

December 20, 2017

1 Samuel 2:1b-10

^{1b} "My heart exults in the LORD;
my strength is exalted in my God.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in my victory.

² "There is no Holy One like the LORD,
no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

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.

⁴ The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble gird on strength.

⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry are fat with spoil.

The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.

⁶ The LORD kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.

⁷ The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low, he also exalts.

⁸ He raises up 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.

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

⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;
for not by might does one prevail.

¹⁰ The LORD! His adversaries shall be shattered;
the Most High 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."

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"My heart exults in the Lord; my strength is exalted in my God." The Song of Hannah is Hannah's song of praise to God for her good fortune. After a long and difficult time of waiting, she will finally be a mother and will give birth to Samuel. Walter Brueggemann suggests that the Song of Hannah sets the stage for a major theme of the Book of Samuel: the "power and willingness of Yahweh to intrude, intervene, and invert."

Many have noticed the numerous parallels between the Song of Hannah and the Magnificat of Mary. Some posit that Luke used the Song of Hannah as a framework for the Magnificat: the themes and wording are very similar. The songs of both women rejoice in God's greatness and in God's reversing the fortunes of various groups—the proud and arrogant are humbled, the mighty are knocked off their thrones, the hungry eat their fill, the barren bare children.

In praying and singing with Hannah and Mary, who are anticipating the birth of their children, we join in the waiting that infuses Advent. Each soon-to-be mother praises God not only for her coming child, but also for the radical ways God breaks into the world and overturns our human systems.

In this Advent season, let us break forth into song and prayer not only for the good gifts given to us by God, but also for the shocking ways in which God radically transforms the world.

Prayer

Inbreaking God,

*Who overturns expectations,
Makes the barren fertile,
Raises up the poor from the dust,
Guards the feet of the faithful;*

*Intrude in our lives,
Intervene in our hearts,
Invert our expectations,
All to lead us into your kingdom;*

Through your son, Jesus the Christ, for whom we anxiously wait,

Amen.