

## **Hannah Remembers**

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My heart is angry still when I recall  
the sacrilege, the blasphemy, the gall  
of those two men who claimed the name of priest  
but turned our sacrifice into a pagan feast  
and mocked the marriage covenant that God  
made with his people. Little Ichabod  
was named because God's glory in the ark  
had gone; in Phinehas and Hophni not a spark  
of glory ever dwelled. With lust and greed  
they put themselves before the people's need.  
My soul was grieved. If only I could bear  
a son whose holy godliness would dare  
to challenge Baal and speak the words of life  
to counteract apostasy and strife.

Elkanah loved me dearly, this I know.  
Penninah had her boys and girls to show  
me every day how poor I was,  
provoking and tormenting me because  
I clearly couldn't do what she had done;  
How desperately I yearned to bear a son  
and I would grant him to the work of God  
as long as he should live with staff and rod.  
Like Nazirites he'd dwell in holiness  
not for a month or two but with a quest  
to serve the Lord of hosts for all his days  
and do the work of God and know his ways.

Old Eli saw me at the temple door;  
My anguished heart was struggling to implore  
the Lord of hosts to hear my desperate plea  
and free me from this dark anxiety.  
They said the Lord had closed my barren womb;  
I didn't see this as a sign of doom.  
If God could shut my womb and cause me pain,  
then plainly he could open it again!

Eli assumed that I was drunk and tried  
to stop me. But he saw how hard I cried—

my tears spoke more than words could ever do—  
He saw my hurting spirit and he knew  
it wasn't wine I'd poured out, but my soul;  
I felt that I was somehow less than whole.  
Dear Eli smiled and bade me go in peace:  
'The God of Israel bring you sweet release  
now gladly celebrate this blessed morn.'  
And so within the year my son was born.  
I named him Samuel for God had heard  
my prayer according to the priestly Word.

When Yahweh challenged him to make a choice,  
he answered, 'Speak, Lord, I will hear your voice.'  
He grew in grace and favour all around  
and not a word he spoke fell to the ground.  
From north to south, from hill to seaside sand,  
they knew there was a prophet in the land.

Those who has many sons have been denied;  
the barren now have blessings multiplied.  
The Lord brings down the haughty who do wrong  
and raises up the weak to make them strong.

*This poem was written after I preached on Hannah at a Mother's Day  
service at St Mary's New Horizons CRC church on 13<sup>th</sup> May, 2018.*