

1st Samuel

Lesson 5

(j) For the LORD's Statute (2:10a)

Hannah gives praise for the LORD's statute. Verse 10a.

"Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; Against them, He will thunder in the heavens, The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;" (2:10a)

All around us, even today, we see people contending with the LORD. It never works out well for them. It is always better to work with the LORD instead of contending against the LORD. Have you ever been in a full force of a hurricane? Have you ever felt the full force of a wave while you were in the water down at the beach? Have you ever been scared of thunder and lightning? In human terms, all of these things are no bigger to the LORD than a child's play toys. They are insignificant in His sight and strength. Yet, anyone human who is not afraid of them is a fool. No human can stand against them and prevail. Be aware; the LORD has the power over everything and everyone on His earth.

(k) For the LORD's Strength (2:10b)

Finally, Hannah gives praise for the LORD's strength. Verse 10b.

"And He will give strength to His king, And will exalt the horn of His anointed." (2:10b)

Let us set the stage for the time of Hannah's life. She was living in the last century of the time of the judges, recorded in the book of judges. However, the book of Judges had not been written because her son, Samuel, was not old enough to write the story. Samson had not been born as yet. Eli was alive and working as the High Priest with his two worthless adult sons. The nation of Israel was supposed to be in total loyalty to the LORD as their King, but they were not. He had given the people of Israel all they needed to live without a worldly king because He was their king if they would obey His covenant, commandments, laws, statutes, and ordinances. They broke them all in the worship of Baal and Ashtoreth. The Nation of Israel has not come to the point of thinking they need a king at this point in the storyline. They still have to experience Samson once he is born. Surely, Hannah knows the law. He would have heard it read every seventh year, the sabbatical year when everything in the nation reverted in a restart event. She had to have heard about the LORD being their King. Verse 10b cannot be speaking about the first king of Israel who will not be asked for until her son, Samuel, is at least middle-aged. But because she had heard the Word of God read every seventh year, she surely knew of the promise of the coming king. Is this a prophecy about Jesus Christ? I think so. God will give strength to Christ. God exalts the power of *His anointed*. All we have to do is look at the Latin translation of this portion of the verse. It says, "*sublimabit cornu Christi sui.*" We could spend a lot of time on this phrase, but let us focus on the word *Christi*. That is the Latin word for our word *Christ*. It means *the Messiah*. The word *Messiah* is the Hebrew word for *Christ*. The word *Messiah* comes from the word translated here, *the anointed*. The Hebrew word is *mashiach*. The phonetic spelling for those of us who do not speak Hebrew is *maw-shee-akh*. The English translation should have used the word *maw-shee-akh* or *Messiah*. We have seen the word before in the books of the Bible, but here is our first encounter with the connection of the Messiah

being the King. God will give the LORD God all the strength or power needed to be the Messiah of the world when He comes to be the King of kings and LORD of lords. Amen and amen. Hannah may not have even known that her prayer was a prophecy yet to be fulfilled more than a thousand years in the future.

2. Samuel's Ministry (2:11-3:21)

a) Samuel's Place (2:11)

It is hard to imagine that a mother would leave her newly weaned child who has just left her breast so many miles away from home, but Hannah did. Why? She did it because she had promised the LORD. At the age of about four years old, Samuel's ministry began in Samuel's new place, his new home. Verse 11. *"Then Elkanah went to his home at Ramah. But the boy ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest."* (2:11)

