

I SAMUEL 2-3

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 2 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

Remember what we learned last week as we began our study here in I Samuel.

The man Elkanah had two wives. One was named Hannah, and she was barren, she had no children. And that may be the reason that he married Peninnah, to bear him children.

And each year he went up to Shiloh to worship the Lord and his two wives would come with him.

And Peninnah would mock Hannah because she was barren and thus, each year they went to worship the Lord, Hannah wept.

But, at one of those times they went up to the Lord, Hannah prayed for a child. This is what she prayed, **“O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of Your maidservant and remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.”** I Samuel 1:11.

And as she prayed her lips moved and no words were coming out, and as Eli the High Priest saw this, he thought she was drunk. Which shows what was going on around the Tabernacle at this time.

But Hannah tells him that she is not drunk, and this is what Eli said to her, **“Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.”** I Samuel 1:17.

And Hannah conceived and bore a son named Samuel. Remember that she said that she would give this child to the Lord, to the service of God.

Now, it has been about 3 years since Samuel was born and she is bringing him back to the Tabernacle in Shiloh to dedicate him to the Lord.

What this entails is that she will give her child to Eli the High Priest to raise, to train up in the things of God. You see, God is going to use this young man in a powerful way. He will use Samuel to be the bridge between the Judges with the individual tribes to the Kings with a united monarchy.

Samuel will be the last Judge in Israel and He will bring spiritual reform to the nation, bringing the people back to God.

Now, as they finish up with the sacrifice at the Tabernacle, the peace offering and the worship of God, they will return home without their son.

I find that interesting. Instead of weeping and complaining that she had to leave her son, she is going to praise God!

You see, as we move into I Samuel chapter 2 this evening, we will see a prayer of Hannah. And this prayer is very similar to the prayer of Mary found in Luke chapter 1.

With that said, let's begin reading in I Samuel chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

I SAMUEL 2

VERSES 1-2

In this prayer, notice what she doesn't say. She doesn't say, ***“Lord, you know that we have been praying for a child for a long, long time and now that you have blessed us with this child, can we get him back? Do we have to leave him here with Eli?”***

Not at all. And I think that may be one of the reasons she was barren for so long. She needed to be willing to give this child to the Lord and that time had come and now, notice the focus of this prayer of Hannah. It is the Lord.

Put yourself in her shoes for a minute. She is leaving her 3-year-old son with Eli the High Priest. And like I have said, this could not have been an easy thing to do.

I don't know about you, but I think most moms, most parents would be focused on what they have lost but Hannah does not see it that way. She understands that whatever is given to the Lord is not a loss, but it will turn out to be a blessing! That is a great perspective to have.

And look at what she does on the day that she makes the biggest sacrifice we can imagine. She rejoices in the Lord!

What a great lesson for us to learn. Paul put it like this in Philippians 4:4, **“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”**

Paul uses the Greek word *CHAIRO*, (khah'-ee-ro) for **“rejoice”** and it is in the present tense, which means to be constantly rejoicing.

Now don't think Paul is saying you need to have a positive mental attitude, but he is saying your focus must be on the Lord for only in Him can we rejoice because He never changes.

Hannah is not rejoicing in leaving her son, but ***IN THE LORD!*** Obviously, she will miss him!

Now let's look at this prayer as she starts out. And again, her perspective is the Lord!

First of all, she rejoices in the Lord because her **“horn”** or strength is in Him, it is exalted in Him.

Next, she smiles at her enemies because she knows their end and she understands that her God will save her. She is rejoicing in his – ***SALVATION!***

I think the focus here, her enemy was Peninnah who mocked her for being barren and now God has blessed Hannah with a son!

Now, in regard to the character of God, He is holy and there is no one that even compares to Him. We need to understand that.

And she concludes by saying, **“Nor is there any rock like our God.”**

In other words, her faith is built upon a solid foundation, it is built upon the true and living God and there is no one like Him, no one that even comes close!

