

1 Samuel 1:11 - 2:11

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[0 : 00] So for those of you who were here last week, we came down as far as verse 11 of 1 Samuel, which was approximately half of what I had intended to do, which has put us in good stead for today, because it means we'll probably finish. And by finish, I mean we'll come down as far as just after the end of Hannah's prayer. So hopefully you've had a chance to turn there.

Apparently I have not, so give me a moment, and then we'll have a word of prayer, I think, just to get us started. Lord God, Heavenly Father, thank you for your word this morning.

Thank you, Lord, that you have by your power and might and wisdom preserved for us the word of God, which of itself it says that is living and active, sharper than any double-edged sword, dividing apart even the soul and spirit. Lord, as we turn our attention to this passage today, I pray that that would be proven true, that your word would work on our hearts, that where we are wrong, it would correct us. Where we are weak, it would encourage and strengthen us. Where we have questions, it will provide answers. Lord, may your word be very bred for us today. We ask in Jesus' name, for your glory's sake. Amen.

Amen. And as I said last week, the book of Samuel is sort of, it marks a bit of a transitional period. I'm not sure if transitional is a word, but it is now. Between the time of the judges and the time of the kings. Samuel was the last of the judges and he is the first of this new line called the prophets. And actually what we'll discover as we read is that they weren't even called prophets. There were these men of God, but they were called seers. And Samuel was the first that was called a prophet. And so far, we've been introduced to a gentleman by the name of Elkanah, or Elkanah, depending on your pronunciation. And his two wives, whose names were Hannah and Peninnah.

And Hannah is enduring continual misery due to her being childless, while Peninnah has children. And what we've seen is that Elkanah is just not able to really minister to his wife, Hannah, even though he loves her. And he does love her. He doesn't know how to help her with this very, very difficult challenge. And we have to face the fact, because twice our text said that the Lord has closed her womb. And I don't know, I doubt whether Hannah knew this was a divine act.

[2 : 58] And I, but certainly we are revealed, it's revealed to us, the reader, this is the work that the Lord has done. He has prevented Hannah from conceiving. Why? Well, because he wants, ultimately, for Hannah to bring forth this awesome man of God, Samuel. And this is an essential part of preparing her for that. Hannah comes to this place of total surrender. Her desire is surrendered to God 100%. And then she is ready to be the mother of Samuel. So we came down as far as verse 11, which says this, and she, Hannah, made a vow and said, Lord of armies, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your bondservant and remember me, and not forget your bondservant, but will give your bondservant a son, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and a razor shall never come on his head. And we left off sort of starting to look at this verse last week. One thing I hadn't quite got to say is that this is a vow. It is a vow that she's making. She is vowing, if you do this, then I vow to do that. And Moses, the law of Moses has some specific things to say about vows. Numbers 30,

Numbers chapter 30 is the key text. I think the main point is that this is a solemn decision. It is not something to take lightly. And you'll recall Jesus had some sharp words for the Pharisees who did take it very lightly in his day. I swear upon the gold of the temple or whatever it is. This is a very, very solemn thing. But the other key thing to note in Numbers 30 is that for a married woman to make a vow, her husband has the authority to annul it, to redeem her out of it, or to nullify it. And we don't see in our text explicitly, well, when Elkanah first hears of this vow, but we do know that he doesn't annul it. And therefore he does confirm it and it becomes a vow that they have made together.

Okay, verse 12 then, reading on. Verse 12, chapter 1 of 1 Samuel. Now it came about, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli was watching her mouth. As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, only her lips were quivering, but her voice was not heard.

So Eli thought that she was drunk. Then Eli said to her, how long will you behave like a drunk? Get rid of your wine. But Hannah answered and said, no, my Lord. I am a woman despairing in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your bondservant a useless woman, but I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation. Then Eli answered and said, go in peace. And may the God of Israel grant your request that you have asked of him. She said, let your bondservant find favour in your sight. And so the woman went away, went on her way and ate and her face was no longer sad. So what we learn now is that Hannah's prayer that she's been offering there, you remember the scene, she's in the tabernacle.

[6 : 26] What's been described as the temple actually, or the house of God in our text. She is there. Eli is the presiding high priest. And he sat on his seat. Remember, and I told you last week that that's the seat of honour, often the word translated throne. And we see him observing the scene.

