

## The LORD Calls Samuel 1 Samuel 3

### INTRODUCTION

This passage in 1 Samuel marks the transition from a time when Israel was not hearing from God to a time when God's word came freely to all of Israel. And that difference came about through God's call of Samuel as a prophet. **So, let's look at this passage together, and see what we can learn about hearing from God, receiving His word, delivering His word and reacting to His word. There's plenty here!**

#### I. \_\_\_\_\_ in the land: the LORD is \_\_\_\_\_ (3:1)

We would be wrong to think that the dark period in which Samuel grew up was devoid of religion. There was a great deal of religious activity in Israel. There were priests serving and rituals observed. All of this religion went on side by side with widespread idolatry and nationwide debauchery. How can religion and immorality so comfortably coexist? The answer is given in 1 Samuel 3:1.

The absence of the word of God was a sign of the judgment of God, of Yahweh's withdrawing the light of His word and allowing Israel to wander in the darkness she apparently preferred. God will be silent; Amos warned his hearers. It will be like a terrible famine, in which starving people search desperately for food and drink but can find nothing. But it will be worse than that: there will be no word of the Lord to be heard anywhere.

**It is difficult for us to sense the horror of Amos's warning because we do not readily appreciate, on the one hand, the goodness of the word of God and, on the other, our profound dependence on God's word.** This may be because we have come to take the word of the Lord for granted or because we have never known its goodness.

#### II. The LORD \_\_\_\_\_: Samuel's \_\_\_\_\_ (3:2-10)

This is the **fifth time** we have heard a brief statement about Samuel and his activities at Shiloh. These statements have been five bright spots in the otherwise dark and gloomy account of the goings on at Shiloh:

- ***And the boy ministered to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest.*** (1 Samuel 2:11)
- ***Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod.*** (1 Samuel 2:18)
- ***And the young man Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord.*** (1 Samuel 2:21)
- ***Now the young man Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man.*** (1 Samuel 2:26)
- ***Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli.*** (1 Samuel 3:1a)

In the very setting of the degeneracy of Hophni and Phinehas and the failing competence of Eli, Samuel progressed from being the person who served the Lord under the direct supervision of Eli "***the priest***" in 1 Samuel 2:11, to taking on a priestly garment himself in 1 Samuel 2:18, to personal growth "***with the Lord***" (literal translation) in 1 Samuel 2:21, to a youth in good standing with God and the people in 1 Samuel 2:26, to the one we will now see at Shiloh serving the Lord, still "***under Eli,***" but with Eli no longer called "***the priest***" in 1 Samuel 3:1.

#### A. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:2-3)

## B. The \_\_\_\_\_ (3:4-10)

**Notice that God calls Samuel's name twice in this verse. This double address of Samuel's name is significant.** When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac, God called out to him, **"Abraham! Abraham!"** (Genesis 22:11) When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, he called out, **"Moses! Moses!"** (Exodus 3:4) **Abraham** was the father of Israel and the father of faith. **Moses** was Israel's deliverer and the giver of the law. **Samuel** was the first in a line of prophets who would faithfully bring God's word to His people. All **three men** were key people in Israel's history, and God gave all three of them this double call of their name at the key turning points in their lives.

This was the key turning point in Samuel's life. So how did Samuel respond to this call? Just like Eli told him: (read 3:10b) That is a great prayer to pray any time before hearing God's word. It shows a desire to hear, a willingness to listen, and a heart that is ready to serve and obey. **"Speak, for your servant is listening."** You can pray that prayer before hearing a sermon; you can pray it before reading your Bible. It is a great prayer to pray any time before hearing God's word. **"Speak, for your servant is listening."**

## III. The LORD speaks again: receiving the word of the LORD (3:11-14)

Basically, God was confirming the earlier message of judgment he had brought against Eli. Eli's sons had sinned, and Eli had failed to restrain them. Now Eli's house would be removed from the priesthood and all the words of the earlier prophecy would be fulfilled. There was no turning back. The sacrifices that could have atoned for their sins were the very sacrifices they had treated with such contempt. There was no other means of atonement.

**Application: There is no forgiveness for sin that is not repented of. You have not truly repented and received forgiveness for sin that you will not stop committing. There must come a time when you renounce the sin and abandon it as fruit of repentance that results in forgiveness.**

**Samuel's call to preach came before he reached manhood.** Samuel is often pictured as a young child in this scene. But there is nothing childish in the whole episode. The message that Samuel is given is anything but child's stuff.

When in Christ are hearts are transformed and we learn, like Samuel to **"know"** the voice of the Lord, sometimes the Word we receive is not comfortable or easy. It definitely wasn't for Samuel. **Here we see the burden of bearing the Word from the Lord.**

IV. The LORD has \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to the word of the LORD (3:15-21)

God broke the silence of those days when he called Samuel and gave him this word. Now the only question that remained was, ***“What would Samuel do with this word?”*** Remember, he was only a boy, and this was a pretty heavy message for a young boy to deliver to an aging priest.

**This is the way we should always approach God’s word. The person delivering God’s word should faithfully proclaim the whole counsel of God, leaving nothing out and the one receiving it should receive it as a word from God Himself.** The message of judgement was a heavy one for young Samuel. Eli could handle it, because he had already come to terms with his fate. But you can image the pain of Samuel, when in his first encounter with the living God, he comes face to face with the burden of prophetic work. He must deliver the prophecy of judgement on the priest who is the closest thing to family he has, he must call out and condemn the most powerful man in all of Israel. It would have been easy in that moment to twist the truth, but he hid nothing from Eli. **He shouldered the burden of the office of prophet when he was just a boy, showing us how God uses even the weakest among us by his Spirit to bear the heaviest loads.**

Notice one more interesting turn of phrase in verse 15. Part of Samuel’s job as an assistant at the tabernacle was to open the doors for worship in the morning. Why would the text include this small detail? Because it shows us the significance of what has just happened. **Samuel receives a word from the directly, affirming his future in prophetic ministry. Just as he is tasked with opening the doors of the house of God physically, by this calling he is taking on, he is opening the doors of the house of God spiritually.**

## CONCLUSION

What can we take with us this morning? Let me share with you some practical takeaways:

- **God desires to \_\_\_\_\_ to us, and we don’t always listen \_\_\_\_\_**
- \_\_\_\_\_ to the LORD leads to \_\_\_\_\_
- **God’s word is not always easy to \_\_\_\_\_ or to \_\_\_\_\_**
- **God \_\_\_\_\_ to us through His word**
- **God has spoken to us through \_\_\_\_\_**