What faith she had during a period of time in Israel’s history when there was not a lot of faith. In fact, we will see that Eli’s sons were very wicked and they were priests!

Now, let me ask you this. Why do many Christians struggle in this life?

Because they don’t have that solid foundation to place their faith upon and instead of resting in the Lord they look to the world and come up empty. There is no rejoicing, no strength, no assurance, no holiness because unless we rest our faith upon the solid foundation of Christ, we are on shaky ground!

Paul put it like this in Colossians 2:8-10, **“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”**

If our feet are planted upon this world, the philosophies of this world, we are on shaky ground but in Christ, we are on solid ground and we are complete in Him.

Make no mistake about it. He alone is God and He is the only Rock we can build our life and eternity upon. And when we do, we can be assured that we will never be moved.

It is as the old hymn goes,

“My hope is built on nothing less Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame, But wholly lean on Jesus’ name.”

“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand, All other ground is sinking sand.”

Don’t place your faith upon anyone or anything else but the solid Rock, Jesus Christ!

And please understand that Hannah was rejoicing in the Lord because her eyes were upon Him, and she trusted in what God said and so should we!

VERSE 3

Who is Hannah speaking of here?

As I have said in our previous verses, I believe she is speaking of her rival, Peninnah. She was proud, arrogant, boasting about what she had and putting Hannah down.

In saying that, I also think it goes far beyond her. You see, it speaks of those, all those who are proud, all those who are arrogant in this world.

And people that are prideful usually manifest it in words, the things they say but Hannah says that when compared to God, you know absolutely nothing and thus, you have no reason to be proud.

Humble yourself because God knows your thoughts and your actions, He knows you and as you look at the Scriptures, it is pride that brought Lucifer down and it is pride that brings us down as well.

In Proverbs 11:2 we are told, **“When pride comes, then comes shame; But with the humble is wisdom.”**

VERSES 4-8b

Remember that Hannah just spoke of not being prideful and now she speaks of why you should not be prideful.

You see, God will bring down the prideful and lift up the humble. Yes, God is sovereign!

What does that mean.

It means that He does as He pleases and one of the things He does is to deal with those that are prideful. He makes those that think they are strong into nothing and the weak He empowers with His strength. Those that bragged about how full they were are now going hungry and those who are hungry have food. And those that boasted in the number of children they had will become barren and the childless will have children.

The Lord is in control and thus, it is better to obey Him, to humble ourselves before Him and allow Him to lift us up than to be prideful now and because of that He will bring us down one day!

It is as Jesus said in Luke 14:11, **“For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”** May we remember that!

In knowing that God is sovereign that He can do as He pleases, does that trouble you or scare you?

As believers, we know the character of God, that He is good and has what is good for His children. There is no darkness in Him at all and that is why we can rest in the fact that all that He does is for good!

Now, if you don't believe in Jesus, then you should be troubled, you should be scared because that pride you have in rejecting Him, will bring you down as you stand before Him and then eternally separated from Him!

Now is the time of salvation, don't pass it up if you don't know Jesus!

VERSES 8c-10

Here's the thing. God couldn't be sovereign if He wasn't omnipotent or all powerful!

Think about that for a minute. You see, God couldn't do whatever He *wants* to do (sovereignty) if He wasn't powerful enough to *do* whatever He wanted (omnipotence). I hope that makes sense to you.

Now, how can Hannah be so sure that God will be able to accomplish this, to bring down the proud and exalt the humble?

Because He is the creator of Heaven and Earth and if He can do that and keep all things in operation, He can surely deal with man whom He created!

Warren Wiersbe sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

As God's people walk on this earth and walk in the light, the Lord will guard and guide their steps, but the wicked will walk in spiritual darkness because they depend on their own wisdom and strength.

It may seem that the wicked "*have it made,*" but one day the storm of God's wrath will burst upon them in fierce judgment. God is long-suffering with those who resist Him, but their day is coming.

Remember what Psalm 96:13 says, **“For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth.”**

It is out of this that I believe that Hannah goes right into a prophecy of the coming Messiah and His judgment upon the proud, the unbelievers.