And what we've learnt now is that Hannah's prayer that she's been offering there hasn't been spoken out loud. She's only spoken in her heart. And yet at the same time, the text says literally that she's been praying to the face of Yahweh, to the face of the Lord. Was she speaking aloud? No. Speaking to the face of God, the face of the Lord, but only in her heart. And it got me to thinking, you know, because sometimes people will ask or will think, how, what's the right way to pray? How should I pray? What's the best way?

What makes a prayer powerful and effective? What's the most spiritual way to pray? And, you know, some people will pray, hands folded, eyes closed. Some people will pray, eyes open, and, you know, gesturing as if the Lord is right there in the room, which I suppose he is. And then you've got examples from scripture, like John 17. You've got Jesus, the high priesthood prayer. And what we read is that he lifted his eyes to heaven. He didn't close his eyes. He didn't sort of collapse in. He lifted his eyes to heaven. And he prayed. And he addresses the Father. And then other examples, we've got Solomon's prayer of dedication. And what he did is he raised his hands like that. And he raised his eyes and he raised his voice. And that was how he prayed. And then we've got Hannah here in a place of silence, not even opening her mouth to speak. And, you know, and I've heard people say, oh, well, this is how we should pray. This is how it should. You should pray eyes open. If you close your eyes, that's wrong.

You know, you're just kind of collapsing down. And I'm like, come on. Because I think what this text does for us is it shows us that this is absolutely valid. And she is heard. It's absolutely valid to pray in silence. When Jesus was asked by his disciples, teach us to pray in Matthew chapter 6, the net of it is, don't do it for other people. Don't pray for show. And don't use thoughtless repetition as if God can't hear you the first time. Which, you know, for me says, the minute anyone says, this is proper posture for prayer, they're wrong. Jesus would say they're wrong.

Because then you are performing, in effect. And prayer is for God. God is a person. There's no formula for how you should speak to God. He hears everything we say and even the things we say in our hearts. Now, that's not to say, obviously, we should have appropriate reverence. And we should, you know, consider in our heart whom it is we're addressing. And the Lord's Prayer helps us to do that. But let nobody think, ah, we didn't do it right. There's a better way to do it, Hannah. You should have opened your mouth.

[9 : 54] Absolutely valid to have had to pray in a heart like this. So, Eli's erroneous judgment. As I said, Eli is sat upon his pompous seat of honour.

Paul asked me about that last week. How do you know? How do you know? So I looked it up in twat. You know, you'd appreciate that. And as of 130, sorry, that is a theological word book of the Old Testament. Sorry, just to clarify what I mean by that. T-W-O-T. It's a great Hebrew concordance. Really, really good. 136 usage, uses of that Hebrew word, which, remember, it says it was kisei. And all but seven of them mean throne. All but seven of 136. And in every case, unless we want to exclude this one, it means seat of honour, if it's not throne.

So, it's a seat of honour. And there he sits on his high priestly throne, which he shouldn't have in a temple anyway. Judging Hannah in his heart. Great. Another drunken peasant who can't even speak. And she's sullyng my temple with her presence. And I thought, surely there's an obvious

discernible difference between somebody who is drunk and somebody who is in prayer. And I really can't explain. I'm at a loss to know how Eli could have been so off on this. The only thing I can think is that we will see in a couple of years, well, probably four years, that Eli's actually going blind. He's losing his sight. Sorry, not four years our time. Four years of narrative time.

Yeah, I'd have to clarify that in this church. So, it could be that Eli is struggling to see. But either way, his, well, Proverbs 18, 13. One, he gives an answer before he hears. It is foolishness and shame to him. This does reflect very, very poorly on Eli. That he's rushing to judgment. Judging according to appearance. And, you know, and obviously this is a theme for the book, right? Saul looks awesome. Head and shoulders above everyone else. He should be king, right? And then Samuel himself will go to Jesse and look at his sons. Man, check these guys out. And God's like, I want the smallest one. I want the smallest one. I want the one who's with the sheep. Because God looks on the heart. So, we'll get to that in about four years. No, I'm kidding. So, one who gives an answer before he hears. It is foolishness and shame to him. Proverbs 18, 13. You know, when we make assessments and decisions based just on what we see, like Eli does, we go astray.

