

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Let's pray...

[1Sa 3:1-21 NKJV] 1 Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; [there was] no widespread revelation. 2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli [was] lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, 3 and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God [was], and while Samuel was lying down, 4 that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down. 6 Then the LORD called yet again,

"Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.) 8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." 11 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13

"For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. 14 "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever." 15 So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!" He answered, "Here I am." 17 And he said, "What [is] the word that [the LORD] spoke to you? Please do not hide [it] from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18 Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It [is] the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him." 19 So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba

knew that Samuel [had been] established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

So last week, in our study through chapter 2, we saw the contrasts between Hannah – an individual who knew God’s sovereignty and providence over every aspect of her life, an individual who was able to rejoice in the Lord – no matter what the circumstances were – remember, she drops off Samuel at the tabernacle at the age of 4, she was an individual who was content in the Lord.

And we saw her prayer in chapter two that she was one who exalted the Lord as well.

And then we saw Eli’s two sons who were the total opposite.

They were not content in what the Lord had provided them, and instead of rejoicing in the Lord, they turned to stealing from the Lord.

Remember, they took a bigger cut of the sacrifice for themselves; they robbed God by not burning the fat upon the altar.

It also mentioned that they were having sex with some of the women in the tabernacle.

And they did all of this as they served in the tabernacle.

Either they didn't care about the Lord or they simply thought that God was not really sovereign and maybe they would be able to get away with whatever they did.

And the scriptures point out that the reason they did this was because they did not know the Lord.

Their father Eli – was not much better as he looked the other way at the corruption emanating from his two sons.

However, despite the corruption within the tabernacle, we also saw little Samuel grow before the Lord.

And here in chapter three, we are going to see the Lord begin to use Samuel as a prophet.

[1Sa 3:1 NKJV] 1 Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; [there was] no widespread revelation.

We really don't know how old Samuel is here in chapter three, most theologians put his age around 12-15.

I asked you to make a note that Samuel ministered to the Lord.

Because ministering to the Lord is very different than ministering for the Lord.

Ministering for the Lord is teaching a bible study or giving a sermon, it is serving one another in His name.

However, ministering to the Lord is about drawing closer to Him personally and privately.

It is not what others see us do but, what the Lord alone enjoys as we spend time with Him.

It is that deep personal relationship that He desires from us.

Jesus gives us the warning in the gospel of Matthew,

[Mat 7:22-23 NKJV] 22 "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' This is ministering for the Lord

23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Because they didn't minister to the Lord – they didn't have a personal relationship with Him, they walked in disobedience.

Church, ministering to the Lord is the highest calling in life and every single one of us is capable of doing it.

Two times in chapter two, we are told that Samuel, even as a child, ministered to the Lord.

I also asked you to make a note that the word of the Lord was rare in those days;

Why is that???

Well, we know that 1 Samuel takes place during the end of the period of Judges, and one of the things that we find mentioned in scripture over and over again during this time period is that

everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

And because of their wickedness, there were not many people who had their ears tuned to receive the word of God.

Turn with me to the book of Amos 8,

Amos is before Obadiah and Jonah.

**[Amo 8:10-11 NKJV] 10 I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentation; I will bring sackcloth on
every waist, And baldness on every head; I will make it like
mourning for an only [son], And its end like a bitter day. 11
"Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD, "That I will
send a famine on the land, Not a famine of bread, Nor a thirst
for water, But of hearing the words of the LORD.**

You see, when we seek God, it generally becomes easier to find Him. When we push away God, it generally becomes more difficult to hear and receive His Word.

That is why God used Hannah – because as we saw in her prayer, she too ministered to God - and that is why God will use Samuel, because his ears are in tune to receive the word of God.

[1Sa 3:2-3 NKJV] 2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli [was] lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, 3 and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God [was], and while Samuel was lying down,

Eli is pretty old now. We will see in the next chapter that he was 98 years old

Here we see that his eyesight is failing him. He is going blind – it is also reflection of where he stood spiritually.

That is why the word of God came to Samuel and not Eli.

Now, every night, one of the jobs of the priests was to light the candlestick in the Holy Place.

And the candlestick or the menorah would burn throughout the night.

So the fact that the candles were still burning when this occurs suggests that it happened late into the night.

[1Sa 3:4-5 NKJV] 4 that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down.

The LORD calls Samuel by name.

And Samuel responds with "Here I am"

Samuel is among several others who also said, "Here I am" when the LORD spoke to them:

Abraham (**Genesis 22:1**) responded with here I am when God tests his faith by sending him to sacrifice Isaac.

Jacob (**Genesis 46:2**) responds with, here I am, when God gives him confirmation that he should go down to Egypt.

Moses (**Exodus 3:4**) responds with here I am when God speaks to him from the burning bush.

Isaiah (**Isaiah 6:8**) responds with here I am when the Lord says “Whom shall I send,

And who will go for Us? – he says here I am , send me.

and in the New Testament, Ananias (**Acts 9:10**) responds with here I am when the Lord gives him a vision and tells him about Saul of Tarsus.

You see, church, “Here I am”, is the perfect response to when God calls us.

We don't say, here I am because somehow God doesn't know where we are at.

