

# Calling of Samuel

## 1 Samuel 3

- I. Introduction
  - A. Whenever God does a new thing in the Bible it's super exciting... and intense
    1. Parting of the Red Sea // Ten Commandments // Mt of Smoke
    2. Inauguration of the Tabernacle // can't enter
    3. First fight in the Conquest (Jericho) // Achan
    4. Pentecost // Ananias and Sapphira
  - B. God's going to do some "Big things" in 1 Samuel as well
    1. They signify a change, something new, God is on the move
  - C. But the other side of that is to wonder, "Why doesn't God do this anymore?"
    1. These demonstrations of power are exciting, but they don't seem as common in 2024... right? Yes we have stories, but we want more
    2. So what are we supposed to make of these stories, and the one we are going to read today?
    3. Are we supposed to try and duplicate what these men and women experienced?
  - D. Is their experience the norm, or is my own?
  - E. B/C our experience feels kind of lame compared to theirs...right? Let's see
- II. *[1] Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision.*
  - A. God's presence was rare; God was silent
  - B. Samuel was ministering (serving) under the tutelage of Eli
  - C. Word of the Lord came in a vision (you see visions; not just hear)
  - D. Old Cov: God had to initiate contact
- III. *[2] At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. [3] The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.*
  - A. Eli is on the way out...
  - B. No frequent vision... Eli's eyesight was growing dim (physically & spiritually!)
  - C. He is lying down at his place, but (contrast) Samuel... he is lying down in the temple (not built yet)
  - D. Old Cov: Holy of holies was where the Ark was stored (God's dwelling place); Samuel is as close as you are legally and ceremonially allowed to be without getting fried
- IV. *[4] Then the **LORD called Samuel**, and he said, "Here I am!" [5] and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you **called me.**" But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. [6] And the **LORD called again**, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you **called me.**" But he said, "I did not **call**, my son; lie down again." [7] Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and **[meaning]** the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. [8] And the **LORD called Samuel again the***

*third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you **called** me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was **calling** the boy. [9] Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down, and if he **calls** you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.*

- A. Here's what's happening: Samuel is green, this is all new to him. The Lord is calling him, but he doesn't know what to make of it
    - 1. He thinks it's Eli
  - B. Finally Eli realizes what's going on here so he tells Samuel what to do
  - C. A few comments on Samuel: This whole scenario underscores his character
    - 1. He was ministering to the Lord (doing what he was supposed to do)
    - 2. He was close by (desiring to be as close to God's presence as he could)
    - 3. He was eager to obey (he stands up and runs to Eli)
  - D. Samuel has a lot of integrity, a lot of character to emulate
- V. *[10] And the **LORD came and stood, calling as at other times**, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant hears."*
- A. We have this idea of God speaking to people with voices in their head, but that's not really what the OT pictures
  - B. In Gen 15 it says the "Word of the Lord" came and appeared to Abraham, hanging out with him
  - C. It says that God would speak to Moses as a man does with his friend - face to face
  - D. Here the Word of the Lord came and stood...calling... as at other times
  - E. This isn't a voice in his head:
    - 1. This is a being, a vision to be seen
    - 2. Many would argue (as I would) that this is a pre-incarnate Christ
    - 3. As John describes
      - a) John 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
      - b) John 1:14, And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- VI. *[11] Then the LORD said to Samuel, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which the two ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. [12] On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. [13] And I declare to him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them. [14] Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."*
- A. The Word of the LORD, the LORD himself, stands with Samuel and tells him some bad news for Eli.
  - B. Eli was hoping God forgot...
- VII. *[15] Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. [16] But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." [17] And Eli said, "What was it that he told you? Do*

*not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.” [18] So 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. You have to respect Samuel. He could have fibbed a little here or stretched the truth. After all, Eli can’t necessarily call down a curse on him, but Samuel is a young man of integrity
- B. He speaks truthfully and directly to Eli → The mark of a faithful prophet!
  - 1. He hears... he obeys... he shares what the LORD told him
- C. Eli’s perspective? Let God do whatever seems right to him.

