

# King Song

1 Samuel 2:1-11    May 24, 2026

The right song can really set the tone. Particularly in movies, where the music not only compliments the imagery, but often steers us to how we're supposed to feel about what we're watching. Music helps us understand whether the action is scary or silly, whether a character is acting in anxiety or excitement, or if a scene is meant to be pivotal as the soundtrack replays the main theme.

Hans Zimmer is one of the most famous film composers working today, often scoring Christopher Nolan's movies. He once told a story of how Nolan sent him a letter which contained a short, metaphorical story that had nothing to do with any movie script. Nolan asked Zimmer to take a day, write whatever came to him, and then Nolan would come over and listen.

Hans wrote what he described as a fragile little piece of music. Very personal and tender. After hearing it, Nolan said, "Well, I better make the movie then." Zimmer asked what *is* the movie? And Nolan started describing a huge, sweeping space epic. The music would be for *Interstellar*, and hearing Zimmer's personal melody, Nolan said, "I know where the heart of the movie is now."<sup>1</sup>

In 1 Samuel chapter 1, we have a prologue. It sets the stage and tells us where Samuel came from. He is going to be the man God uses to transition Israel from judges to monarchy. But he also establishes how this arrangement will work. That, yes, Israel will have a king, but any king is really just a *vice-king* under the King of the universe - the Lord of Armies, God Himself.

In chapter 2 we have the Song of Hannah. It's not only a nice moment of praise and thanksgiving. *This* song is going to set the tone for the book. It provides the theological heart for the story and foreshadows many of the scenes that lay ahead. By the way - for any classical music lovers out there - scholars categorize this song as a Rondo.<sup>2</sup>

Our author *starts* the book with a prologue followed by Hannah's song, and then he *ends* the book with *David's* song and an epilogue. Hannah's song describes Who God is, what He does, and what He *will* do. David's song is about how God has been *faithful* to do all those things.<sup>3</sup> These are the theological soundtrack for the rest of the book.

The themes Hannah drives home are that God is in charge, He is personally involved in human affairs, and He is interested in you walking with Him through life so that He can lift you up.

**1 Samuel 2:1 - <sup>1</sup> Hannah prayed: My heart rejoices in the LORD; my horn is lifted up by the LORD. My mouth boasts over my enemies, because I rejoice in your salvation.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q7DuMIJHHC0>

<sup>2</sup> David Toshio Tsumura *The New International Commentary On The Old Testament: The First Book of Samuel*

<sup>3</sup> Bill Arnold *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*

There are many points in the Bible where God's people pause to sing a song after He has done a work for them. Moses, Miriam, Deborah, David, Habakkuk, and Mary are all examples. In fact Mary's song in Luke 1 echoes some of the words and themes of Hannah's song.<sup>4</sup> Both Mary and Hannah understood that not only were they loved and graciously treated by God, but that their lives were part of His ongoing, dramatic work that will one day cover the whole earth.

The same is true of our lives! That's something to be excited about. Something to *sing* about. To let our hearts overflow with thankfulness as we sing out the testimony of God's amazing grace. That we once were lost but now we're found. That He has done great things and He *will* do great things.

Hannah *rejoiced*. Not just because she wouldn't be called childless anymore. She rejoiced *in* the LORD. In His salvation. Her relationship with God is what made the difference between chapter 1 and 2. In chapter 1 she said her heart was *broken*. Now her heart is *triumphant!* She's thankful that the Lord opened her womb, of course, but she's also thankful that the Lord lifted her head.

God is a *lifter*. Psalm 3 says He is a God Who hears and answers and will lift up your head. When you're hurt, when you're overwhelmed, when you're beaten down, Jesus is the lifter of your head.

Is Hannah being rude back to Penninah in that second to last line? One commentator says the image connotes "sticking out the tongue, and sneering."<sup>5</sup> I can't really imagine Hannah doing that. Plus, in a moment she's going to tell everyone to *not* boast proudly.

The words she used mean her mouth was open wide to swallow up her enemies.<sup>6</sup> And what is her mouth full of right now? Praise. Thanksgiving. Prayer. Confidence in the Lord. Praise is powerful!

**1 Samuel 2:2 - <sup>2</sup> There is no one holy like the LORD. There is no one besides you! And there is no rock like our God.**

If you want to know about God, here's the place to start: His greatness and purity and uniqueness on display. Greater in each of His attributes than we can comprehend. How strong is He? Greater than we think. How merciful is He? Greater than we realize. How good is He? How great is His love?

This description of God as Rock reminds us of the parable Jesus told. The wise man built his house, his life, his future, upon the Rock. All other ground is sinking sand. As Deuteronomy 32 says, "Their 'rock' is not like our Rock."<sup>7</sup> And not only is He the solid foundation we can build our lives upon, we remember that He is the rock of our salvation.<sup>8</sup> The Rock of ages, cleft for me.

