

INTRO¹: We live on a stage where moral outrage substitutes as a stunt double for virtue. Unfortunately, people do not agree on what counts as morally outrageous. Is it crime, or the criminal justice system? Is it capitalism, or socialism? Is it police brutality, or rioting? Homosexuality, or homophobia? Is it the cinematic exploitation of children? Or poverty in a land of plenty? Is it an outrage not to wear a mask? Or is it an outrage to wear one? Would it be an outrage to replace a deceased Supreme Court Justice before the election, or would the outrage be to wait until after the election? For now, the Cancel Culture has assumed the authority to judge who gets to retain their visibility and who gets erased. Not surprisingly, the historical figure many would like to cancel most is God Himself—at least, God as He presents Himself in the Bible—the God who tells us we need Him to save us from our sins, the God who tells us that he alone has the power to reverse human fortunes, the Righteous God who takes sin so seriously that he gave his Son over to a Roman cross. In the middle of all the chaos and confusion, we might feel like asking if God is still in control? After all, it doesn't always seem as if He's winning. But if you'll turn with me to 1Sam 2:1-11, we'll discover that God is in control, even over those very moments and even years when evil seems to have the upper hand. In fact, it is God's sovereignty over just such times that enables His trusting people to Rejoice in God's Salvation, Revel in God's Reversals, and Rest in God's Righteousness. Please follow along in your Bibles as I read 1Sam 2:1-11.

1. REJOICE IN GOD'S SALVATION (1SAM 2:1-3)

With all you are (2:1).² Hannah's heart exults, her horn is exalted, and her mouth opens up. But as happy as she must be with little Samuel, her heart is not rejoicing in Samuel, even though she had probably waited for him for nearly a decade (Peninnah's minimum of 4 kids, plus years trying before Elkanah figured he needed another wife). Hannah exults in the God who gave Samuel to her. She exults not directly in Samuel, but in what the gift of Samuel says about God as Giver. She does say that her horn is exalted. The horn here is not a horn like a trumpet. It's a horn like a ram's horn. The horn was a symbol of strength and dignity.³ We might think today of a thanksgiving centerpiece like a cornucopia—a horn shaped container full of fall produce. For us, it symbolizes prosperity, abundance, blessing. But here, the horn is not filled. It's exalted, lifted up, elevated. Hannah may feel a sense of abundance because of Samuel, but foremost in her heart was her sense of honor and dignity and blessedness, not just at becoming a mother, but in how that happened—as God's answer to her prayer. Pregnancy didn't just fill her—it dignified her. Do not trivialize the dignity of motherhood or the honor of God answering your most anguished prayers. But Hannah is not bragging on herself here. She's not strutting her stuff or making much of herself. She admits "*my horn is exalted in the Lord*. The idea is, "look at what the Lord did for me. Look at what the Lord gave me. And look at what that says, not about me, but about the Lord." I am not good. God is good. I am not strong. God is strong. I am not worthy. God is worthy.

The rest of the song will illustrate what it looks like to exult in the Lord. She goes on in v.1 to say "*my mouth derides my enemies because I rejoice in your salvation*." She's not gloating. She's not doing to Peninnah what Peninnah did to her. She's not ridiculing people. The verb here translated "deride" is

¹ Tsumura's exegetical outline (NICOT, 141) makes sense: (1) Yahweh's holy sovereignty (vv.1b-3); (2) Reversal of human fortunes (vv.4-5); (3) Yahweh's holy sovereignty (vv.6-7); (4) Reversal of human fortunes (v.8a); (5) Yahweh's holy sovereignty (vv.8b-10a); (6) The theme of kingship (v.10b). D.R. Davis's homiletical outline is roughly parallel and instructive. "Verses 1-3 express Hannah's elation... Verses 4-8 [indicates that] the way Yahweh delivered her is characteristic of the way Yahweh rules his world... What Yahweh has done for Hannah simply reflects the tendency of his ways... that is just he way Yahweh is! ... The view expands in vv.9-10... to how it will be when Yahweh fully, completely, and visibly rules." This affirms a kind of temporal outline that had previously occurred to me, where Hannah's reflection on God's faithfulness to her in her own past leads her to gnostic reflections on the way God operates and into a future confidence of what God will eventually do for his people in regard to both his enemies and, by extension, theirs. Davis's applicational takeaway is also instructive: "Every time God lifts you out of the miry bog and sets your feet upon a rock is a sample of the coming of the kingdom of God, a down payment of the full deliverance, the macro-salvation that will be yours at last" (FOTB, 25).

