Hannah’s Magnificat: The Preeminence of YHWH

Zanesville, OH | March 10, 2019 | John Pollard

**Foundational Scripture:** 1 Sam. 2:1-10

**Intro**:

* Hannah was one of two wives of the man Elkanah. She did not have any children and so she prayed to God in chapter 1 that God would give her the ability to conceive a child. It came about that God granted her request and there is no doubt she was thrilled to hold Samuel in her hands; her very first child. Something that seemed impossible had suddenly become a reality because of God, prayer and her zeal. And as a Christian might expect, overwhelmed with joy and happiness, she pours out a prayer of thanksgiving to God in chapter 2; a song of praise; a Magnificat! She does not shy away from praising Yahweh and magnifying His name and His abilities. There is an immense amount of information and lessons we can extract from Hannah’s magnificat but I would like to focus this morning on the most important theme of these verses: **The Preeminence of Yahweh.**
1. **Yahweh’s Unparalleled Nature (vv. 1-3)**
	1. Hannah begins this prayer, this song, this magnificat by speaking of herself in the 1st person (notice ‘my’ 3x and ‘I’ is used once in v. 1). This is not Hannah seeking to make the prayer or the song about herself. She is simply overwhelmed with emotion due to what God has done.
	2. This is done at the beginning and then it is completely removed from the remainder of the magnificat. She does not want it to become about her and thus the remainder of the song focuses on Yahweh. She is overjoyed, thrilled, thankful and dignified not because of anything she did but because of what God did (v. 1).
	3. And so, the attention turns now to Yahweh who is exalted and magnified with respect to His unparalleled nature (v. 2). There is none Holy as He is and there is no god beside Him. He is unmatched and insurmountable!
	4. This is both striking and pertinent as the narrative of 1&2 Samuel largely deal with Israel’s conflict against the Philistines. They held their god Dagon is high esteem and claimed he was omnipotent. But Yahweh would prove otherwise (1 Sam. 5).
	5. The fact that Yahweh is unmatched and insurmountable is further emphasized by the reality that there is no rock like Him. He is strong, safe and secure.
	6. Hannah condemns pride and arrogance in the face of this unparalleled, unrivaled, holy God. This may be a subtle hint at Peninnah (1 Sam. 1:6). Pride usually comes from knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1) but next to God we know nothing. In comparison to Yahweh we know nothing! Yahweh, the all-knowing God, will be sure to weigh our actions. His nature is unparalleled! The preeminence of God is seen in His unparalleled nature.
2. **Yahweh’s Formidable Reversals (vv. 4-8)**
	1. Yahweh is now noted for His formidable reversals. Hannah speaks of the reversal of human fortunes in vv. 4-5. Even though God is not directly mentioned as the cause for the reversals in vv. 4-5 it is understood that it is He who carries out such. In v. 4, the strength of the mighty is broken and the weak take up strength.
	2. In v. 5, Hannah continues by saying those who may have plenty of food one day may not the next. The one who has no food one day may be filled the next. The barren woman (personal illustration) may give birth to a complete family (7 kids) but the one who has had children may not be happy.
	3. With this unparalleled, formidable God “normal” is never what humans perceive it to be. He is fully capable of conducting actions beyond human comprehension and explanation. God holds the whole world in His hands and the fate of all souls depend on Him.
	4. In v. 6, God holds power over life and death. He can both kill and resurrect. This further emphasizes His power and control over human life. In v. 7, He has the ability to make man both rich and poor and he can humiliate the socially significant and exalt the socially insignificant (cf. Lk. 16:19-31).
	5. The poor and needy who are looked down upon, trampled over and treated with contempt, Yahweh can place among nobles and to them grant seats of honor. Why? Because He owns everything and runs everything. He is the Creator and Sustainer. Ultimately this is seen in His formidable reversals. The preeminence of God is seen is His formidable reversals.
3. **Yahweh’s Universal Sovereignty (vv. 9-10)**
	1. Yahweh is supreme ruler over all nations and peoples across the universe. His rule/dominion is not limited by borders or city jurisdictions. In v. 9, all those who cling to Him, those who turn to rock that is God, He will ensure they are taken care of. As He stabilizes the earth, so too He is able to stabilize the feet of His godly ones.
	2. It does not matter where they are, which country they are a part of and or what their genetic make-up is. If you imitate Yahweh and cast your undying, unwavering loyalty to Him, He will keep you secure (His power and influence is everywhere).
	3. Those who do not do this are wicked and their end (actions weighed) is to be silenced in darkness. This directly correlates with those who are arrogant, who mock Him, deny Him and reject Him. These will be silenced and shut up in darkness because Yahweh has universal sovereignty. He will hold all evildoers accountable.
	4. Man cannot prevail by themselves. If man should prevail it would be because God kept their feet, guided their ways and approved of their deeds. Without Yahweh, man is unstable, unidentifiable and unrecoverable.
	5. In v. 10, Hannah appropriately states those who want to take their chances against God will end up broken and demolished. God controls the fate of all men and while for a time we may be able to do as we please, know that for everything we do God will bring it into judgment (cf. Ecc. 11:9). His eyes move all over the earth. No one will escape His judgment.
	6. Yahweh’s universal sovereignty is seen in the illustration of setting up rulers on earth. There is nothing out of the realm of His control and that includes government and politics. No man or woman should ever think that the power they have comes from within themselves.
	7. It comes from the God with universal sovereignty and we ought to ensure that we turn to Him for guidance and wisdom. With Him man accomplish much. Without Him man is doomed to failure, finish and fire. The preeminence of God is seen is His universal sovereignty.