

THERE IS NO ROCK LIKE OUR GOD**1 Samuel 2:1-10; Philippians 4:5-7**

INTRO: I found this in the latest edition of TOOLKIT, which is the bi-monthly newsletter from Everence that you receive in your ABC mailbox.

“If you have an upbeat attitude, you may also live longer, webmd.com reported ... The finding came from studies of about 71,000 adults, with results analyzed in PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES ... Optimistic people are more likely to experience “exceptional longevity,” defined as living to age 85 or older... Compared with their least optimistic counterparts, the most optimistic women and men studied were 50% - 70% more likely to reach that milestone ... Researchers found an association and not a cause-and-effect link, which means that more pessimistic people are not necessarily destined for shorter lives.”

That last line, *“More pessimistic people are not necessarily destined for shorter lives.”* gives hope to the Eeyore’s out there. If you’re a nithering nabob of negativity doesn’t necessarily mean you’ll die sooner, but why find out? Of course, the average pessimist would probably ask why anyone would want to live so long? ☺

But enough of busting the chops of pessimists – the truth is, a joyful and thankful heart is good medicine. Proverbs 17:22 in the King James Version says *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine*. Proverbs 17:22a, (KJV), in more modern parlance that would read, *A cheerful heart is good medicine*, Proverbs 17:22a. That’s why it’s good to be reminded every year during this holiday week to be running over with thanksgiving. But thankfulness will only be short-lived unless you know where it ultimately comes from. It comes from a knowing the source of all good things – the God of the universe.

Hanna was a lady who knew God well. She was on close, speaking terms with him. In the first chapter of 1 Samuel, we are introduced to her. She is one of two wives of a godly man named Elkanna. She is despondent that she is childless. In the ancient culture of Israel to be so is to be ultimately unfulfilled and a 2nd class citizen. She wants a child, desperately. So she prays a desperate prayer in the tabernacle tent. It is so passionate that Eli, the high priest, overhears her and thinks she drunk and accuses her of the same. He soon realizes he is quite mistaken and assures her that she will soon have a son. And she does. She names him Samuel and she dedicates him to the Lord and becomes the last Judge of Israel and the prophet who anoints the first Kings of Israel, Saul and David. After she has Samuel, she proceeds to have 5 more children. She knew thankfulness and our scripture for today is a snippet of it. Listen to Hannah’s prayerful song of praise

(Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10)

Now, let’s look at it section by section and see how, in Hannah’s words, there is no Rock like our God, is as true as ever and a great thing to ponder whenever we forget to be thankful.

Right out of the block she begins . . .

My heart rejoices in the Lord!

- In other words, we have no excuse to be anything but thankful when we realize who our God is. I mean, really! Our God, who knows us intimately is the creator and sustainer of the very universe.
- Our God is also our strength. The horn she refers to in the second line of verse one is a reference to great strength. The point is, GOD is our strength. We can rely on him.
- The next line of verse one has her gloating over her enemies. Essentially she is saying “My enemies are laughable.” Our enemies are not a threat, because God is our God. This means that we don’t need to be concerned about them.
- And the final line of verse one simply points out the truth we, too, experience, Salvation is ours! The chorus to a song we sang when we were kids goes,

Real joy is mine,

No matter if the teardrops start,

I’ve found a secret,

It’s Jesus in my heart.

No matter what, no matter is the teardrops start, no matter what we’re up against, when we know Jesus, salvation is ours and then real joy is ours too.

- And here’s why, we’ve touched on it a few minutes ago . . .

There is no one like our GOD!

- There is no one holy like our God. He is wholly other, he is completely holy and he is the one who lives in our hearts.
- There is no other god but our God. In Hannah's day, people made little statues and then bowed down to them. They were called idols. Isn't that crazy?! They worship the one they have created. We wouldn't do that would we? Yep – we do. We have any number of gods, from money, to things, to people, to status. The list is actually endless of the things we put in place of God. But there is no other God but our God.
- There is no ROCK but our God. Why try to find substitutes for him?! He is our strength, hope and our deliverer. Worship him. Praise him! Rejoice in him.
- Hanna goes on to admonish us with . . .

God KNOWS

- This is frightening and comforting at the same time.
- He puts humanity in their place with *“Do not keep talking so proudly or let your mouth speak such arrogance, for the Lord is a God who knows, and by his deeds are weighed.”* (v. 3)
- We can all think of arrogant people we'd love to see put in their place, and as we're thinking that, I hope we realize, it's arrogant to think that ourselves.
- God knows. He knows everything about us, he knows our thoughts, our fears, our sins, our hurts. He knows EVERYTHING! That's frightening, and it should be if we are living in rebellion. But it's comforting too in that even with everything he knows about us, he still loves us enough to offer . . .

Transformation and deliverance

- Verse 4 promises that the enemy is disarmed and God's children are armed with his strength. That's all we need!
- It goes on to say that the ones who forget where everything ultimately comes from will be empty and those who rely on God will be filled by the one who can multiply a little boy's lunch into a banquet for over 5,000.
- And then, close to Hannah's heart is God's care for the childless. *She who was barren has borne seven children, but she who has had many sons pines away.* (v4c) Perhaps you remember that I said that Hannah had six children. Some have pointed out that she didn't know how to count, but they're the ones mistaken – Hannah is sharing the perfect number 7 which had significance for. What had been imperfect is perfected by the one who gives and takes away. God transforms and delivers because he is . . .

The ULTIMATE POWER

- This, of course, is a recurring theme here, but we too often seem to forget it. Verse 5 reminds us that our mighty God has the power over life and death, poverty and wealth, humility and exaltation, and the poor and royalty. This is our God.
- Do you know this? When we worry about how horrible things are in this world, what does that say about our faith is the Rock who is our God? It shows we really don't believe our own words. God is God and we are not. God is on his throne and this is his creation. What ultimately happens only happens with his permission and often with his careful direction. Listen to the last part of verse 8, *“For the foundations of the earth are the Lord's; on them he has set the world.”* (v. 8)
- To paraphrase a line from the hymn, “This is our Father's world, we can rest in that thought.” Let's be thankful for our Rock who is the ultimate power, because he is . . .

Our great Protector

- This is Hannah's final emphasis in her thanksgiving prayer. Listen, *He will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.*
*“It is not by strength that one prevails;
those who oppose the Lord will be broken.
The Most High will thunder from heaven;
the Lord will judge the ends of the earth.”* 1 Samuel 2:9-10a

- This is another recurring theme in the song. God is our protector. He will protect his faithful servants so that we don't have to fear in the dark what we know to be true in the light of day.
- Here is the point and we need to pound it into our minds: We have the strength of God. He is our strength and shield in an uncertain world.

Conclusion: That's it ABC! That is your Thanksgiving message. Paul nailed it in his letter to the Philippians that we heard earlier. Let's hear it again and start a verse earlier, *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.* Philippians 4:4-7

With Hannah's and Paul's thankful words we are set up for a 365 day thanksgiving plan.

Rejoice! And again REJOICE!

Don't be anxious, REJOICE!

In every situation, REJOICE!

In prayer and petition, REJOICE!

With thanksgiving, REJOICE!

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and you minds in Christ Jesus, because there is no rock like our God Amen.