² Baldwin, 56-57 "the whole person...."

³ HALOT, 1145. Tsumura says "Hannah's horn symbolizes her dignity" (NICOT, 142).

open or enlarge or widen. It's a picture word, a metaphor, so there's a need to interpret it, and that's what the ESV did. She's either smiling or somehow even swallowing up her enemies. That's a metaphor for victory.⁴ Peninnah's got nothing on Hannah now that she has Samuel. She no longer dreads or resents her enemies because God answered her prayer and gave her not just escape but victory, by His power, in answer to her prayers.

But the word "enemies" is plural. This is about more than just Peninnah. It's about what God can do, does, and will do for his people when they cry out for salvation from their enemies. In her grief at Peninnah's provocation in chapter 1, Hannah said nothing in reply. She only prayed to God. But now she has something to say to anyone who previously provoked her. But what she says is not about herself, or really even about them. It's about the Lord. The Lord is wiser, stronger, and better than her enemies. And the Lord gives more cause for joy and security than her enemies can give for sorrow or dread.

This OT phrase "in the Lord" we now apply as "**in Christ.**" Christian, you will still have enemies. Jesus assumes it in Matt 5:44 "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (cf. Rom 12:17-20; 2Tim 4:14). We will still deal with people who hate us because we love Christ. And we will all have the enemies of the world, the flesh, and the devil trying to ruin our faith. We will have our share of disease and disorder, disturbance and disaster, in a fallen world. But God's sovereignty means he can work in your life, and in the life of the church, in such a way that will make you rejoice with everything you are, even though everything you are has been sad, provoked, and anguished for a decade, like Hannah.

Impressed by God's Uniqueness (2:2). V.2 So Hannah's heart exults in the Lord; but what does a heart say and do when it exults in the Lord? Look there in v.2. "*There is none holy like the Lord: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.*" That is the main truth and praise of Hannah's prayer. Hannah goes straight to God's unparalleled holiness and reliability. The rest of the prayer details what God's unique, transcendent, sovereign holiness means and does, not only for those who do pray to Him and trust in Him, but also to those who don't. Holy means transcendent, separate, consecrated...to the point of commanding respect, awesome, singled out for a special purpose and praise (HALOT 1066). No one commands respect, no one is singled out for such honor and special treatment, like God. No one is so high and awesome as God. No one is so faithful to his own character and commitments as God. No one can challenge or threaten God, because God is in a class by Himself. And that is why no one is so reliable as the Lord. That's what it means for Hannah to say "*there is no rock like our God.*" A rock is solid, steady, unbreakable. You can stand on it. You can grab hold of it in the middle of a raging river. Hannah has experienced the truth of the **First Commandment** for herself—she had no other god beside the True and Living God, and He's the only one she needed.

Moses had written a similar song in **Ex 15:11** "*Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?*" It's a little-known fact, but Moses actually wrote the first Christian Rock song in Dt 32. **Dt 32:3-4** "*I will proclaim the name of the Lord; ascribe greatness to our God **The Rock**, his work is perfect, for all his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is he.*" But in **Dt 32:15** Israel "*forsook God who made him and scoffed at **the Rock** of His salvation.*" **Dt 32:18** "*But you were unmindful of **the Rock** that bore you.*" **Dt 32:30-31** "*How could one have chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight,*

⁴ Tsumura affirms that the significance of the Hebrew phrase "my mouth opens wide" is "swallowing enemies, figuratively to stand for triumphing over one's enemies (so BDB; NAB)" (NICOT, 142). It's an image of victory.