VIII. *[19] And 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 was established as a prophet of the LORD. [21] And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.*

- A. God continues to give Samuel success
- B. He appears to him other times and all the words that he gave him come true
- C. This is what it means by “let none of his words fall to the ground”
- D. When God speaks, he follows through, and he proved that through Samuel
- E. In v20 we see the MAIN IDEA of the whole chapter, “All Israel knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the LORD.”
- F. And the LORD appeared again... and continued to reveal himself... how? As the Word of the LORD
- G. This whole chapter is about positioning and establishing Samuel as the prophet and priest who will be replacing Eli and his wicked sons

IX. OIA

- A. When we read the Bible there are three main things we need to do → OIA
- B. Observation is to ask, “What does this passage say?”
  - 1. What I just did was all observatory stuff
- C. Interpretation asks, “What does it mean?”
  - 1. To put it another way, “What was the author’s original purpose for putting this here? What was he trying to say?”
  - 2. Now if I told you the point of this passage was that you should sneak into LCMR and sleep as close to the stage as possible like Samuel did, that wouldn’t be accurate
  - 3. If I told you that God wants to speak to you and all you need to do is lie down and be very still until he shows up, that wouldn’t be a proper interpretation
  - 4. The interpretation of this passage is v20:
    - a) God is no longer silent
    - b) There’s a new prophet in town
    - c) He’s gonna replace Eli very shortly
- D. So observation is what happens, and interpretation is what it means, but application is what it means for me / for us
  - 1. For this we need to dig a little deeper....

X. Old Covenant versus New Covenant

- A. *Hebrews 1:1–3 [1] Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. [3] He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...*
- B. In the NKJV this is word as God spoke at various times and in various ways...
- C. The OT is our primary record of the Old Covenant, and the NT is our primary record of the New Covenant.
1. The Old Covenant refers to the agreement between God and the Israelites, established through Moses, outlining laws and commandments for righteous living and the promise of blessings for obedience.
  2. The New Covenant signifies the promise of salvation and forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ, replacing the old system of laws with the grace and redemption offered by His sacrificial death and resurrection.
- D. In the OC, God spoke from time to time in various ways, but mostly through prophets
- E. In the NC, he "HAS SPOKEN" by his Son
- F. In the OC, the messengers were fallen, sinful, confused, bad parents (Eli)
- G. In the NC, the messenger, who is the Word of God, is the exact imprint
1. Perfect, radiant, glorious, pristine, full deity
- H. There's more of this unpacked throughout Hebrews:
1. In the OC, God's Spirit would anoint people for a purpose only to leave again, but it dwelt in the Temple (holy of holies w/ the Ark)
  2. In the NC, God's Spirit no longer dwells in a building. Now it dwells in his people b/c we are called his temple
  3. In the OC, there was limited access to God's presence. Only the high priest... only once a year... or else
  4. In the NC, we have TOTAL access because the curtain separating the holy place was torn when Jesus was crucified
  5. In the OC, there was fear when approaching God's dwelling
  6. In the NC, we are told to BOLDLY APPROACH THE THRONE WITH CONFIDENCE at any time, regardless of where we are or how we are dressed
  7. In the OC, we had fallen priests
  8. In the NC, we have a perfect high priest who sacrificed once for all (that's why we don't do a mass as protestants b/c the mass is for sacrifice / the sacrifice is done!)
- I. In every way, shape, and form we have a better covenant, a better promise
- J. So... we don't need to be jealous of Samuel. You have something better
- XI. So, what's our APPLICATION (knowing the point of 1 Sam 3... knowing the OC/NC)?
- A. *Hebrews 10:19–25, [19] Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, [20] by the new and living way that he*

*opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, [21] and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. [24] And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, [25] not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (ESV)*

- B. Sometimes we use the illustration of a triangle at Revolve to describe the disciple's journey and health. A disciple lives his life in 3 dimensions → up w/ God, in with God's people, and out with the world
  - 1. Let us draw near with confidence
  - 2. Let us stir one another up to love and good works (one way we do this is by gathering that we might encourage one another)
  - 3. Let us hold fast (and not look to the Old Covenant like fools)
- C. Samuel slept in the tabernacle... Jesus' Spirit dwells within his people
- D. Samuel had to wait to hear from God... we can draw near anytime we want
- E. Samuel alone could do certain sacrifices as the high priest and it still wouldn't take away sin... Jesus sacrificed once for all
- F. It is thrilling and exciting to read these stories, but we should never be jealous
- G. In the NC we have access to God that Samuel only experienced in part!
- H. We should learn from Samuel's character
  - 1. His eagerness and readiness to obey
  - 2. His honesty even when it was difficult to share with Eli
  - 3. His desire to be close to God and hear his voice
- I. But remember that if you are in Christ, you have even greater access to God
  - 1. So draw near... with eagerness... with expectancy... desiring to be close to God and hear his voice... ready to obey as you pray, read his Word, and give the Holy Spirit opportunities of stillness to speak into your life