

Devotion for Advent 3

1 Samuel 2:1-10

Hannah's Song

And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in the Lord. My mouth derides my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.

There is none holy like the Lord; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

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.

The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble, bind on strength.

Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has born seven, but she who has many children is forlorn.

The Lord kills and brings to life; He brings down to Sheol and raised up. The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and He exalts.

He raises up the poor from the dust; He lifts the needy from the ash heap and makes them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honour.

For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and on them He has set the world.

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.

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; He will give strength to His king and exalt the power of His anointed.

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

Isaiah 9:1-7

For to us a child is born

What words indicate that this is no ordinary child?

How is this child connected to King David?

What will be different about this King's reign?

Luke 1:39-56

Mary's Song

How did Elizabeth know that Mary was pregnant with God's son?

How is Mary's song similar to Hannah's song?

What words show Mary's need for forgiveness like all of us?

"Special Blessings"

God showed His power to keep His promises, by sending children to women in remarkable ways. God promised Abraham descendants as numerous as the stars in the heavens. Through one of those descendants (Israel), He promised to bring blessing to all the nations of the earth. In order to confirm in Abraham's mind His power, God refrained from sending Abraham the child through whom this blessing would begin, until he and his wife Sarah were impossibly old to have a child. God wants us to believe, nothing is too hard for the Lord. He always makes a way to keep His promises.

Hannah was the wife of a man named Elkanah. In a society that valued women mostly because of child bearing, she was childless. She prayed the Lord for a child and promised to dedicate him to the Lord's service. Her song in 1 Samuel is praise for an answered prayer. Her son Samuel, served as a priest and prophet of the Lord. He anointed Jesus' ancestor David to be king over Israel. God promised David an eternal kingdom of peace and righteousness, which would be fulfilled through one of his descendants.

The coming of Jesus into the world marked the fulfilment of God's promise of an eternal kingdom to David. Through Jesus, God also kept His promise of universal blessing spoken to Abraham. As Isaiah sang, He is the almighty God, the Prince of Peace. Jesus' birth was preceded by one more divine visitation to provide a woman with a child even though humanly speaking, she was past the age where that was a possibility. Elizabeth conceived and gave birth to John, the prophet who prepared Israel for Jesus' coming. Each of these women had at one time felt forsaken by God and looked down upon by others. Elizabeth rejoiced that God had taken away her "*disgrace among the people*." But rather than overlooking or disgracing them, God was preparing each one of them to be special vessels of His mercy. Each of them had an indispensable part in God's plan of salvation.

God blessed the world and each one of us through these women by sending Jesus to be our Saviour. When you remember Jesus, remember them. When you remember them remember that regardless of how you feel about yourself at any place in your life, or how others judge your life, know that God loves you. He does not overlook you. He looks on you with love. He has a purpose for you in His great plan of salvation. He blesses you now and He has prepared blessings for you in eternity. He may not bless you in the same way He blessed these three women, but He will bless you. He blesses you eternally by giving Jesus as your Saviour.

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" (Public Domain)
Lo, how a rose e'er blooming, from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming, as prophets long have sung.
It came a flow'ret bright. Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

Isaiah 'twas foretold it, the rose I have in mind.
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Saviour,
When half-spent was the night.

This flow'r, whose fragrance tender, with sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor, the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God, from sin and death He saves us,
And lightens every load.

O Saviour, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;
O Saviour, King of glory, who dost our weakness know;
Bring us at length we pray, to the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your kind mercy shown to Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth, women through whom you kept your promise to redeem the world from sin and life the condemnation of death from our heads. We remember that nothing is too hard for you and that your blessings come to us regardless of our life situation, or our perception of reality. You blessed each of these women to be a blessing to others, as through their children you carried on your promise to bring forgiveness and eternal life to all people through the birth of Jesus. Your blessings in time are all a sign and foreshadowing of the eternal blessing you offer all to receive through faith in Jesus. Grant this to us always. Open the hearts of many others to receive the blessing of faith in Christ this Advent and Christmas season. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen

The Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

Benediction

Luke 1:54-55

“He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

Bible Knowledge Quiz

Where does the Angel Gabriel stand in God's presence?

What was the first thing the angel said to Mary and to the Shepherds?

Why was Mary's child given the names Jesus and Immanuel?

Answers to last weeks quiz

1) To a town in in the hills of Judea. Luke 1:39

2) He prophesied. Luke 1:67

3) Gabriel. Luke 1:19