No one, in their strength will be able to stand before Him, only those that are in the strength of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, clothed in His righteousness will be able to stand!

Now look how awesome this is. In verse 10 we see the word, **“anointed”** and I believe this is speaking of the Messiah.

Hales tells us, “She first applied to him the remarkable epithet *MESSIAH* in Hebrew, *CHRIST* in Greek, and *ANOINTED* in English, which was adopted by *David, Nathan, Ethan, Isaiah, Daniel*, and the succeeding prophets of the Old Testament; and by the apostles and inspired writers of the New.”

Not only that but listen to what Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist tells us in Luke 1:69, **“And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David.”**

He is speaking of Jesus the Messiah and thus, so is Hannah in I Samuel 2:10!

And lastly, in the prayer of Mary, the mother of Jesus, she too seems to quote Hannah’s song, and she is also speaking of the Messiah!

VERSE 11

Again, this must have been hard for them to leave little Samuel with Eli, but they made a promise to the Lord, and they were going to fulfill that promise.

Now, it says that Samuel served the Lord before Eli the priest. That is interesting to me.

How in the world can a 3-year-old serve the Lord?

Folk's, if God can use us, He can use children to be His helper, at whatever capacity.

As we read on, we are going to see a contrast from Samuel, who is serving the Lord to the sons of Eli, who were not serving the Lord but themselves. They were wicked men!

VERSE 12

Eli, the High Priest had two sons, and they were evil, they were corrupt.

In fact, the Hebrew literally calls them, "**sons of Belial.**"

In other words, Belial was a pagan god and thus, these men were worthless, they were wicked.

And think about this for a minute. It would be these sons of Eli that were to replace Eli, and that is not a good thing.

How can they behave like this, and we will see all that they did in a minute.

It is as simple as this, "**they did not know the Lord.**" (I Samuel 2:12)

That was the problem and yet they were serving the Lord, how ridiculous. You have the blind leading the blind and I don't have to tell you, that is not a good thing.

And what was happening with these two men happens in churches today where you have pastors, leaders who don't know the Lord, but they are there serving the Lord.

Not a good thing because if they don't believe, where are they going to be leading their people?

They will be leading them in unbelief!

Look at what these men did as they ripped off the people of God, like many do today!

VERSES 13-17

Keep in mind that there were many sacrifices that were offered up at the Tabernacle and with these a portion was to be given to God, a portion was given to the priest and there was a portion that was to be given to the person who brought the offering.

Now, some 400 years earlier, when the Law was given to Moses, the priests were to receive a portion of the breast and the shoulder. (Exodus 29:27-28, Leviticus 7:31)

Now things have changed. They did not want the portion that was to be given to them, they just wanted to take a big fork and whatever the fork brought up out of the pot was theirs!

That was the priesthood in general, they were wicked, and now these sons of Eli were even worse in what they were doing.

The fat was to be given to the Lord, that was the best, but they wanted the meat before the fat was burned off. They did not want it boiled but raw.

Why did they want this meat raw?

Maybe it was easier for them to sell and make a profit off this raw meat!

Now what if the people refused to do this?

If the people refused or became upset in what was being done, they threatened them that if it were not given to them, they would take it by force.

Keep in mind these were the sons of Eli!

One writer put it like this in regard to what they were taking from the Lord.

He wrote, *“The fat was thought to be the most luxurious, best part of the animal, so they gave it to God. The idea was that God should always get the best, and God should get His portion first. But in their pride the sons of Eli took their portion before they burned the fat.”*

Also, did you notice that these young men did not do this, but they had their servant go and do their dirty work!

Make no mistake about it, they were evil and trying to make a profit off of God.

And even though they had these servants do their dirty work, look at what verse 17 says, **“Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.”**

Yes, these servants were responsible for their actions, but even more accountable were the sons of Eli. You see, by their actions they made many not want to come to the Tabernacle and worship the Lord, sacrifice to the Lord.