We say, here I am because it tells God and it reminds us we are simply before Him as servants, asking what He wants us to do.

However, Samuel doesn't know it's the Lord yet – he thinks it's old man Eli calling him in the middle of the night.

[1Sa 3:6-7 NKJV] 6 Then the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down

again." 7 (Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.)

So once again the Lord calls on Samuel and just like before, Samuel thinks that Eli is calling him.

Now I asked you to make a note of verse 7.

Because last week, when we read about how corrupt the children of Eli were, the scriptures tell us that they did not know the Lord.

Phineas and Hophni didn't know the Lord because of their wickedness.

However, Samuel did not **yet** know the Lord. He knew about Him. He knew that the Lord was to be worshipped and ministered to.

However, Samuel didn't have that personal relationship with the Lord yet.

And because of this, he was not able to discern the voice of the Lord – that is why he kept going to Eli when he heard the voice.

[1Sa 3:8-9 NKJV] 8 And the LORD called Samuel again **the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me." Then Eli **perceived** that the LORD had called the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, 'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.**

One of the things that we can take comfort in is that God simply doesn't stop after reaching out the 1st time.

We see this over and over in scripture.

Abraham had two callings.

Jonah had two callings.

Growing up at home, we wished we had a second calling. If we ignored our parent's first calling, the second became the second calling.

Samuel knew that he is not hearing things – that is why he tells Eli ,
Here I am, **for you did call me**

Remember, Eli cannot hear God calling Samuel.

But after the third time of this happening, he perceived, the Hebrew word used here means that Eli understood - that he was able to discern that the Lord was speaking to Samuel.

How was Eli able to perceive this despite him being spiritually blinded???

1. Because at one time, his ears were tuned to be able to hear the word of God.
2. Because of what the man of God had told him back in chapter two – that God was going to judge him and his sons for what they had done.

So Eli commands Samuel to go back to bed and gives him a response for the next time that the Lord speaks to him.

[1Sa 3:10-13 NKJV] 10 Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears." 11 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows,

because **his sons made themselves vile**, and he did not restrain them.

So the Lord calls out to Samuel the fourth time and Samuel responds just the way Eli told him to respond.

And God gives Samuel the message of what is going to happen to Eli and his two sons.

The message would be so shocking that when people heard it, both their ears would tingle.

And we also see this in other scriptures as God pronounces judgment – we see an example of this in Jeremiah 19:3 as well.

Everything that the man of God revealed to Eli in chapter two, God is going to do.

Note that God said Eli's sons made themselves vile.

Each person is responsible for his own evil –

[Eze 18:19-20 NKJV] 19 "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

The sons of Eli demonstrated their wickedness and Eli demonstrated his by not stopping what they were doing – by looking the other way.

Because he knew and did nothing about it, he is responsible.

If he truly was unaware of what they were doing, then he would have been responsible.

[Jas 4:17 NKJV] 17 Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do [it], to him it is sin.

[1Sa 3:14 NKJV] 14 "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

What a terrible judgment!

This means, "It's too late for Eli and his sons.

Any opportunity for repentance has past. their judgment is sealed."

Now, there will be some that say – where is God's grace in all of this???

Remember, time passed between the man of God giving the message to Eli (end of ch 2) and God giving the message to

Samuel here in ch3.

Nowhere do we see them repent for what they had done.

God doesn't want us to simply say I am sorry – He wants repentance.

[1Sa 3:15-18 NKJV] 15 So Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!" He answered, "Here I am." 17 And he said, "What [is] the word that [the LORD] spoke to you? Please do not hide [it] from me. God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18 Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It [is] the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

It is hard to imagine what Samuel must have thought as God revealed to him that judgment was coming upon Eli and his sons.

Eli was the man that had raised him in the tabernacle from the time that Hannah had brought him over.

Eli had an idea of what the message of God to Samuel was. Kindly, he took the initiative and asked Samuel, knowing it was difficult for the young man to tell him.

But, Eli warned Samuel that it was his obligation to tell him everything God had revealed to him.

You see, that was the role of a prophet – not to simply tell the people what they wanted to hear but to tell them the entire message that God has given them.

No matter how painful or unpopular it might be.

God gave the message to Samuel for a reason – to withhold it would frustrate the purpose of God and bring God's judgment on the prophet – (Ezekiel 33, the watchmen)

This is why we do a verse by verse study through the bible. I am accountable to give you the entire council of God.

At the end of verse 18, that is Eli speaking when he says - It [is] the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him.

Let God do what God is going to do – Eli submitted to the judgment of God. He trusted God that He would render a just judgment.

[1Sa 3:19-21 NKJV] 19 So Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel [had been] established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

It would be interesting to know how big Samuel was because throughout chapter two and three, we just keep on reading that Samuel grew.

I asked you underline that none of his words fell to the ground. This means that everything that God spoke to Samuel – all the prophecies that God gave him to speak to the people – they all were fulfilled.

And that is a sign of a true prophet.

Notice that chapter three begins with the word of God being rare and it ends with the word of God becoming a common occurrence.

Why?

Because needed a servant who was in tune with the word of God and also be able to proclaim the word of God.

This is how God was going to use Samuel to deliver the Israelites from the period of anarchy.

Let's pray...

