

Samuel Established As A Prophet

The Word Of The Lord Was Rare (1 Sam. 3:1)

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.

- Notice again the amazing contrast between Samuel and the wicked priests.
- Important detail: the word of the Lord was *precious* in those days. He says there was no *widespread revelation (no open vision)*. Revelation in a more purely verbal form had become rare. Visual revelation had also become rare.
- The lack of prophetic revelation was another sign of the judgment that was coming against Israel.
 - *We do not see our signs; there is no longer any prophet; nor is there any among us who knows how long.*” (Psalm 74:9)
 - *“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. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD, but shall not find it.”* (Amos 8:11-12)
- Samuel represents a new birth, a new launching of the prophetic ministry that would help the people of God. Peter refers to this in Acts 3: *“Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days.”*

Here I Am (1 Sam. 3:2-7)

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.)

- Taking care of the menorah might have been part of Samuel's duties: *"And you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to burn continually. In the tabernacle of meeting, outside the veil which is before the Testimony, Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. It shall be a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel."* (Exodus 27:20-21)
- Notice Samuel's obedient heart.
- God hadn't yet revealed Himself to Samuel the way He did to His prophets.

Eli's Perception (1 Sam. 3:8-9)

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.

- This is meant to highlight for us the increasing blindness of Eli.

Your Servant Is Listening (1 Sam. 3:10)

10 Now the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant hears.”

- When we ask God to speak, we are recognizing that we cannot force Him to.
- Second, Samuel identifies himself in this prayer as God's servant.
- He says that he hears, or is listening. This is a beautiful play on words: *listening* and Samuel's *name* come from the same Hebrew word.
- Samuel had a listening posture before the Lord.
- Notice: this seems to go beyond mere auditory revelation. It looks like it was an actual appearance of the Lord in preincarnate form, a *theophany*.

God Reveals What He Is About To Do (1 Sam. 3:11-14)

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.”

- This is a great example of a biblical principle: *“Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.”* (Amos 3:7)

- What is iniquity? Iniquity is sin that is especially wicked, or has been embraced or allowed to go on so long that it has warped and misshapen your moral character. It speaks of perversity and depravity.
 - The love of pleasure and desire for an untroubled life led him to completely overlook the wickedness of his sons.
 - Because of this, things had come to the point where there must be judgment.

Eli's Fatalism (1 Sam. 3:15-18)

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."

- A great sign of Samuel’s maturity: he did not immediately share this revelation. Consider also: this is the first time he has had an experience of this type.
- He also didn’t become inflated and leave aside all the practical things of this life. Notice how he fulfilled his duties.
 - There’s also some great symbolism here, because the spiritual night in Israel was coming to an end, and Samuel would be the one who would open many spiritual doors for people.
- Eli is a strange mixture of kindness, harshness, and judgmentalism.

- Sadly, Eli really has resigned himself to the fact of judgment. He’s right to be humble, but there is seemingly no thought of repentance, or crying out to God for mercy. He couldn’t stir himself up to prayer.

Established (1 Sam. 3:19-4:1a)

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. 1 And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

- Everything Samuel said was accomplished. There was no vain word or unfulfilled prophecy.
- God’s presence was really in Shiloh again, as evidenced by the fact that He was speaking to Samuel there.
- The word of Samuel came to all the nation – does this mean Samuel’s words, or does it mean the word about Samuel? Perhaps both.

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