**1 Samuel 2:3 - <sup>3</sup> Do not boast so proudly, or let arrogant words come out of your mouth, for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and actions are weighed by him.**

<sup>4</sup> Ronald Youngblood *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 3: Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Samuel*

<sup>5</sup> Ralph Klein *Word Biblical Commentary, Volume 10: 1 Samuel*

<sup>6</sup> P. Kyle McCarter *1 Samuel: A New Translation With Introduction And Commentary*

<sup>7</sup> Deuteronomy 32:31

<sup>8</sup> 2 Samuel 22:47

Our God is a God of knowledge. He knows us. He knows the plans He has for us. He knows what we need and what we don't. He knows how to lead us. He knows the way to go. He knit us together, He sustains our lives, and He wants real relationship with us. So He also evaluates and measures our lives. Are we following? Do our actions line up with what He desires?

Hannah tells us to not be boastful or arrogant. In the coming verses she will list a bunch of things that people naturally lean on or get proud about and she shows how fleeting they are. Meanwhile, if we want to boast, let's be like Hannah. Let's boast in the Lord our God.<sup>9</sup> Let's proclaim *His* power and accomplishment in our lives and in this world.

**1 Samuel 2:4-7 - <sup>4</sup> The bows of the warriors are broken, but the feeble are clothed with strength. <sup>5</sup> Those who are full hire themselves out for food, but those who are starving hunger no more. The woman who is childless gives birth to seven, but the woman with many sons pines away. <sup>6</sup> The LORD brings death and gives life; he sends some down to Sheol, and he raises others up. <sup>7</sup> The LORD brings poverty and gives wealth; he humbles and he exalts.**

Hannah lists for us seven contrasts and how the Lord reverses the fortunes of people in these different groups according to His purposes. Strong and weak, full and hungry, barren and fertile, dead and alive, sick and well, poor and rich, humble and exalted. God is in charge over all.

In some of these examples, Hannah actually foreshadows some of what we'll see in the pages ahead. People of strength and wealth and position brought down while others who are oppressed or weak or humble are exalted.

Now, it would be a mistake if we think God does these reversals *just* to show how strong He is. It's not just about flexing His sovereignty. *Who* does God exalt and who does He bring low? Hannah will tell us in verse 9. Psalms, Proverbs, James, and Peter all explain, "God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." It's not random or arbitrary. Remember - God *wants* to lift your head.

He wants to make us alive. Here's what He wants, as written in Isaiah 55: "Come, everyone who is thirsty. Pay attention and come to Me, listen so that you will *live!*"<sup>10</sup> That's what He wants. That we will receive His *hesed* love and *live*. He's not toying with us. He's *telling* us how to receive life. But when a person *rejects* God's way and God's revelation and commands, the result is death.

**1 Samuel 2:8 - <sup>8</sup> He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the trash heap. He seats them with noblemen and gives them a throne of honor. For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; he has set the world on them.**

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<sup>9</sup> 2 Corinthians 10:17

<sup>10</sup> Isaiah 55:1-3

The poor and needy are shown in the worst possible position. The trash heap means a dung hill.<sup>11</sup> That was where they lived. Where they slept at night. What has the Lord done for them? He gives them a throne of honor. He seats them among *princes*.<sup>12</sup>

We were the beggars, now we're royalty. Not because of our own power or our own loveliness, but because of God's great love for us. His salvation is not just a rags to riches story, it's an excrement to eternity story. "Gives them a throne of honor" is also translated "inherit the throne of glory."<sup>13</sup>

Oh the grace of God! That we, who are nothing, who began life as enemies of God, lost in sin, citizens of the kingdom of darkness, who bring nothing to the table but guilt and failure, would be given a place and a part in the Kingdom of Jesus. Not just to dwell there, but to reign with Him!<sup>14</sup>

That's our future. Meanwhile, we can be confident that God will not allow this world to fall apart before His plan is done. There are people out there today saying the world is going to end. That climate change or atomic war or some other threat will destroy us all. Many young people are convinced that there is no future for this world. Here's what God says in Psalm 75:

**Psalm 75:3 - <sup>3</sup> When the earth and all its inhabitants shake, I am the one who steadies its pillars.**

Yes, the world trembles. Our God is a *Rock*. Stable, reliable, unshakable. A firm foundation. If you build your life on Him, then you will be safe in the storm. His plan cannot fail.

**1 Samuel 2:9 - <sup>9</sup> He guards the steps of his faithful ones, but the wicked perish in darkness, for a person does not prevail by his own strength.**

We talked about this a few weeks ago, but remember: The faithful ones are simply those who receive God's love. They believe and trust God and walk with Him. Does that describe you?