Guaranteed. And I do also think that this reflects quite poorly on the nation of Israel on the whole. Because the priest thinks it's more probable that a drunk will show up at the temple than someone in prayer. Wow.

But it is the time of the judges. So, I think this is just another indication of the spiritual health of the nation. So, how does this resolve then? We've had Hannah praying. We've had Eli judging. And Eli speaks up. And we see Hannah's response there. No, my lord. I'm a woman despairing in spirit.

[13:46] She calls him Adonai. Adonai, my lord, is literally what that would mean. But it's equivalent to just a respectful, no sir. No, no sir. No, my lord. No. So, it reads to me as a very well-balanced, humble, and respectful, and yet forcible response. You're the high priest. I get that. You're a man.

I get that. But you're wrong. No, sir. And yet, she maintains an appropriate level of respect. I've spoken out of my great concern. Concern, worry, anxiety are all appropriate translations for that Hebrew term. And out of my provocation or grief.

Sir, I'm not drunk. I have brought to God my anxiety and my grief. And Eli blesses her, and she goes away, no longer sad. And I think to myself, well, what is it then that gave her peace? Was it the blessing of Eli? He said this, may the God of Israel grant your request.

And I'm not sure on this, so take this with a pinch of salt. But I think there's three reasons for us to think that this may have been prophetic. And they are these. Firstly, because he is the high priest. And that is an office through which God speaks and works. If you want to drop down a cross-reference, you would note down John 11, 47 to 53. That's John 11, 47 to 53. That's where, you remember the story of Caiaphas, the high priest, and he says it's expedient for one man to die for, you know, to, and he means, you know, it's better for this nation if we just get rid of the charlatan.

[15:47] But John points out, actually, this is prophecy that he didn't even mean to deliver because he was high priest. And God spoke the gospel through him, one man will die for the sins of the nation. So that's one reason why he is high priest, so it's reasonable to think that he could speak in a prophetic way, even though he is incompetent. The second reason is, well, Hannah seems to have interpreted it that way because she leaves no longer sad. She hasn't had a promise. Unless she has, unless she has interpreted this as a promise, that God will give what she's asked, and therefore she's no longer sad. And then the third reason is because when we get down to verse 23, we'll see Elkanah say, may the Lord confirm his word. Well, what word was given? What word of prophecy has been given, Elkanah? Well, this is the only thing to me that seems to potentially fit. If there has been a promise of a son, this is the only place that would seem to fit. So those are my three reasons. Don't lean too heavily on that, but that's what it seems to me. It seems to me that Eli, the high priest, has given this word. And you'll note, actually, Hannah didn't tell Eli what she prayed for.

She didn't say, oh, I prayed for a son. She just said, I've poured out my heart and soul. That's it. In fact, I don't think she even says that she's praying for something specifically.

No, my Lord, I'm a woman despairing in spirit. I've drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I've poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your bond servant a useless woman, for I have spoken until now out of my great concern and provocation. That's it. She didn't say, I'm praying for this thing. And Eli simply says, may the God of Israel grant your request. Wow.

Wow. So, Hannah's face is no longer sad. She has brought her petition to God, resolved and vowed that this desire that she has had for however long, this is no longer about me, God, it's for you. I give it to you. And in that giving, a sense of peace has come for her. Has anything changed? Nope. But she still has no son. And she still has a very obnoxious fellow wife. But she has a right perspective of herself as bond servant and the right perspective of God as Lord and Master. She's released it to him. God, if you give me a child, he's 100% yours.

[18:33] God, if you withhold a child, fine. I have you, Lord of armies, my King and my Lord and Master. I need nothing else. That's where Hannah has come.

Let's read on now, verse 19 and 20. Then they, so that would be Elkanah and Hannah and Peninnah, then they got up early in the morning and worshipped before the Lord and returned again to their house in Ramah.

And Elkanah had relations with Hannah, his wife, and the Lord remembered her. It came about in due time, after Hannah had conceived, that she gave birth to a son. And she named him Samuel, saying, because I have asked for him of the Lord.

So the day after Hannah's prayer, we see Hannah and Elkanah worshipping together. And that blessed me to see that. I think that speaks to a godly union between husband and wife.

I wonder if Elkanah noticed a change in Hannah's countenance. I wonder, we don't know, whether she shared with him anything. All we know is they were eating together and she got up without eating and went to the temple.