Of this Clarke tells us, *“As the people saw that the priests had no piety, and that they acted as if there was no God; they despised God’s service, and became infidels.”*

And what does Jesus have to say about this?

In Matthew 18:6-7 He said, **“Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”**

It is not good when you lead God’s children astray!

We see that in the church today where leaders rip people off in their giving to the Lord, make them feel guilty about not giving enough, fleecing the flock of God for their own gain and in doing so, some have departed away.

Woe to the person that messes with God’s kids!

VERSES 18-21

Notice the contrast here between Eli's sons who had the title of being a priest, and little Samuel who had no title and yet faithfully served the Lord!

Eli's sons ministered to themselves while Samuel ministered to the Lord, even at this young age!

Now this linen ephod just showed that he was there serving the Lord, and it may have been just small things but in those small things God was teaching Samuel and helping him to grow so that He may use him even more down the road!

We tend to look at the things we do as insignificant for the Lord compared to others, but I am so thankful that our Lord does not look at what we do that way. He looks at our faithfulness in service and our heart's motives and blesses accordingly!

And we are told, "**Samuel grew before the LORD.**"

Yes, physically he matured as well as spiritually and God was watching all that was taking place just as He does in our own lives!

Remember that Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord, and as Hannah gave a gift to the Lord freely, God did bless here exceedingly abundantly as this once barren woman now has three more sons, and two daughters besides Samuel!

God is a debtor to no man or woman!

VERSE 22

We are told that Eli was old, but he was the High Priest, and he should have dealt with the immorality of his two sons, but he didn't!

We saw how they were ripping the people of God off who came to worship God, they were, in a sense, stealing from God.

And it is even worse than that. Now we are told that they were committing sexual sin with the women who were serving the Lord at the Tabernacle!

Think about this for a minute, as hard as this may be to do.

Here were these women coming to serve the Lord in the Tabernacle and now these sons of Eli were forcing them to have sex with them!

It is no different than the sex scandal's we see with clergy today!

And, obviously, this is not a true shepherd that we see here in Eli's sons, but they are hirelings who are only interested in themselves.

Remember, they did not know the Lord and it is reflected in their actions!

And when we read that they were "**sons of Belial**" now you can understand why they were called sons of the Devil!

VERSES 23-24

As Eli hears all that his sons were doing, all he can come up with is, "***Bad boys! Bad boys! What you gonna do?***"

Are you kidding me!

These are men and Eli needed to remove them from ministry, kick them out of the house. Don't just use empty words, do something about it!

"Why are you doing this?"

Who cares, there is nothing that can justify their actions, there is no excuse for their behavior, so asking them why they are doing this is just foolish!

We see that today with many parents who don't discipline their children.

And yes, you can do your best in raising your children and then it is their choice. I am not saying that parents are always wrong, they are not. And even in the worst situations, children still have choices to make!

But listen carefully to this report and see how important it is to train our children!

**THE HOUSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT
JUNE 1994
10-POINT STATEMENT
FATHER'S GUIDE TO MAKING A DELINQUENT CHILD
(After talking with delinquents over a number of years they put this together)**

- Begin at infancy to give the child everything he wants. This way he will grow up to believe the world owes him a living.
- When he picks up bad words, laugh at him, that way he will think he is cute and amusing.
- Never give him any spiritual training, wait till he is twenty-one and then let him decide for himself.
- Pick up everything he leaves laying about, books, shoes, clothes, do everything for him so that he will be experienced in throwing all responsibility upon others.
- Quarrel frequently in his presence in this way he will not be too shocked when the home is broken up later.
- Give the child all the pocket money he wants. Never let him earn his own, why should he have things as tough as you had them.
- Satisfy his every craving for food, drink and comfort. Denial may lead to harmful frustration.
- Take his side against neighbors, teachers and policemen they are all prejudice against your child anyway.
- When he gets into trouble apologize for yourself saying, "I could never do anything with him."
- Prepare yourself for a life of grief; you have earned it.