In the *closing* song of 2 Samuel, sung by David, David says that he was faithful. That he let God's ordinances guide his steps. Of course, we look at that and say, "What about Bathsheba? What about your ungodly census? What about the mistakes you made?" David *did* make mistakes. But even still, God was with him and God was *guarding* David's steps - guarding his life. God's grace working powerfully *even when* David fell into faithlessness for a time.

No believer's life is perfect. But God keeps watch and God pours out His grace and God provides His strength as we walk with Him. You see, we can't accomplish the Christian life in our own strength. That's not how we prevail. It's not by our might or by our power, but by God's Spirit.

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<sup>11</sup> Klein, Tsumura

<sup>12</sup> Robert Alter *The David Story*

<sup>13</sup> See KJV, AMP, LES

<sup>14</sup> 2 Timothy 2:12

As we allow God's ordinances to *guide* our steps, the Lord *guards* our steps. Though a believer may fall, Psalm 37 (another David song) promises that we will not be overwhelmed, because the LORD supports us with His hand.<sup>15</sup> Our part is to put God's instructions in our hearts so *that* our step do not falter. And, when we do fail, to turn in repentance so God can restore us. *That's* the difference between Saul and David. Not perfection, but faithfulness.

**1 Samuel 2:10 - <sup>10</sup> Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered; he will thunder in the heavens against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give power to his king; he will lift up the horn of his anointed.**

As usual, the Bible sets before us life and death. If you will receive God's love by faith, He gives you life. If you oppose the Lord, you will be *shattered*. It's the same verb Hannah used up in verse 4 saying the bows would be broken. Not just broken, but crushed into tiny pieces.<sup>16</sup>

God uses this image of the broken bow multiple times. Ezekiel prophesied that Gog's bow would be broken. Jeremiah prophesied that Elam's bow would be shattered. But this promise is not just for far off people who we don't know. *All* who oppose Him will be shattered. It even applied to Israel. Sadly, by the time of Hosea, the Israelites had opposed the Lord for so long, He finally said, "I'm going to break the bow of Israel."<sup>17</sup> And it happened.

But look at those last two lines. Hannah ends her song with a crescendo. She identifies two figures who had yet to arrive. The king and the anointed one. In Hebrew, the *melek* and the *messiah*. Hannah moves from praise to prophecy. Israel had not yet demanded a king, yet Hannah declares that one was coming *and* that God *would* give him power. This, by itself is a great work of grace. Because when Israel demanded a king they were, in one sense, divorcing themselves from God's rule over their nation. And yet, the Lord would not abandon them. He gave a king. He *empowered* the king. And when that king failed, God provided a *better* king.

But more than a king would be needed. God's people and *all* people would need a Messiah. The Anointed One, the Christ. A deliverer. And in this book we will see how David on his very best day was only a dim shadow of what the Son of David is yesterday, today, and forever.

**1 Samuel 2:11 - <sup>11</sup> Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy served the LORD in the presence of the priest Eli.**

When Christopher Nolan sent the letter to Hans Zimmer, it contained a short little metaphor about what it meant to be a father. And Zimmer's piece, he says, was based on his own love for his son.

This great song, this great story, is about a loving God, God the Father, showing faithfulness and love to His children, even when they turn their backs on Him.

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<sup>15</sup> Psalm 37:23-24

<sup>16</sup> Alter

<sup>17</sup> Hosea 1:5

So now, the stage is set. The melody has played. Now we watch it all unfold and see the power of God, the graciousness of God, the patience of God, compared to the feebleness of man, the failure of man, the inconsistency of man. But at the same time, we'll see the story of God using human beings for His good work. Empowering people to be a meaningful part of what He's promised. It's an amazing story - one that continues through the lives of believers today.

As we close, I'd like us to return briefly to those reversal verses, verses 4 through 7, where we see God doing these specific things. We might ask, "Does He really do this still today?" Does He clothe us in strength? Then we remember how Ephesians 6 invites us to clothe ourselves in the armor of God so that we will be strong, able to stand against every scheme of the devil.

Does God still fill the hungry? Jesus said that those who hunger and thirst for righteousness *will* be filled. That those who come to Jesus, the Bread of Life, will never be hungry.

Does He give children to the childless? Whether you have been blessed with physical children or not, God says that in the Church we receive a hundred-fold family. Brothers, sisters, mothers, and children.<sup>18</sup>

Does He make us rich? Paul says in Ephesians 3 we have been given incalculable riches in Christ.

The God of the Bible is a God of faithful, generous activity toward those who will be faithful to Him. Those who trust Him and walk according to His ways. Those are the people who are loved and lifted by the power of God, Who will never fail.

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<sup>18</sup> Mark 10:29