*unless their **Rock** had sold them, and the Lord had given them up? For their rock is not as **our Rock**; our enemies are by themselves.”⁵ Hannah is echoing the chorus of Moses’ Rock Song.*

In fact, Samuel is bookended by rock songs, this one by Hannah, and the one by David in 2Sam 22, where David begins his song by confessing *“The Lord is my **rock** and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my **rock**, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies.”* That theology is written in the same key as Hannah’s rock song. And the fact that Samuel begins and ends with songs about God as our rock tells you something about the emphasis of the whole two-volume work. God is a strong and reliable refuge for the weak.⁶ Yet it’s a funny thing about rocks. They can stabilize you, and they can also make you stumble. God said through Isaiah That he would lay in Zion a stone, a cornerstone, chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame, but for all who reject him, he would become a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, and many shall stumble on it. They shall fall and be broken. (Isa 28:16; 8:14-15). This Rock is Jesus Christ. It is on the Rock-solid confession of Jesus as Son of God, Savior and Lord that He is building His church. He is the original living stone rejected by men but in God’s sight chosen and precious. And we the church are built on him. And so we keep on preaching Christ as the Rock of our salvation, the only refuge strong enough to protect us from God’s righteous wrath over our sin and rebellion. Trust this Christ-Rock, and he will stabilize you through anything. Reject him, despise him, and this Rock will crush you in the end.

Humbled by God’s all-knowing wisdom (2:3). *“Talk no more so very proudly, let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.”⁷ Peninnah talked proudly. But God’s answer to Hannah’s prayer proved to her that God saw, God heard, and God knew, just as Moses said in Ex 3:24 “God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.”* God is not just a God of abstract knowledge. God is a God of personal knowledge. He knows the suffering and sorrows of the afflicted and downcast. He is a God of moral knowledge—He weighs our actions because He is the all-knowing Judge of all women and men from all places and times. God knows it when you think and speak and act out of your own egotism and vanity; and He evaluates it. Heb 4:13 *“no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.”* He sees you as you are, not as you dress yourself up to be.

Friend, do you talk proudly? Peninnah talked proudly, especially about the gifts God had given her and withheld from Hannah (1Cor 4:6-7). But gifts are not graces. Peninnah was gifted with children, but it doesn’t appear that she had much grace to go along with those gifts. There are many gifted people in the world who don’t have a single drop of **saving** grace. Giftedness in vocation, leadership, languages, preaching, music, organizing, even giftedness that has supernatural qualities to it, doesn’t necessarily mean you’re saved, especially if you’re arrogant about those gifts. *“Many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord,*

⁵ Tsumura, NICOT, 143 affirms the reality, if not the intentionality, of all these allusions. He also notices the macro *inclusio* of “rock songs” in Hannah’s mention of God as rock here and David’s “rock song” to end the double volume in 2S 22:2; 23:3; and gets to Christ by tracing the rock theme through Isa 8:14; 28:16; Ps 118:22; and into 1Pet 2:6-8, which I did not notice.

⁶ Cf. 2S 22:43, 47; Ps 18; Ps 19:14; 28:1; 31:2; 62:2, 6; 71:3; 78:35; 89:26; 92:15; 94:22; 95:1; 144:1; Isa 8:14; 17:10; 26:4; 44:8; Hab 1:12.