Now you can see why there are so many problems today, we have trained up children to behave this way and we are reaping what we have sown as Eli did for it seems that he too did not discipline his children. At least that is what we see here.

VERSE 25

The judge did have the power over life and death as he evaluated the given situations.

In regard to what is said here, Clarke makes these remarks, ***“All differences between man and man may be settled by the proper judge; but if a man sins against the Supreme Judge, God himself, who shall reconcile him to his Maker?”***

That is an interesting question for each of us.

Who shall reconcile us to our Maker?

We don't have to guess for we are told in I John 2:1-2, **“My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.”**

Praise the Lord we do have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ!

After all that Eli said, his sons did not listen to him. Again, end of story. You are done. You are not continuing on as priest. But Eli did not do that and as we continue on, we will see the results of that.

Now here is another point that we need to deal with. It says that the Lord desired to kill Eli's sons.

“Wait a minute, that does not seem fair, does it? I thought God was a good God! What if they wanted to repent, does that mean God won't forgive them?”

First of all, God is a good God and He is patient, He is longsuffering and there then comes a time when His judgment will be poured out.

You see, they had gone past the point of no return, they were not going to repent and thus, God was going to take them out of the picture before they hurt anyone else!

Think about it like this. Why leave a rabid animal alive when there is no cure for it. They will only hurt others with their poison!

The same is true here. When a person passes that point of no return, there is no reason for God to leave him around to injure others by his actions.

Now if we were God, and we are not, I don't think we would have as much patience and long-suffering as God does!

But make no mistake about it, when His judgment comes, there is no place to hide for the wicked!

VERSE 26

Once again, in the midst of all this evil, we see a bright spot. Samuel who is continuing to grow in the Lord and others are taking notice of this young man of God!

VERSES 27-29

Here comes a man of God to speak to Eli.

We do not know who this man is, but he is representing God and that is what is important. He is the servant, and this issue is not who he is but what God has to say. He is the mouthpiece for God.

And what he tells Eli or really reminds Eli is that God raised up Aaron and his descendants to be the priesthood. Aaron being the first High Priest and that would have made Eli a descendant of Aaron and yet, his actions did not reflect what God desired of him in the discipline of his children, who are now men!

This was a great honor that God gave to Aaron and his descendants, and it seems that Eli did not see it that way; his actions did not reflect that.

And as you look at verse 28 you have a summary of what the duties of the priests were, at least some of them.

We are told,

- **To be My priest:** Obviously this was the most important job of the High Priest, he was to minister unto the LORD. Before he served the people, he was a servant of God. He was not first the people's priest (though he was that also, he was first the priest of God.).
- **To offer upon My altar:** The priest was to bring forth sacrifices for atonement and worship. The altar was the place where atoning blood was both shed and applied, blood that would cleanse from sin. The altar was also the place where the "sacrifice of praise" was brought.
- **To burn incense:** As we have seen in our study of the Old Testament, the burning of incense was always a picture of prayer, because the smoke and the scent of the incense would ascend up to the heavens. The priest was to lead the nation in prayer, and to pray for the nation.
- **To wear an ephod before Me:** The priest was clothed in specific garments, *for glory and for beauty* (Exodus 28:2). He was to represent the majesty, dignity, glory, and beauty of God to the people.
- **All the offerings:** The priest was also charged with the responsibility to receive the offerings of God's people and to make good use of them, something that the sons of Eli were not doing!

It all boils down to this. By his actions Eli showed that he loved his sons more than he loved the Lord because he refused to discipline them as a father and as a boss over them. He was more afraid of offending his sons than he was afraid of offending God.

That goes on even today!

Are you willing to make that kind of a sacrifice, to honor God more than man, more than your family?

As a pastor, I have had to rebuke friends, correct them and that was pretty much the end of that relationship, they walked away. But I have to honor the Lord over anyone! That is what Eli was to do but he didn't!

I will share with you this story about Eric Liddell, who was one of Britain's greatest athletes and a believer in Christ who gave his life on the mission field for the Lord.

