, the winner of that competition was... Anyone know? Sweden. Sweden won. And they won by 57 points.

But last year, Ukraine won. And next year, some other country might win instead of Sweden.

Sweden. They can all compete together in a competition.

[4 : 26] And a winner will come out every year. And different countries will win every year. But you know what? God is very unlike contestants on Eurovision.

He can't compete against anybody. Because he is so much bigger and more amazing than anyone else. There is no one holy like him. No one pure like him.

says to Matilda, I'm smart, you're dumb. I'm big, you're little. I'm right, you're wrong. And there's nothing you can do about it.

[10:59] But as the story goes on, Miss Trunchbull is proved wrong. Matilda and her friends managed to get rid of her, being the head teacher of her school, drove her out of the school.

I think Miss Trunchbull is a picture of a self-confident, proud, arrogant person. And this verse, verse 3, tells us that God is a God who knows about such people. By him, deeds are weighed. And Hannah knows this to be true in her situation as Peninnah would say proud and arrogant words to her. Say, look at me, I have these children and you don't.

But as Hannah sees God working in her life, she sees a God who knows. By him, deeds are weighed.

And we'll see later on that God is a God who judges. Who will bring down those who think they are full of self-confidence? Because really, their proud and arrogance is like lies before God.

They need to come and humbly bow down before him and see, make him king and ruler of their lives.

[12:36] Don't have this self-confidence. It cannot stand before God. Secondly, second thing that Hannah sees is that God gives strength to the weak.

So you have a look at verse 4, which says, The bows of the warriors are broken, but those who stumbled are armed with strength. There's a really good illustration in 1 Samuel of this verse.

We'll see it later on. It's a story we all know, I'm sure, to one degree or another. It's a story of the giant Goliath and the boy David.

Goliath was a mighty Philistine warrior who kind of stood against God's people, God's people Israel. And they didn't know what to do with this guy. Who's going to go and defeat him? And people kind of hid away, didn't know what to do. And so little David comes along with his sandwiches for his older brothers.

[13:46] And he says, I could try and fight Goliath. I look after sheep and I deal with lions and bears and other animals which come and attack them.

Oh, I'll deal with Goliath. And so Saul gives David his armor, but David can't really wear his armor. He's not used to that. It's heavy stuff.

And so instead he selects five smooth stones. He has a sling. A stone against a giant. That's not really going to work, is it?

But David knew that the battle belongs to the Lord. And David took aim at the giant. And wow, the giant falls. The bows of the warriors are broken.

For those who stumble, those who are weak, they are armed with strength. God gave strength to David to defeat that giant, Goliath.

[14:54] In God's kingdom, in God's ways of doing things in this world, He gives strength to the weak and the mighty they fall. Turns the world upside down.

Next, he fills the empty. Verse 5, those who are full hire themselves out for food. But those who are hungry are hungry no more. She who was barren has born seven children.

But she who has had many sons pines away. Hannah was barren. Barren means empty. Can't have children.

Can't have children grow inside. It's a sign of emptiness. But God filled her emptiness with a child who grew inside her. And she gave birth to a son.

And Hannah is so astonished that in her prayer, she says, She who is barren has born seven children. Feels a bit of an overreaction. She's only had one child so far. As we'll go on to see, she has other children in this chapter.

[16:05] I only count six. Might be wrong. But I think seven, it's a sign in the Bible of completeness. Hannah was provided in full by God.

She was barren and now she could have children. She also speaks of people being empty in terms of hunger. I'm sure some of us know what that feels like right now.

Breakfast feels a long time ago. We're looking forward to a nice church lunch, but Daniel keeps talking. And I'm hungry and I want food. Don't worry, it will come.

And we will be full. But Hannah is speaking more deeply than that, I think. Those who hunger, who feel like life is just leaving them empty.

God can fill. God can satisfy us. Our every longing can be satisfied in him. Jesus says, doesn't he, bless it, bless to those who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

[17 : 18] They will be filled. He's a God of great reversals. The hungry will be fed and those who were full will hire themselves out for food.

He's a God of great reversals. He turns this world upside down. The next thing we see that he raises the dead to life.

Raises the dead to life. Verse 6, the Lord brings death and makes alive. He brings down to the grave and raises up. Hannah's womb was dead and lifeless, but God brought life there.

This world was created out of nothing. Out of nothing, God brought life. God brought this world to be. He did that in Jesus who died on the cross and was buried in a tomb.

But he didn't stay dead. He rose again. And he does that for all who come to know him.

[18 : 29] The Bible explains to us that we are all dead in our sins, but God makes us alive in Christ. He raises the dead.

He brings death and makes alive. He brings down to the grave and raises up. He turns this world upside down. And the final thing Hannah shows us is that he raises the poor and needy to sit on thrones.

Verse 7, the Lord sends poverty and wealth. He humbles and he exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes and makes them inherit a throne of honor.

He humbles the lowest, the lowest, the humblest, the poor, the needy. They're raised up and they can sit on thrones in God's kingdom.

That's the way God works. It was amazing last week, hopefully we haven't forgotten the coronation too quickly, seeing King Charles kneeling down in just a very simple white clothing to be anointed with oil.

[19 : 55] And at that moment screens were put around him. It was a very private moment but he knelt down. It was recognizing that he was a servant, that he is before God.

He is just a human being, just a human king who will reign for a very short time really. Human. Nothing compared to God. God who raises the poor and needy to sit on thrones. It's not just those who look powerful and rich in this world that reign.