⁷ Tsumura (NICOT, 144-145) notes that “deeds” in v.3 is parallel to knowledge, which is God’s, and so takes the deeds here as God’s, translating “[his] deeds are immeasurable”. This makes the transition to v.4 easy, “Hannah now recalls the results of Yahweh’s deeds” (NICOT 145). But you could make the transition just as easily by understanding God as weighing human deeds and reversing human fortunes accordingly. By contrast, Baldwin (TOTC, 57) notes here that “human arrogance is totally misplaced and even dangerous, in view of the Lord’s way of ‘balancing out’ human experience. That is the meaning of weighted in the last line. The following verses illustrate the idea with examples of providential reversals that God has brought about.”

did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Many of the most gifted people will discover all too late that they never tasted a single crumb of saving grace. You can, in the words of Hebrews 6, even “taste the heavenly gift, share in the Holy Spirit, taste the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, yet not have “things that belong to salvation.” You can feel good feelings at church and not be saved. God gave lots of good things in this life to the rich man who ended up in Hell while Lazarus ended up in heaven.

Do not confuse gifts with graces. Gifts are abilities, things, experiences. Grace is salvation and the fruit of the spirit that comes with salvation. Graces are character traits—love is a grace. Joy, peace, patience... Godliness—devotion, piety, holiness—that’s a grace. Humility is a grace. Repentance is a grace. Faith in Jesus is a grace. Do not count gifts as if they were graces. And do not let not arrogance come from your mouth. For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by his actions are weighed.

Friend, do you rejoice in God’s saving grace, or do you brag about your gifts? The disciples rejoiced that the demons were subject to them, but Jesus told them rather to rejoice that their names were written in the book of life. Do you want worldly gifts, or other-worldly graces? Your greatest joy should be that even though God is your holy creator and judge, even though you sinned against his law and love and deserve hell for it, he sent Jesus to become the rock of your salvation by his death and resurrection. So friend, repent of your arrogance. Humble yourself under the truth of God’s holiness and your sinfulness, and trust in Christ’s blood and righteousness to save you.

2. REVEL IN GOD’S REVERSALS (1SAM 2:4-8)

For Social Justice (2:4-5 politics, prosperity, productivity).⁸ 3 reversals. “*The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.*” That is a reversal of political and military power, accomplished by God himself, for those who are feeble in heart and trust Him to do what they cannot do for themselves. The bow was the symbol and instrument of military strength. God is so sovereign, so firmly in control, that he breaks the bow of the strong. But God’s sovereignty doesn’t just bring down the strength of those who are strong in themselves. God is the God of the great reversal. He is sovereign to bring down the strong in order to raise up the weak. That is God’s unique work. God and God alone does that. And so we are called to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might.

In v.5 *Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.* That’s a reversal of prosperity and self-satisfaction. Hannah is telling you something here. God is telling you something here through Hannah. God is telling you something about Himself. “This is how I am,” God says. “This is what I do. This is my M.O. What I did for Hannah is not out of character for Me, it’s not an irregularity or a wrinkle in my ways. This IS my way. This is who I am and how I operate.” God is a Reverser of Human Fortunes. He puts down the self-righteousness in order to raise up the humble and the downcast. He puts down those who are impressed and satisfied with themselves, in order to raise up those who despair of any goodness or righteousness in themselves. He empties those who are full of themselves, and he fills those who hunger and thirst for a righteousness that is better than their own (Mat 5:7).

⁸ Bergen, “force, food, and fertility” (NAC, 76).

This prayer shows you how to get God's attention. You don't get God's attention by giving him a résumé, or making yourself worthy somehow, or by telling him how much you deserve his blessing. You get God's attention by pleading for his mercy out of your weakness and emptiness. Hannah's faith discovered the truth of **Isa 66:1-2** "*Thus says the Lord: 'Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.'*"

V.6 appears to represent the climax, the clincher. "*The barren has born seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.*" That's a reversal of blessing, and it's personal. Finally, Hannah is not only Elkanah's first love; she also has a son by him. Now that the first-love has a child, Peninnah's advantage evaporates. Samuel is worth seven sons to Hannah.