In the 1924 Paris Olympics, a twenty-two-year-old Scottish athlete made headlines when he determined to say No to self and Yes to God.

Eric Liddell made a decision that would have been unthinkable for most – to drop out of his best event, the hundred-yard dash, because the qualifying heats were being held on a Sunday.

While his competitors were participating in the heats, Liddell was preaching a sermon at a nearby church.

Subsequently, Liddell entered himself in the 400-yard dash, a race for which he had not trained.

He ran the race, finishing five yards ahead of his nearest competitor and setting a new world record.

However, that Olympic gold medal, earned under such extraordinary circumstances, was far from Eric Liddell's greatest accomplishment.

His obedience to God in Paris was just one of a lifelong series of surrenders that earned Eric the applause of heaven.

After his Olympic triumph, he returned to China where he had been raised, to serve as a missionary.

In 1943, he was interned in a Japanese concentration camp in China, where he continued to serve God and joyfully ministered to his fellow prisoners.

While still in the camp, Liddell suffered a brain tumor that ravaged his body and left him partially paralyzed.

On February 21, 1945, Eric lay on a hospital bed, struggling to breathe and moving in and out of consciousness.

Finally, he went into a convulsion; the nurse who had been by his side took him into her arms as he managed to breathe his final words: "*Annie,*" he said, his voice barely audible, "*it's complete surrender.*"

Eric Liddell slipped into a coma and then into eternity, where the bondservant bowed the knee before the Master he loved so dearly and for whom he had labored so faithfully.

- Nancy Leigh DeMoss, *Surrender*, pp. 172

Complete surrender!

VERSES 30-34

Imagine the boldness of this prophet to say these things to the High Priest, and yet, he was to honor God more than man and fear God more than man, and thus, he spoke forth this prophecy of the destruction of the family of Eli.

What he told Eli was that his descendants would not remain in the priesthood but would be cut off. And the sign that this will come to pass is that both his two sons will die in one day!

I wonder if this prophet was ready to high tail it out of there after speaking forth the words that God had given him!

But he is not done. Listen to how he ends this with Eli.

VERSES 35-36

The priesthood of Eli's family is replaced in I Kings chapter 2 with the family of Zadok and they are faithful in their service unto the Lord.

In I Kings 2:27, 35 we see this played out as we are told, **“So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, that he might fulfill the word of the Lord which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh. . . . The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put Zadok the priest in the place of Abiathar.”**

But ultimately this is looking to or pointing to our Great High Priest, Jesus Christ who is from the everlasting priesthood, from the order of Melchizedek.

In Hebrews 7:12-17 we are told, **“For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: ‘You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.’”**

I SAMUEL 3

VERSE 1

Josephus tells us that Samuel was twelve years old at this time. If that is true it would mean that some 9 or 10 years have passed from the end of chapter two to the beginning of chapter three.

And we are told that Samuel grew in the Lord as he serves the Lord and then we are told that God did not speak to the people and when He did, as we have seen with this prophet, the words He spoke were that of judgment.

The Word of God was silent in those days because the people's hearts were not seeking the Lord, and thus, He was not speaking to them.

Let me clarify this. It wasn't that God did not want to speak to them, they just didn't want to hear from God and thus, God was silent, and it was a form of judgment upon the nation as He was waiting for someone to call upon His name, to seek His face, and then God will listen and speak to the people.

What is the remedy?

In Jeremiah 29:11-14a we are told, **“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you . . .”**

VERSES 2-4

Here we are seeing the spiritual condition in Israel as we look at this High Priest named Eli.

Yes, he was old and physically speaking his eyes were growing dim, but also spiritually speaking his spiritual eyes were dim. The Lord was not speaking to and through Eli any longer it would seem and as the leaders go, so go the people!

Remember, “**. . . the word of the LORD was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.**” I Samuel 3:1.

Again, we don't know how old Samuel is at this time but, as I have said, according to the ancient Jewish historian, Josephus, he tells us that Samuel was 12 years old.

