



... Here am I; for thou didst call me...

Part Two – The Calling of Samuel

1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision. 2. And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; 3. And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; 4. That the Lord called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I. 5. And he ran onto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. 6. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him. 8. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child. 9. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth. 11. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. (1 Samuel 3:1-14)

I have often claimed pointed out the Word of God coming from the lips of a child has the same authority as the same word proclaimed by an aged minister. I believe this is true because it is not the authority of the person but rather the Word the person speaks which bears its own authority. Samuel is a perfect example of this fact, and he was a Child-Prophet. This is not to say that the aged and called elder who loves the Word of God is not more able to teach its meaning and interpret its application based on years of study and living.

Samuel, even before he was conceived, was consecrated to the Lord at the Temple Altar of Shiloh by his believing mother. What use God would make of Samuel, Hannah did not know; but she knew if Samuel were used of the Lord, it would be with great purpose – and so it was. This is comparable to mothers and fathers who dedicate their children to God in Holy Baptism. It is a promise made by believing parents on behalf of

infants who are unable to express faith – just as Hannah had done while Samuel was not yet even conceived.

The invisible hand of the Lord works behind the veil, and human eye cannot discern His plans or His works. But once revealed, His works are altogether good and wise. The life of Eli fell far short of that expected of a prophet of the Lord. His sons were degenerate and irreverent in their priestly duties. God would need a strong man to replace Eli in due time, and God saw that strong man in the countenance and heart of Samuel. The Providence of God forever works to accomplish His predetermined plans for us. “5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, 6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Eph 1:4-6) To what end has God performed this mystery? To satisfy His own will and not ours; and to glorify the GRACE with which we are claimed by God to the disregard of anything we have done to deserve that GRACE. So God is working in the shadows to bring about, with absolute certainty, His Holy Will. It is always so!

The Hand of God deals in deliberate stages in accomplishing His will and purpose. We see these stages revealed below:

I. The failure of the House of Eli as declared in 1 Sam 3:11-36

1. His sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be slain in one day when the ark was taken by the Philistines.
2. Eli himself shall die tragically when, in due time, as he sat at the gate to learn if the ark were safe, the news of its loss to the Philistines caused him to fall over backwards and break his neck in death. (1 Sam 4:18)

II. The Call of Samuel:

1. The summons of Samuel (3:1-21)
2. The call to Samuel (3:1-9)
3. The word to Samuel (3:10-15)
4. The words related to Eli (3:16-18)
5. The fame of Samuel (3:19-21)

Eli was advanced in age when Samuel came to him to be raised up in the House of the Lord. His human senses were dimmed with age. His vision was poor and so was his hearing. But these are not fatal flaws. The fatal flaws that arose in the soul of Eli were attributable to the poor vision of his spirit in seeing the wickedness of his sons before the people, and his lack of hearing and following the counsel of God. Many fine young ministers embark on a burning desire to serve the Lord, and Him alone, only to fall victim along the way to pride and greed. This was Eli's failing. He enriched himself and his sons on the largesse of the temple offerings.

Samuel is young and tender in the House of the Lord. He has known no egregious and sinful lifestyle. The promises made by his mother at Shiloh before his birth are burned, as with a hot branding iron, on the soft sinews of his heart. A child so raised will adhere to the path laid out before him by righteous counsel. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Prov 22:6) This is an area of fidelity to God in which modern America has disgracefully erred. We have turned our children over to the public educators, media providers, and federal government to be raised. Those entities have done the same tragic job in raising our children as they have done in acting with honesty and integrity in the execution of their offices.

The Call of Samuel begins with an intriguing manner: *1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.* (1 Sam 3:1) When the Gold is scarce, its value rises. When the Word of the Lord cannot be commonly heard, it gains value to world in famine for it. There was no

open vision, just as that vision is also failing in America, because the prophets were not worthy to receive it. Today in our land, there are far more isolated Christians who remain faithful to the Word of God than there are faithful ministers to proclaim the Word in courage and truth.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; 3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; 4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I" (1 Sam 3:2-4) It is amazing with what immediacy the young ears of Samuel could hear the Voice of the Lord though he knew not that it was the Lord. An obedient child is obedient to God and also to those elders above him. *5. And he ran onto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.* Eli had heard nothing of the voice of the Lord, so he attributed Samuel's response to youthful imagination. *6. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. 7. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him.* Sin dulls the spiritual ears, but Samuel's ears were clear and sensitive to hear God.

Have you ever wondered the source of the old axiom, "The Third Time is a Winner!"? It probably comes from this third time that the Lord calls Samuel. *8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.* Not by the Voice of the Spirit, but by the voice of the child did Samuel realize that the Lord was calling Samuel. He gave Samuel the advice to answer: *Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if He call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for Thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.* The Lord will not cease to call a man once He has chosen Him as a vessel for His service.

10. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth. 11. And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. 12. In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. 13. For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. 14. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. The Lord will also speak this prophecy directly to Samuel only, for he was more worthy to bear it than Eli.

Eli would later press Samuel to hear what the Lord had spoken, and Samuel revealed all to the aging prophet. So the aged prophet learns prophecy from the lips of a child. *18 And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good" (1 Sam 3:18)*

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. (1 Sam 3:19) Whatsoever the Lord spoke, Samuel related and was thereby preserved from false prophecy. Would it not be a great joy if our modern preachers would only proclaim what the Lord has said rather than speaking from the imaginations of their hearts?

Samuel grew to become a great prophet in Israel. Unlike Eli, who took filthy lucre (and allowed his sons to do so), Samuel took not a single penny from the people for his services to God and the people. Samuel's final address to all of gathered Israel confirms his good character in contrast to that of Eli: *2 And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and grayheaded; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you*

from my childhood unto this day. ³ Behold, here I am: witness against me before the LORD, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you. ⁴ And they said, Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. ⁵ And he said unto them, The LORD is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found ought in my hand. And they answered, He is witness. (1 Sam 12:1-5)

We would be hard pressed to find any politician, preacher, or lay person who could make such a proclamation and have the concurrence of all of the people, but Samuel DID!