But this is not just personal and sentimental. It's churchly. Sarah was barren until God gave her Isaac. Rebekah was barren until God gave her Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:21). Rachel was barren until God gave her Joseph (Gen 29:31). Manoah's wife was barren until God gave her Samson (Judges 13:2). Hannah was barren until God gave her Samuel. Israel was spiritually barren until God gave her Jesus Himself (Isa 49:20; 54:1). And the church is barren until God gives us the fruit of regenerated hearts by the life-giving power of His Spirit making our preaching and evangelism effective. This is why we **MUST** pray, brothers and sisters. Of all people, we who make much of God's sovereignty in salvation must pray to our sovereign God to give life to dead men walking. This is also why we must often be content with slow, steady, surprising growth. This is often God's way. He waits, often years, to bless. And then when he does, he gets all the credit. We exult in Him, not in ourselves or even the gifts He gives. We don't say "how do you like **ME** now?" We say, "How do you like God now?!" **OUR GOD...did THAT...among us, in front of us, for us, even in spite of us, in spite of our barrenness, in spite of our sorrow and weakness and utter incompetence. Friends, God can bless His people even when they think they are long past being blessed. Why? Because He is the God who breaks His strongest enemy. He is the God who empties those who are full of themselves. He fills those who are empty in themselves. He humbles the arrogant. He blesses the barren. That is the kind of God we have in Christ.**

Unbelief looks at the injustice of 1Samuel 1—Peninnah's arrogance and her mean-spirited provocation of Hannah—and unbelief says, "Well, there must not be a God, or if there is one, then He must not be very good or very powerful." Hannah's faith looks at her own sad experience and takes it in prayer to the only God there is, and she reaps the benefit of hoping against hope and believing that God is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him. The problem of evil is not designed to aggravate or calcify your skepticism. It is designed to make you desperate enough to pray and cry hard to the only Sovereign God for justice and salvation. "Rend the heavens and come down." And when that happens, we discover that God uses evil as only He can—to bring about good as His personal and saving response to the prayers of his trusting people.⁹ God brings good from our barrenness. He brings good from our cancer. He brings good from the loss of a job, the loss of a child, the loss of a reputation. He brings good from my emptiness and sorrow and despair and confusion at how I've been wronged in the past, and maybe even how you're being wronged right now. It's not just that God can do these things. It's that he's the kind of God who does these things all the time. He's been doing them for millennia. And we are

⁹ So also Dale Ralph Davis, "Without Peninnah's goading, mockery, and malice would Hannah ever have been driven to the distraction that moved her to desperate prayer? As one looks back how crucial becomes the fact that Hannah was crushed with grief and moved to prayer...The severe trial of Hannah proved to be the salvation of a whole people (FOTB, 26).

invited—in all our sorrow, confusion, hurt, and despair—to take our **protest not to the streets of Gotham, but to the streets of gold; not to the steps of the Capitol, but to the throne of grace, to God Himself, the Sovereign King of Kings, who alone actually does something about such things.** The great reversals that we all want and need to see will not happen through politicians. They happen through prayer to the Sovereign Lord of Lords, who is in control before the cradle and below the grave.

In life and death (2:6-8a). *“The Lord kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts.”* That, remember, is praise from a poor woman who had been brought down to despair because she had no life in her womb. And then God raised her up. God made her poor; then God made her rich. He humbled her; then He exalted her.¹⁰ Yet here again, this is nothing new. This is how God has always acted. In fact, God had declared his sovereign control over human life and death through Moses in **Dt 32:39** *“See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand....”* Back in 1Sam 2:8 *He raises the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor.* Now if you’re a non-Christian listening to all this, you might ask “where does God get off? What gives him the right to be in sovereign control of human destiny?” Hannah was hoping you’d ask.