No, because as we recognize that we are sinful, as we recognize that God, the great king, can give us life, he can raise us up to seat us in the heavenly realms with Christ.

We'll see that through 1 Samuel. We'll see that Saul becomes a king. He's a very tall, head above the rest, a very handsome man.

[21 : 11] He looks like a king. But when he dies, David says, how the mighty have fallen. God brought low the one who thought he was strong.

And in 1 Samuel we'll see someone else who's anointed as king. Samuel himself will go and anoint him. He goes to Jesse and his sons.

He looks at the first one and thinks, what a tall, strapping lad. No, it's not him who's going to be king. And he works his way through these sons who all look the part. But no, it's that shepherd boy over there in the field tending sheep.

That's the one God wanted as king. He lifted the humble, the weak to sit on a throne. Hannah sees God working in that way in this world.

world. And he showed that to us in Jesus who came as a humble, weak little baby. Who died on a cross. Who looked very weak and empty on that cross.

[22 : 22] And yet in that weakness, apparently so, apparent weakness, actually, it was God's way to save the world.

hearts. He's now risen again. He triumphed over death and he now sits on the throne of God. And as I've said, if we're Christians this morning, we are humble and weak and sinful.

Ephesians 2 verse 6 tells us God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms, in Christ Jesus.

He raises the poor and needy from the dust, from the ash heap. He makes them inherit a throne of honour. That's our great God who works.

And we can trust that he is working in this way, in this world, even though it may not seem obvious to us. Because, as verse 8 continues to say, for the foundations of the earth are the Lord's.

[23 : 35] On them he has set the world. This world is held in God's hands.

He knows how it works. He keeps it going. And so if this world belongs to God, well then of course he can take down the mighty and raise up the weak.

Of course he can make the hungry full. Of course he can bring life to those who are dead. If this world belongs to God, of course he can raise up the humble, the poor and needy to sit on thrones. Of course he can. God's. This world belongs to him. And we're going to sing before we look at the rest of this prayer of Hannah's.

We're going to sing those things that Hannah says he can do in his prayer. But I don't know about you but as I look on this world as I think about little me and little you in Brighton 2023 I do see that the powerful the rich the people who are not humble seem to be winning and those who are humble and weak seem to stay that way.

[25 : 12] But as we look through Hannah's prayer we're reminded that who is on the victory side. Verse 9 Hannah says he will guard the feet of his faithful servants or his saints as some of our Bibles say.

They are people who follow God. People like me and like many of us in this room who have recognized that we sin and we need God to forgive us.

We need to live with him as our king. It tells us, Hannah tells us that he will guard our feet.

He will keep us as we walk through this world, this world where it seems like the mighty, the big, the strong, the most powerful are winning.

and the wicked, well, it tells us as Hannah continues her prayer, the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.

[26 : 28] It is not by strength that one prevails. Those who oppose the Lord will be broken. Those who think they are mighty, those who think they are strong, those who think they stand before God because of all that they have and all that they do.

They cannot. It is not by our own strength that one prevails. It is by the strength that the Lord gives to us, gave to Hannah, gives to us.

Life isn't a competition to see who can get the best house, the best cards, the most football cards, the most Lego. life is about living humbly with God as our saviour and our king.

Hannah prays to a great God who reigns. And he's going to show that he is this great God who reigns.

verse 10. The most high will thunder from heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth.

Hannah looks forward in her prayer to a time when God will bring this world to an end where those who are mighty, those who think they are mighty and strong, who don't think they need God, will indeed fall, as God judges the ends of the earth.

[28 : 10] But those who are his will be kept safe in him. And then Hannah concludes her prayer by saying he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointings.

Which is all very well Hannah praying that, but right now where Hannah is, where Hannah is praying, there is no king. There were certainly indications that there might be a king who will be among God's people, but at the moment there is none.

How can Hannah pray he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed? Well, Hannah looks forward by faith and with the knowledge that God only has and chooses to give Hannah here really to the time when kings would come.

And she probably didn't really know that her little boy that she gave birth to, that she longed for, would go and anoint some kings. There's Saul, there's David.

And both kings were used by God in different ways. Both kings were given strength from the Lord, just like Hannah was given strength from the Lord.

[29 : 44] But both kings failed in different ways. Both kings died. Who do we look to?

as king. Where is the king that Hannah talks about? The Bible shows us another king, doesn't it? A king born to a girl who also couldn't have a baby. A girl who was not married. Who suddenly saw an angel appear before her.

Who told her that she would have a child. And you were to call him the name Jesus. A king who would be born in the royal kingly line of David.

That king that Samuel will anoint. A king who does even mightier things. in this king.

[30 : 57] In this king we find our hope and our help. In this king we are seated with him in heaven. In this king we have life if we trust in him as our savior.

See, this world it may have many situations and people who will seek to pull us apart in different directions. Life may seem to prod us and poke us.

We may feel flat like Hannah felt flat. But as Hannah helps to remind us this morning we have a God who is in control.

A God who reigns over all things. A God who holds this world in his hand. A God who is like this rock who is firm, unmovable, unchangeable, dependable, faithful.

It is not Rishi Sunak's world. It is not King Charles' world. It is not Joe Biden's world. This world belongs to God. And he reigns.

[32 : 16] And it is him that Hannah trusts. It is him that Hannah rejoices in. And it's him that we can trust and rejoice in together too.

And we're going to express our trust in God as we sing our final song.