

**People of the Promise:
Samuel: Call of God
1 Samuel 1-3**

Introduction

Israel has been living through the dark ages of their history. It is bleak. Once the generation that knew Joshua died, the people forgot God and pursued idols. They suffered the consequences with wave after wave of oppressing nations. They would cry out in their distress, and God would send a man to deliver them. But as the years wore on the cycle gets worse and worse, until you can barely tolerate reading through the final chapters. Even the heroes behave wickedly, and the nation seems hopelessly mired in sin and bad decisions.

In the later part of those years, though, the events of the book of Ruth transpire. It's not till later that Israel will understand the huge significance of what happened there.

Even later comes the story of Hannah, suffering the sorrows of barrenness and of polygamy, the other wife having children right and left and gloating over Hannah with wicked cruelty. But to barren Hannah is born a son in answer to her prayer. His name is Samuel, asked of the Lord. She dedicates him to the Lord as a young boy. And in what God

will do through this child lies the hope of the nation. God will call him. And that will change everything. Call of God.

Fitting that on a night we ordain Ben Solensky to gospel ministry (and pray over Jonathan Overstreet and his family heading to serve in another local church) that we would be in this passage. If the qualities we see in Samuel are part of who you are, Ben, Jonathan, you will serve God and His people well.

1. Man of Worship (1:26-28)

1 Samuel 1:26-28

²⁶ And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him.

²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD."

And he worshiped the LORD there.

To bow down

2. Man of Ministry (2:11, 18-19; 3:1)

1 Samuel 2:11

Then Elkanah went home to Ramah. And the boy was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli the priest.

1 Samuel 2:18-19

18 Samuel was ministering before the LORD, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. **19** And his mother used to make for him a little robe and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice.

1 Samuel 3:1a

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD in the presence of Eli.

In contrast to Eli's wicked sons, Hophni and Phineas, who used their ministry positions for wicked, selfish purposes

These men grew up in the household of the priest of the LORD, but they did not know the LORD and blasphemed Him with their lifestyle.

We desire our children to grow up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, but some of them are already on their way to being wicked blasphemers of God. They are hardened to the truth of God. They are unmoved by the worship of God. Their hearts are far from God. Their worship is vain, merely habits not heart.

What are you doing with the truth you hear?
Ignoring it?
Do you love God?
Do you pray?

Do you spend any time in your Bible just to know God?

Are you trying to serve God as a child?

Or are you just watching your parents and other people do it?

“It must have seemed to many that there was no hope of improvement, no exit from the night. But in the middle of it all the text keeps whispering, “Don’t forget Samuel—you see how Samuel is serving.” That is Yahweh’s manner—quietly providing for the next moment even in the middle of the darkest moments.” Dale Ralph Davis, 31

3. Man of Growth (2:21, 26, 3:19)

1 Samuel 2:21

Indeed the LORD visited Hannah, and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:26

Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man.

And in goodness (wellbeing, pleasing) in relation with Yahweh and with man.

Cf. Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Growth takes time. During those years the fate of the nation looked bleak. Those who were supposed to be leading in righteousness led in wickedness of the worst sort.

“Yahweh is already at work providing for new, godly leadership for his people. There are no slogans, no campaigns, no speeches. It is all very quiet. Growth seldom makes noise, and Yahweh is growing his new leader.” Davis, 31

4. Man of Submission (3:4-16)

As we saw this morning in John 7, the revelation of truth comes to those who want to do the will of God—submission.

1 Samuel 3:4

Then the LORD called Samuel, and he said, “Here I am!”

“Here I am!” (3:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 16)

1 Samuel 3:9-10

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. ¹⁰ And the LORD came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.”

Hears—listens in order to obey

5. Man of God's Word (3:1, 7, 11-21)

1 Samuel 3:1

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.

This famine of God's Word resulted from the judgment of God on a people who had been given the Word of God (the Torah—the Pentateuch) but ignored it. Every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Dale Ralph Davis, *Looking on the Heart*, Volume 1, 44: "Starvation may not come from the absence of food but from lack of appetite."

1 Samuel 3:7

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

1 Samuel 3:11-18

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."

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."

Eli had complained to his sons about their behavior, but he should have had them removed. He was judge and priest of the nation.

What Samuel first heard from the Lord was very difficult to receive and to pass on. But he did so. Samuel revered and loved Eli. It was a test of his integrity as a prophet of the Lord whether he would faithfully deliver to Eli the word God revealed.

1 Samuel 3:19-21

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.

Conclusion

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2. Man of Ministry (2:11, 18-19; 3:1)
3. Man of Growth (2:21, 26, 3:19)
4. Man of Submission (3:4-16)
5. Man of God's Word (3:1, 7, 11-21)