Because He Created All People and Things (2:8b). *For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and on them he has set the world.* God’s sovereign control to reverse human conditions is rooted in his ownership of all things as Creator.¹¹ It is, of course, true that God is perfect, righteous, all-knowing and good. His character in itself qualifies Him. But here, it’s God’s role as creator that gives him the right to control everything and to execute righteous reversals of fortunes without asking permission from us. God is the giver of life. He made the world and everything in it. He gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. He doesn’t need anything from us, least of all permission (Acts 17:24-25). Every breath we take is given by this God. And therefore, he can take that breath and life back at will, no questions asked. He gives you wealth...and he can take it away. Ask Job. Friend, isn’t this the real reason humanity wants to **cancel** God as Creator? We don’t want to think about a God who could or would cancel us, or damn us, for our sins against him. We want to be sovereign over our own lives and bank accounts. We want to be the hero to reverse the fortunes of others so that **we** get glory for that.

But if you’ve ever read all the way through Samuel before, you also get the feeling that something more is going on here than just Hannah praising God for Samuel. Her song is starting to predict everything else God will do in Israel’s history in the book of Samuel. God will bring down Eli and his corrupt sons, to raise up for Himself a faithful priest in the little boy Samuel. God will bring down the idol Dagon to prove that there is no rock like our God. God will bring down King Saul and raise up King David. He will bring down the Philistines and their Goliath, and He will raise up Israel. And that whole history of Israel will foreshadow what God would one day do for and through **Jesus**. King Herod would try to cancel Jesus in his infancy, but God would cancel Herod in order to raise up Jesus as King of the Jews. God would bring Jesus down to the grave (Sheol) and raise him bodily from the dead to sit at the right

¹⁰ “The phrase *brings death and makes alive* is a merismus which claims that Yahweh holds total authority over life and death and the entire course of a human’s life.” “In the ANE the sun god[dess] is considered to be *the psychopompe, the guide of the dead*, in the death cult...However, Yahweh...is the Lord of the quick and the dead who brings men down to or up from Sheol. He holds absolute authority over the world of the dead as well as of the living” (Tsumura, *NICOT*, 146-147).

¹¹ “Since the Lord founded the world, ‘he has the right to intervene in the social order’” (Tsumura, 147, quoting R.P. Gordon). Here Baldwin (TOTC, 57) also notes that “A person’s status in life is not to be regarded as fixed and unchangeable, for the Lord is well able to reverse it.” This is a refreshing application of trusting God’s sovereignty rather than political leaders or economic forces for the achievement of relative “social justice”.

hand of the Father so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. At the very cross where Satan thought he was canceling Jesus, God was confirming Jesus as Savior and King. And God did that for us in Christ so that our sins and our old enslaved souls would be buried with Christ and raised up to new life with Him. And all those who trust in Jesus will enjoy His righteous reign for all eternity on a new earth that will be so much better than this one we will need new and better bodies to enjoy it. Jesus said in John 5:21 *“For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.”* Jesus Christ, Son of God, has the power and right to give life to whomever he will. Friend, go to him. Find your resurrection in His resurrection. Find your righteousness, in Jesus’ righteousness; and rest in it.

3. REST IN GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS (1SAM 2:9-11)

He will fight for us (2:9). *“he will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for **not by might shall a man prevail.**”* Everything that Hannah has learned about God from her recent past, is true of God in the eternal present, and will always be true of him into the **future** of our own lives, both in this world and the next. What he has done, is rooted in who he is; and who he is, He will continue to be, forever. And that means he will guard us in this world, he will thunder against his enemies, he will judge the earth, he will strengthen his people, and he will exalt His chosen king.

“Not by might shall a man prevail.” This becomes a theme throughout the book. Eli and his sons abuse their power, but it’s the little boy Samuel who becomes the next prophet-priest. Jonathan knew that God was not constrained by human strength or numbers when he said to his armor bearer *“nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few”* (14:6). David is smallest and youngest of his brothers, but he’s the one God chooses as king because although *man looks on the outward appearance, The Lord look son the heart*” (16:7). David is a young boy with five stones, but he takes down Goliath by faith in God’s promises because he knows *“the Lord saves not with sword and spear”* (17:47). Saul keeps trying to pin David to the wall with his spear, but never succeeds. And when one of David’s men has the chance to pin Saul to the ground with a spear, David won’t let him. *“As the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish”* (26:11). And while the sons of Zeruah are executing vendettas and seeking revenge for David, David is waiting on God to consolidate his kingdom, and he refuses to treat any Israelite as an enemy. David will prefer his enemies be converted, not condemned. That is why, when David is finally established as king, he *“knew that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that [the Lord] had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel”* (2Sam 5:12). This is in fact the difference between Saul and David. Saul thinks he will prevail by his might. David thinks he will prevail by his God. And this is arguably the point of the whole book—**not by might will a man prevail**. While humanity is trying with all its might to **cancel** God, God laughs...and then cancels human strength as He thunders from heaven.