And we are told that Samuel was sleeping in the Holy place and thus, he was probably responsible for keeping the Menorah, or the oil-burning lamp lit.

The priest was to fill the oil holders twice a day and trim the wicks, for the lamps were never to go out. And that illustrates to us that the light of God was not to go out in Israel but was to burn bright and continuous, never to be extinguish. (Exodus 25:31-40, 30:8, 27:20-21).

And it is during this time, as Samuel is sleeping that the Lord calls Samuel and he responds by saying, “**Here I am.**”

Now, as we will see, Samuel does not know it is the Lord yet.

Let's read on and see how this plays out.

VERSES 5-9

I don't believe that the Lord was speaking to Samuel with an inner voice or in his heart, but outwardly, audibly and because of that Samuel is not sure who is calling and he again believes it is Eli. I mean, who else could it be?

This poor nearly blind man might need help, and little Samuel was up three different times ready to meet his needs.

What a godly young man he was.

We are also told that Samuel did not know the Lord and that is interesting, because if he is around 12 years old, he is around the age of accountability and thus, it was time for him to make a decision for the Lord.

Folks, our children are not saved because of us, they are saved when they make that profession of faith and that is what Samuel will do!

Now this third time that Samuel comes to Eli asking what he needed we see that Eli finally figures it out. It must be the Lord, and he gives young Samuel wise counsel that the next time the Lord calls, say to Him, "**Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.**"

Folks, how true that is in our own lives. It is important to hear God's voice, to be open to Him and we can't give to others what we ourselves don't have.

God is speaking to us through His Word opened up to us by His Spirit, may we be listening!

VERSE 10

This does not seem like a dream or vision, but it could be an Old Testament appearance of Jesus before Samuel speaking to him here and look at the obedience of Samuel. He obeyed the counsel of Eli!

Let's see what the Lord will tell Samuel.

VERSES 11-14

Imagine Samuel, maybe 12 years old or so at this time, and the Lord gives him this news that will tingle the ears of those that hear it. It is speaking of judgment obviously.

You see, God warned Eli through the prophet, and he did not heed the warning. He did not deal with his sons like he should have as a father and as the High Priest and God was holding him accountable as well as his sons.

As I have said, Eli needed to honor God above his children, but he didn't and here are the consequences.

What I want you to notice is that we are told in verse 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.**"

As you can see, Eli had reached the point of spiritual no return. There was no sacrifice that could atone for his sin and thus, judgment was coming upon him and his family.

Back in I Samuel 2:27-36 we see the Lord give Eli a warning through this prophet, he could have repented, he could have done what was right, but he didn't.

And now there is the judgment with no atonement available for him as young Samuel will have to tell Eli!

Does that still happen today? Do people reach a point of spiritual no return?

I believe they do but I don't believe any of us will know when that is, only God does and thus, we should witness no matter how hopeless.

Let me give you an example of a group of people that had reached a point of spiritual no return.

Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath and that was not kosher according to the Jewish religious leaders. In fact, they said that he had a demon that was doing this for Him.

And in Mark 3:28-30 Jesus said, **“Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation - because they said, ‘He has an unclean spirit.’”**

At this point Jesus is warning those religious leaders that they are very close to committing blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. They had hardened their hearts so much to the things of God they could no longer see.

Now, what is blasphemy of the Holy Spirit?

It is not lying, stealing, cheating, not even taking the Lord's name in vain or even murder. You see, all those sins can be forgiven.

The blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is a process of denying the works of the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit has come to testify of Jesus, to bring us to Jesus.

In John 15:26 we read **“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.”**

Thus, if you continually reject the Holy Spirit's call for you to turn to Jesus, there comes a point where your heart becomes so hard that you are eternally separated from God. There is no salvation for you; you have passed the point of no return!

In John chapter 12 it seems that they passed the point of no return, they could no longer be saved.

In John chapter 12, beginning in verse 37 we read **“But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: ‘Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?’ Therefore they could not believe . . .”** John 12:37-39a.