[19:51] And I'm sure she was like, you're right, love. But off she went and I, you know, how and when things happened and they came back together, I don't know. But we do see them worshipping together, which I do think speaks to union between them.

And as I said earlier, if she did share with him her vow, then he would have had opportunity then. And that was his only opportunity to annul it. If he thought it inappropriate, he does not. So they head home to Ramah. And Ramah is short for Ramathiam Zophim, as we saw in verse 1.

And I think I expressed at the time how glad I was that it's just shortened to Ramah, because it's a lot of syllables. And then we read that the Lord remembered her.

Ah, amazing. The Lord remembered her, which is actually exactly what she prayed and asked for in verse 11. Lord, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your bond servant and remember me.

[20:55] Remember me. Remember me has the connotation not of... Ah, yeah, Hannah, what was it she wanted again? Ah, yes.

It's not that. Remember me in the Old Testament is... We see it often as a marker of God intervening at the right time to save or to give or to do or act.

Often in a miraculous way. I think the first example was God remembered Noah in the ark. So it's an idiom of God acting on Hannah's behalf.

And then this name. Samuel. Shmuel is the Hebrew pronunciation. There's a little bit of debate as to what it means.

I think most likely we have Shema, which is here. He is. Listen. He is. And El, which is the name of God. So Shmael or Shmuel is best thought of as God hears or God has heard.

[21:58] There's other possible meanings, but that to me seems the most likely. God hears. That's his name. What a cool name. God hears. Psalm 116 verse 1 says, I love the Lord because he hears my voice and my pleas.

Awesome, awesome testimony. And again, what voice? Because the voice was spoken in silence. Spoken only in her heart did Hannah say these things. The voice of anguish and hardship.

God heard. God hears. Awesome. Verse 21. Then the man, Elkanah, went up with all his household to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow.

But Hannah did not go up. For she said to her husband, I will not go until the child is weaned. Then I will bring him so that he may appear before the Lord and stay there for life.

Elkanah, her husband, said to her, Do what seems best to you. Stay until you have weaned him.

Only may the Lord confirm his words. So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she weaned him.

[23:10] So Elkanah maintains his annual commitment to sacrifice. And Hannah there, you'll note that she is quite assertive. But I would say she is appropriately assertive in saying, I'm not going to go up.

Dear husband, When it's time, I will go up and I will complete my vow. You know, and I was thinking on how far this is away from the idea that, you know, wives should submit to their husbands and all things, and oh yes, of course we'll go up.

You know, Hannah was right to say, that's not the best way for us to do things as a family. When we have children, it does kind of interrupt our routines. Just a bit.

Oh man, I do remember someone saying to me that when they have their child, you know, this is a child coming into our lives, and you know, we're going to continue our routines, and they're not going to, they need to learn that it's not about them.

That probably lasted about five minutes. I was like, yeah, okay, good luck with that. Children interrupt our routines, and they had an annual routine of going to sacrifice.

[24 : 21] And she said, no, we need to wait until he is weaned, and he's ready. And Elcano, I think, is awesome there.

Do what seems best to you stay. You know, he confirms her word. He submits. He submits. I think that, and I would say that they are both in submission to God.

Elcano and Hannah both in agreement that they will give Samuel to the Lord forever. So it's only now that we see an explicit confirmation that Elcano is validating the vow of Hannah.

And again, as I pointed out earlier, he says, only may the Lord confirm his word, which, again, I see it as an acknowledgement that there is prophecy being fulfilled here. A child has been born.

God has granted what was asked for and confirmed by the high priest. And now Hannah must complete the vow at the appropriate time. When is that? Well, weaning in this period would typically be completed at the age of three or so.

[25 : 27] So he would have been breastfed until the age of three or thereabouts. And then it would have been time for him to go up. Verse 24. Now, when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with a three-year-old bull, one ephah of flour, and a jug of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, although the child was young.

And then they slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli. And she said, Pardon me, my Lord. As your soul lives, my Lord, I am the woman who stood here beside you, praying to the Lord.

For this boy I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my request, which I asked of him. So I have also dedicated him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is dedicated to the Lord.

And he worshipped the Lord there. Three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a jug of wine. What is that?

