

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study

### “MIRACULOUS BIRTHS: SAMUEL”

For individual study or group discussion

We switch our attention this week to 1 Samuel 1:1-20 as we continue our Advent series: **Miraculous Births**. It is interesting to note that the books of 1 and 2 Samuel chronicle the history of the Israelite kings, but 1 Samuel begins with the story of a desperate woman who does not measure up to the cultural ideal of her time. Hannah is barren and desperately wants a son. But later we see her longing transformed by the realization that only God can fulfill the deepest desires of the human heart.

#### **A heartbreak endured: the triad of tragedy, taunts, and tears (vv. 1-8)**

1 Samuel begins with a barren woman in a polygamous marriage with no real hope of improving her situation. Year after year, Hannah is taunted by her rival Peninnah because of her inability to conceive. Hannah is provoked to the point of tears. Even being the favored wife of Elkanah does not console her, so desperate is her longing for a child.

- Is there an area in your life where you feel desperate right now? Read Psalm 55:22 and Psalm 121. Discuss the promises found in those passages. Consider last week's sermon about the miraculous birth of Isaac. What did you learn about God's character?
- Does it seem strange to you that Peninnah was blessed with many children, despite her cruel character, whereas Hannah was barren? In the upside-down Kingdom of God, we often don't understand his ways. He uses the weak and not the strong, the poor and not the wealthy, the simple and not the wise as a means for his sovereign ends. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Why does God operate this way?

#### **A grief processed: pouring out a broken heart to God in worship (vv. 9-18)**

In verses 9-18, we see a transformation come over Hannah. Her desperate heart becomes satisfied. After she pours out her grief to God, she emerges joyful. In his sermon entitled “Hannah's Prayer,” pastor Tim Keller states that Hannah is determined to take her desperate longing to God, because she knows he alone can comfort her. And he does. After she pours out her heart to God, she “went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad” (v. 18). Hannah has peace *before* becoming pregnant.<sup>1</sup> Worship changes her. She realizes God is enough.

- When you are desperate, where do you tend to go first? What paths do you sometimes take instead of taking your heartbreak and desperation to the Lord?
- 17th century philosopher Blaise Pascal once stated, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man, which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made known through Jesus Christ.” Read Psalm 107:9 and Isaiah 55:1-3a. How does God fulfill your deepest longings?

#### **A child provided: The Lord Almighty sends a son. (vv. 19-20)**

In verses 19-20 we see God blessing Hannah with a son whom she named Samuel. His name means “I have asked for him from the LORD.” Samuel becomes the last judge and first prophet of Israel, who bears the responsibility of anointing David as king. Several Old Testament prophecies promise that the Messiah will descend from King David, thus tying Samuel's miraculous birth to that of the miraculous birth of the Savior to come!

- Read Hebrews 6:11-12. How is Hannah an example of those “who through faith and patience inherit the promises”?
- Take time this week to read the rest of Hannah's story in 1 Samuel 1:21-2:1-11.



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

DATE: December 10, 2023

SPEAKER: Frank/John Mark

SERIES: Advent 2023

PASSAGE: 1 Samuel 1:1-20

## Family Dinner Table

### Hannah's Prayer

*“My heart exults in the LORD;  
my horn is exalted in the LORD.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in your salvation.*

*“There is none holy like the LORD:  
for there is none besides you;  
there is no rock like our God.*

- 1 Samuel 2:1-10 records another prayer of Hannah's. It's her song of praise to God. Read through her prayer. Whom does Hannah not mention in the song? Why is that surprising and significant? What does it tell you about her transformed heart?
- Read Luke 6:20-26 and Matthew 5:3-12. How does Hannah's prayer relate to Jesus' teaching on the upside-down Kingdom of God?
- Hannah's prayer has royal overtones woven throughout (vv. 8, 10). Read Mary's *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55) and Zechariah's *Benedictus* (Luke 1:67-79). Discuss the parallels. How do the three songs point to the promise of a great reversal that will take place through Jesus Christ?
- Advent and singing go together! As a family, discuss your favorite Christmas carols. Find similar themes of God's great reversal in raising the lowly through Jesus' humble birth.

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Chattanooga Young Life & Young Life Urban, supported partner ministries

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Christ Church Leeds, supported missions partners

<sup>1</sup>Keller, Tim. *Hannah's Prayer*. July 1, 2020. Gospel in Life. <https://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/hannahs-prayer-1593667106/>