He will judge for us (2:10a). *“The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The Lord will judge the ends of the earth; Our four-year old told my wife recently, “when God speaks with his thunder voice in heaven, I want you and daddy to be right beside me.” Unfortunately, it won’t do him any good to have us beside him. The only one who can protect us from the thunder-voice God is Jesus; and if Jesus is beside you, then He will be enough. Notice here too that God’s justice and judgment will extend to the ends of the earth. This God will judge people from cultures that do not acknowledge Him...because His sovereignty, his reign, his rule as king, knows boundaries. It is as extensive as the universe, and as intensive as the deepest recess of your heart.*

He will reign over us (2:10b). *he will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.*” And here we end where we began, with the horn of God’s people being exalted, but now in the anointed king who represents them.¹² And here the prophetic nature of Hannah’s prayer is on full display. Of course, Moses had already mentioned the coming of the kings in Dt 17:15 and the people even asked Gideon outright to rule over them like a king in Judges 8.¹³ So even though the kingdom hadn’t been set up yet, Hannah is well within existing revelation at the time to expect a kingdom. But she also spoke far better than she knew, as we discover from the rise of Saul, and then David, and ultimately Jesus Himself. In fact, the similarities between Hannah’s song and Mary’s *Magnificat* are too close to ignore¹⁴: *“My spirit rejoices in God my savior...” “He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”* Sovereign Salvation...Righteous Reversal. This is what God has done, because this is who God is, which means God will finish what He started for us in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Friends, God is in control over all our chaos. He is sovereign over all that scares and saddens us. God has exalted the power and authority of His anointed Son Jesus Christ. Jesus said *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.”* God has exalted Jesus as head over all things for the church (Eph 1:23). Jesus is Sovereign, over all things, to save us. He has reversed our fortunes, from condemned sinners to vindicated saints. And He is coming back to lay low the proud and to raise up the humble. God’s authority as our Creator and His righteous rule in Christ will never be cancelled. Are you glad about that, friend? Or do you think you should be in control?

¹² Tsumura, 149, affirms the inclusion with horn in v.1.

¹³ Baldwin notes “there is nothing anachronistic” here in the mention of a king (TOTC, 58), and rightly quotes Kilpatrick: “‘Hannah’s song is a true prophecy... The failure to recognize this has led critics to deny the authenticity of the song, and to conjecture that some ancient triumphal war-paeon has been erroneously placed in Hannah’s mouth by the compiler of the book’” (TOTC, 58 n.1). On the corporate application of Hannah’s song, Baldwin continues: “The question arises whether the song had any political overtones for the people of God. They had come into the land of Canaan, with few possessions, to find relatively wealthy cities which, under the good hand of their God, they had overthrown. ‘Those formerly ruled and deprived in all the basic areas of their existence are now self-ruled, abundantly provisioned, prolifically reproduce, and socially fulfilled.’ Thus God’s word had credibility for Israel because they could see that it worked out in tangible ways, for individuals and for the whole community. The outworking of God’s judgment was as impartial as the bestowal of his blessing, and judgment was soon to fall on those who despised God’s law at the very shrine to which Hannah had brought her son” (TOTC, 59, quoting Gottwald).

¹⁴ I’m indebted to Tsumura (NICOT) and Bergen (NAC, 77) for noticing parallels with Lk 1:46-55.