That is a unique offering. I can't find it anywhere else in the scriptures. You may know, and just for your notes if you want, Numbers 18 has that there is a redemption price of five shekels for the firstborn male, Samuel.

[26 : 41] And then Leviticus 12 gives the details for the Chathat offering, which is often translated as sin offering, but really it's not really that. It's more of a purification offering. A purification offering.

Leviticus 12, and that's the one that she would need to give, or they would need to give, rather, 40 days after his birth. But this is neither of those, right? This is three years later, because those would have been presented long ago.

As far as I can tell, this would be construed as a peace offering, or fellowship offering, a voluntary offering, a voluntary act of worshipping, and also, as an interesting point, that is the only one of the offerings that the offerer would partake of the meal.

So you could say it is a worshipful barbecue. Delicious. And obviously the best parts go to the Lord, the next best parts go to the priests, and then they all eat.

So anyway, so that is what I think that is, Hannah's offering. And Samuel then is dedicated. And notice, Hannah has to reintroduce herself to Eli.

[27 : 50] As I said, he's old, his eyesight's starting to fail, probably didn't recognise her. And again, by now, it would have been nearly four years, right? You know, the nine months, and then three years.

So, yeah, he's either forgotten, or can't see, or both. And again, if you look back, Eli hadn't even been informed what the prayer was about. She'd only told that she was praying out of real great concern.

The Lord gave me the boy I prayed for, and so now I'm dedicating him to the Lord. Dedicate, or possibly the word lend. Some Bibles have the word lend. What I found interesting, and therefore I'm going to tell you, is that word is actually Shaul, or Saul.

Yeah, so King Saul, his name means dedicated, or lend as well. Same word. And Eli has no words. He's got nothing to say in response to this.

What he does, he worshipped the Lord there. Awesome. That's a good move, Eli. Worship, just for us to have a good picture of what that means, the word literally means to bow down.

[29 : 05] And so we're talking about specifically a humbled, reverent, solemn posture of worship. Quite often we say worship, and really we mean praise.

But this is worship. Alright. Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving, chapter 2.

Then Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoices in the Lord, my horn is exalted in the Lord, my mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.

There is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides you, nor is there any rock like our God. Do not go on boasting so very proudly.

Do not let arrogance come out of your mouth, for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and with him actions are weighed. The bows of the mighty are broken to pieces.

[30 : 04] But those who have stumbled strap on strength. Those who are full hire themselves out for bread, but those who are hungry cease to be hungry. Even the infertile woman gives birth to seven, but she who has many children languishes.

The Lord puts to death and makes alive. He brings down to Sheol and brings up. The Lord makes poor and rich. He humbles, he also exalts.

He raises the poor from the dust. He lifts the needy from the garbage heap to seat them with nobles, and he gives them a seat of honour. There it is again.

As an inheritance, for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he set the word on them. He watches over the feet of his godly ones, but the wicked ones are silenced in darkness.

For not by might shall a person prevail. Those who contend with the Lord will be terrified. Against them he will thunder in the heavens. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth, and he will give strength to his king, and he will exalt the horn of his anointed.

[31 : 16] Wow. A beautiful, spontaneous prayer of worship and thanksgiving to God. Yeah, I don't know why our Bibles have decided to label it a song of thanksgiving.

I see no reason to think it was sung. I think we can, I think we can probably infer that unlike her former prayer in the heart, this one was out loud.

And it's just wonderful. And I'm really glad actually we've got a bit longer to explore it today.

Because there's tons here. And again, the key and the important thing is that what is said, because it's so rich in theology, and for Hannah to deliver this off the top of her head is a remarkable thing indeed.

And I wanted to pull out for you three aspects of theology that Hannah is teaching us in her prayer. Three things. I'm sure there's more, but these are the three that struck me as I read through it. The first one is this.

God is unique. God is unique. She says, verse 2, there is no one holy like the Lord. Indeed, there is no one besides you.

[32 : 31] There's no one holy like the Lord. And again, we sung it this morning, holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty. What do we mean by that? What do we mean when we say that God is holy? Because when we refer to things as holy, a holy nation, a holy place, a holy thing, what we mean is that this is a thing that's been distinctly separated for God.

It's his. Okay, but what do we mean if we say that God is holy then? And it is hard to define, I found, it's hard to define the word holy other than in reference to God.

And I think, as I said, I think the point is for us that God is just unique. There's no one like him.