This little Levite boy began to help with the duties in the Tabernacle that were normally restricted to a Levite who had reached the age of twenty-five, and then he was in training for five years. He could not perform the duties on his own until he reached the age of thirty. Imagine a four-year-old carrying the week-old loaves of showbread out of the Holy Place and placing the new loaves of showbread on the table before the LORD. Imagine if you can a four-year-old filling the oil in the seven candled lampstand. Imagine if you can the four-year-old placing the coals in the firepan, dousing it with the proper amount of incense, and placing the hot pan on the Altar of Incense in front of the Veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies. Imagine if you can imagine a four-year-old standing in front of that Veil, just four feet away from the Ark of the Covenant where the LORD Almighty hovered over the Mercy Seat. Can you imagine? Can you imagine a four-year-old helping to fill the basin with water used by the priests to wash parts of the sacrifices? Can you imagine him cleaning the ashes from the ever-burning Brazen Altar? Can you imagine him dipping his fingers in the blood and sprinkling it on the Veil, the curtain that acted as the door to the Tabernacle, and on the Brazen Altar? A four-year-old? Every day this boy was ministering with Eli at the Tabernacle. Did he run and play like other children? We do not know. But what we do know is, his father, mother, and family left him there at the Tabernacle while they returned to their home in Ramah. He would not see them again for a year. Was this bad? No. It was the LORD's plan. Eli was the LORD's priest in place to mentor such a child.

b) Samuel's Mentor

(1) Eli's Worthless Sons (2:12-17)

Eli was Samuel's mentor. He had been given the opportunity to train Samuel. It was a second chance for Eli. His first chance was with his own sons, now grown, now serving in the active-duty of priests. They were over thirty years old. They were Eli's worthless sons. Verse 12. *"Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD¹³ and the custom of the priests with the people. When any man was offering a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand.¹⁴ Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. Thus they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there."¹⁵ Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give the priest meat for roasting, as he will not take boiled meat from you, only raw."¹⁶ If the man said to him, "They must surely burn the fat first, and then take as much as you desire," then he would say, "No, but you shall give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force."¹⁷ Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men despised the offering of the LORD."* (2:12-17)

Did you notice that the writer told us that Eli's sons *"did not know the LORD?"* Here these sons of Eli, descendants of Aaron, serving as priests in the most holy place in the Promised Land, *"did not know the LORD."* We would like to think that such a situation was strange and uncommon, but it is clearly not. In my last church ministry, there were two men above me in the organizational chart,

whom I served with for almost thirty years. These men were divisive at every turn and even unfaithful to the founding pastor. Frankly, in my last decade at the church, I seriously doubted their salvation. In short, they did the “Church work,” but they did not do the “work of the Church.” The two are completely different. Men without godly fruit in their work. They filled a place on the chart of duties, yet, both were a consternation to the staff. In the end, they devised a plan to oust the founding pastor. They hired a consulting group that specialized in the task. They spent more than two years placing all the right people on just the right committees. Then, when all was in place when the betrayal was almost fulfilled as planned, they approached the LORD’s anointed pastor and informed him of his retirement date within the next few weeks. Then, in a conversation, they proudly boasted that they had been faithful to the pastor for thirty-five years but unfaithful to him for two years. It is the LORD who calls the anointed pastor of the church. The founding pastor whom the LORD used to start a Church with sixteen people and see more than fifty-eight thousand people unite with the Church over fifty years of ministry. And then, unfaithfulness was born in the hearts of two who were in positions of power with their finger in the mixing pot where they thought they knew what was best for the LORD’s Church, and they left out the LORD. Worthless men, disguising themselves with all the vestiture of holy men. They were determined to take from the anointed what was not theirs to take. Their sin, like unto the sin of Eli’s sons, “*was very great before the LORD.*” The older generations, who had been part of the Church for decades, each person individually, have almost unanimously concluded that “their church with no problems for more than fifty years now has a thousand new problems every day.” And so, the Church has conflicted to this day. The new pastor brought more conflict. God is not the author of conflict and confusion. When worthless men are in charge of God’s jewels, conflict is present. Many hundreds of years after this place in time, when the LORD has had enough, He will speak the following through Ezekiel.

Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: “As I live,” declares the Lord GOD, “surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock; therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: ‘Thus says the Lord GOD, “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease from feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth so that they will not be food for them.” ’ ” (Ezekiel 34:7-10)

And just as in the time of the days of Ezekiel, the LORD will deal with the worthless men. He will deal with the worthless men of the modern Church, and He will deal with the worthless men in the days of Samuel. Their end is near in this story. The LORD will avenge the wrong. The LORD will mediate the wrong against the people bringing their offerings and against the anointed pastor. However, the wrong was not just with the wronged people and the wronged pastor; it was also against the LORD. Who could intercede in that case? We will learn that answer in a few more verses.

(2) Eli’s Worshipful Supplication

(a) Hannah’s Yearly Visit (2:18-19)

Yet, as Samuel’s mentor, he watched Eli’s worshipful supplication. This portion begins with Hannah’s Yearly visit to the Tabernacle. Verse 18. “*Now Samuel was ministering before the LORD, as a boy wearing a linen ephod.*”¹⁹ *And his mother would make him a little robe and bring it to him from year to year when she would come up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.*” (2:18-19)

How did Hannah know how large to make the robe each year? Women just seem to know these things. There were other boys in her home. Her husband’s second wife had sons, and Hannah

could watch their growth and estimate the yearly growth of her son. Surely, she made the robe a little larger than necessary, so he could grow into it and wear it comfortably until the next year. And as stated previously, she and her husband, with all the family, made their yearly trip to the Tabernacle to offer sacrifices for their sins and for their thankfulness to the LORD.

(b) Eli's Yearly Prayer (2:20)

More than likely, as we come to Eli's yearly prayer, it was spoken each year Hannah went to the Tabernacle Verse 20. *"Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, 'May the LORD give you children from this woman in place of the one she dedicated to the LORD.' And they went to their own home."* (2:20)

(c) Samuel's Younger Siblings (2:21)

Eli's prayer worked. Samuel was not Hannah's only child. We come to Samuel's younger siblings in verse 21. *"The LORD visited Hannah; and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew before the LORD."* (2:21)

In Hannah's song of praise at the birth of Samuel, she spoke of seven children. That was not the plan for Hannah. The LORD gave her six. Four sons, including Samuel, and two daughters she bore.

(3) Eli's Warning Snubbed (2:22-25)

Samuel was doing well under Eli's direction. But that was not the case with Eli's own sons. We come to Eli's warning snubbed in verse 22. Verse 22. *"Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting."* ²³ He said to them, *"Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people?"* ²⁴ No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD's people circulating. ²⁵ *If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?"* But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death." (2:22-25)

Here, the writer adds more to the story of the sin of Eli's sons. Not only were they sinning in the practice of their jobs as a priest, but they were sinning with the women who came to the Tabernacle with their families to worship. Young Samuel must have no doubt observed all that transpired. Samuel saw these sons of Eli corrupt the women who ministered at the door to the Tent of Meeting. Did women have a place at the tent? Yes. Exodus 38:8 says, *"Moreover, he made the basin of bronze with its base of bronze, from the mirrors of the serving women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting."* These women were dedicated to m, much like young Samuel. We must understand this. These two sons were married. They should not have been having a sexual relationship with anyone but their wives. The Law, given through Moses, in Leviticus, especially for the Levites to regulate among the Israelites, forbid such relationships. Eli has heard, and he knows these detestable things occur with his sons. Yet, he allows them to continue leading in their place of responsibility without rectifying the matter. Eli had the power as High Priest to remove his sons from the priesthood. They had already disqualified themselves for service according to the Law. Who can intercede for them? No one will, not even the LORD. The LORD will intervene, but not to change their ways, but to take away their lives. The LORD will physically remove them from their leadership positions of power. The sons should not have snubbed their father's warning.

c) Samuel's Growth (2:26)

From Samuel's place and mentor, we now come to Samuel's growth. Verse 26. *"Now the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men."* (2:26)

In a simple translation, we might say it like this. Samuel did everything right every day of every year, and the LORD loved him for that fact.