There's no one beside him. He is matchless. He is separated from everything, separated and separate from everything he's created, everything else that exists.

And there's quite a few verses that speak to the application of that point. And I'm just going to, if you want to catch up because you missed them, then you can get the notes afterwards.

Psalms 50, 21, God is quoted as saying to the wicked, you thought I was just like you. Numbers 23, 19 says that God is not a man that he should lie.

[33 : 53] He's different. He's separate. 1 Samuel 15, 29 says that God is not a man that he should change his mind. In Job 9, 32, God says, sorry, Job says, God is not a man so that we can go to court together.

Can't do it. God being holy means that he is different, he is distinct, he is other, and we do indeed fall into error when we try to impute our characteristics to God.

Romans 11, 33, Paul says that God's judgments are unsearchable and his ways are unfathomable.

Job 37, verse 5, Elihu says that God is doing great things which we do not comprehend.

That's God. God is holy. He is different, he is distinct, he is other, and part of that means we should not expect to fully understand God's ways.

We shouldn't expect that. And as Psalm 99, verse 9 reminds us, the only appropriate response to the holiness of God is worship, which is exactly what we saw Eli doing.

[35 : 08] God is unique. The second one is that God is omniscient. It's a nice word, isn't it? What does that mean? The Lord is a God of knowledge, declares Hannah.

It means, omniscient means that he knows everything. Omni-science. Omni-knowledge. He knows all knowledge. He knows everything. And he weighs that knowledge. He weighs the knowledge of our actions.

God is a God of knowledge. Psalm 44, verse 21 says that God knows the secrets of our hearts. I wonder what you feel about that. Ecclesiastes 12, 14 says that God will bring every act into judgment.

Everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. Jeremiah 17, verse 10 says, I, the Lord, search the heart.

I test the mind to give to each person according to his ways. God is omniscient. Again, Hannah's barrenness carried with it a stigma.

[36 : 18] The assumption being that if she deserved children, she would have them. Penina must be worthy because she has kids. Hannah must be unworthy because she does not.

Can't be about Elkanah, right? But Hannah knows and she understands that she is known and she is understood. Hannah takes great comfort from the omniscience of God.

God knows my heart. I wonder how you feel about God knowing everything. Every thought and deed and motivation.

I know for some of us, well for many of us, the immediate sort of visceral reaction, that could be, oh really? everything, everything? He never takes his eyes off us?

No. But I want to suggest to you this morning that actually that should give us a really good sense of confidence because there is nothing that God can learn or find out about us that will cause him to reject us or to stop loving us.

[37 : 23] He already knows everything there is to know about us. God and so when we read about how on the cross of Christ every sin was laid, we don't have to think, oh but what about the secret on that I haven't confessed yet?

What about the thing that I may do? We don't have to have a fear of those things. I mean obviously we should seek not to sin against God, but we need not worry that something will be found out and God will realise he made a dreadful mistake adopting us into his family.

No, because everything that is evil and bad and sinful is paid for on the cross. And so we don't need to hold back from coming fully and completely to God.

The Lord is a God of knowledge. He knows us completely. That's the second thing. And the third thing that I wanted to draw out from this was that God has all authority.

God has all authority. And if you want a technical term, I guess it would be that God is sovereign. He has all authority and there's nothing out of scope for his dominion.

[38 : 33] In Hannah's prayer, she says that the Lord has unique authority over life and death in verse 6. He puts to death, he makes alive.

God also has full authority over who has riches and who lacks. And he has full authority to humble the proud and exalt the lowly. We see that in verses 7 and 8.

And we also see that he has all authority to judge and that the scope of his judgment is actually the whole of the earth, the ends of the earth, he says there in verse 10.

The Lord will judge the ends of the earth. So she is sophisticated enough in her theology to know that Yahweh is not a regional deity. He is God of the world and he will judge the world, the ends of the earth.

You know, humanity will forget this, but God is God. He created the whole universe and everything that lives draws its life from God's spirit. Again, Elihu, he makes this point to Job in Job 34 verse 14 and 15.

[39 : 42] He says, if he, God, were to determine to do so, if he were to gather his spirit and his breath to himself, humanity would perish together and mankind would return to the dust.

And there's that similar passage in Hebrews, isn't there, where it speaks about he holds all things together by the word of his power. He could release at any moment, but he doesn't. This is the authority of God.

And the secular world will sometimes, and unbelievers will sometimes declare that God is unjust. How dare he do this or that? How dare he not immediately remove all suffering from the planet? How dare God order the Israelites to wipe out the nations in Canaan? Who does he think he is? And I don't mean to belittle those questions because they're good questions to ponder, but the point is they often come from the heart of, I think God is just, he doesn't get to, he doesn't get to. God's just like me, he doesn't get to make decisions like that. I do. God is God, and the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and if we're going to question, if we're going to consider questions like those, why is there suffering, why does God allow X or Y or Z, then we have to start from the fear of the Lord.

[41 : 09] We have to start from a knowledge, and a fear, and an acceptance that God is God, he has all power and authority, he is different, and he is holy, this is God, we have to start there.

And of course his omniscience as well means that he is in a far better place to determine the best course of action, the fear of the Lord. So, God's unique in his holiness, God's omniscient, meaning he knows everything, God is sovereign, having all authority.

And I wanted to notice one other thing as we move forward. Where's Penina gone? She's gone. She's gone, and you can control F in your Bible and search for Penina, and you will not find her again. She is gone. Okay, well maybe we can find her children. Let's look for Elkanah in the records.

Yes, you can find Elkanah, and you can only find two of his sons. One of them is Samuel, and one of them is Samuel's brother. Penina gone.

[42 : 13] She is gone. Her children are not named, and as far as I can tell, I mean certainly her line is gone from the historical record. The infertile woman is given birth to seven, while she who has many children languishes.

Indeed, indeed. Has she given birth to seven? No, she has not. Seven is a number that means complete, and figuratively, she has a fully satisfactory family.

Hannah is fully satisfied with Samuel, whom the Lord has provided, even though Samuel is going to live away from her. And God will provide Hannah and Elkanah with five more children, and I'm sure that they brought them a lot of joy, but Hannah is satisfied now in the Lord and what he has done. Awesome. Oh, one thing I've just missed, sorry. I want to draw your attention to those last couple of verses, no, the last couple of lines of verse 10, which say that he will give strength to his king and he will exalt the horn of his anointed, his Messiah.

Which king are we talking about here, I wonder? And I think that we need to see that Hannah is speaking prophetically about the son, because her son is going to anoint a king, in fact, who, if you count Saul, he will give strength to his king, the king who is to come, he will exalt the horn of his Messiah, he is anointed, and I think Hannah is speaking prophetically about King David, and ultimately Jesus Christ, the son of David.

[43 : 52] David. So, verse 11 of chapter 2, then Elkanah went to his home in Ramah, but the boy continued to attend to the service of the Lord before Eli the priest.

So, it's worth us taking a moment to observe that. This young three-year-old is attending to the service of the Lord. It just goes to show, no matter your age, you are valuable to God and able to minister to him.

So, that's our text for today, that's our study. Just, I guess, by way of summarising and points to take away, what we've seen this morning is a reminder that our posture of prayer matters not next to the posture of our hearts.

That's what Hannah shows us. Her example is that we should be ensuring that we come humbly, surrender to God and choosing to be confident in God's goodness. We saw a brief reminder about Eli and his pre-judgment and actually that's where the word prejudice comes from.

Pre-judging based on what we see. Bad plan, don't do it. We saw the scriptures speak against that. And then we've spoken about God's holiness, God's omniscience, God's sovereignty.

[45 : 14] And I hope that those have been a good reminder of the character of our God and the one to whom we offer our prayers and our worship. Lord, praise you for these things. Lord, we thank you for this godly woman Hannah and her example to us today.

Lord, I do pray God that we would have a right perspective of who you are. Lord, I do pray that as we walk with you as your sons and daughters, Lord, you would gently show us who you are.

The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Holy God who is separate and other, the one who is omniscient, knowing all things, the one who is all authority. Lord, I pray that we would have peace and I pray that we would have faith to know that your will is always best and sometimes we struggle with that, Lord.

You know sometimes we struggle with that and sometimes there are bad things that happen but none of these are beyond your power to redeem and use for good. Lord, we praise you for your power, Lord God.

We praise you for your authority your character. We thank you, Lord, for what we've studied. In Jesus' name, Amen. Hallelujah. Amen.