What is tragic is that is what we are seeing in America today! We in America have heard about the Lord so much that many times it seems that people are just cold to the things of God, they have heard it all before.

I pray that America as a nation is not past the point of no return! And we don't know that point in a person's life or in a nation, only God does, but don't take the chance, give Him your life before you pass the point of no return!

Share with others even if they seem far from the Lord, they may not be!

Now let me share this with you. This is from my pastor regarding God speaking to people and even to young children. He wrote,

On September 7, 2001 a second grade teacher at the Calvary Chapel elementary school in Finger Lakes, NY had the class draw pictures that would be hung in their classroom.

All of the pictures were of horses, rainbows, crosses and pictures of Jesus - the typical things 7-year-old Christian kids would draw - all except for one boy who drew two tall buildings with planes crashing into them.

He drew the buildings on fire with smoke coming out of them and people in the air that had jumped out of the buildings.

When the teacher asked the boy about it he said ***“Every time I went to draw I couldn’t get this picture out of my mind.”***

The picture was so disturbing that the teacher wondered if they needed to send this boy for some counseling as this was a strange thing for a little boy to draw - very dark.

Five days later when the attacks happened on the twin towers in NY city, Scott, the pastor, got that picture and looked at it again in shock - he realized that God had spoken to that little boy telling him what was about to happen.

Today that picture hangs in the sanctuary of the Calvary Chapel in Philly as a reminder that God can and will speak to anyone - even to children and we had better not think that these little ones can’t be used by Him or have nothing to offer Him - so take their walk with God seriously.

- Pastor Phil Ballmaier, I Samuel 3

VERSES 15-18

Can you imagine Samuel waiting till morning and then getting up, afraid to tell Eli what the Lord has spoken to him.

Why was he afraid?

Because he loved Eli and he knew the news was not good, but Eli tells Samuel to let him have it, he needs to hear it, and Samuel told him everything the Lord said.

That is important folk's, we have God's Word and if we hold back, we are not speaking forth the whole counsel of God, all of God's Word, but just what we want to speak so we won't offend anyone! Don't make that mistake. We need to share the truth in love!

And yes, it is not easy. Paul said in Galatians 1:10, "**For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.**"

Paul understood that it is not always easy to speak the truth because people will be offended by it. But are you going to be a man pleaser or a bondservant of Jesus Christ? I am not saying be mean to people, but in the love of Christ you share the truth with them, as difficult as it may be. That is what we see here with Samuel!

Now let me also say this. For Eli, I think that his reaction to what Samuel told him was strange.

Some say he was humbling himself to what the Lord was saying, but to me it just seems that he accepts it but there is no real repentance, falling on his face before God and interceding for him and his family!

It is possible that his relationship with the Lord had grown so dim that he just resided himself to what God was going to do. What a sad place to be!

VERSES 19-20

We see here that as Samuel grew, he hired an agent to promote his prophet ministry and before long, there were billboards, camel signs, newspaper reports, magazine articles, speaking engagements promoting this man of God! He had his books, "***How to live you best life as a Prophet***" And "***The Purpose Driven Prophet!***"

NO, he didn't!

He rested in the Lord and God took care of the rest. And we see that from the north to the south, from Dan to Beersheba people recognized Samuel as a prophet of God!

You don't have to promote yourself; you serve the Lord and He will take care of the rest!

What Samuel said came to pass. Samuel was now a prophet of God, which means he was speaking for God - *FORTHTELLING*.

We mainly think of a prophet in the form of *FORETELLING* or predicting future events. But most of the time it is speaking forth the word of God to the people!

And through Samuel, God's presence was once again seen and His voice heard in Israel, for he was the mouthpiece for God.

VERSE 21

How did the Lord appear to Samuel in Shiloh?

Was it a loud thundering noise?

No!

What about an earthquake?

No!

It was not even a still small voice here, but it was by "the word of the LORD."

You see, God does reveal Himself by His Word. That means when God is going to move, do a work, it will be in accordance with His Word and thus, we need to be in it and read it, study it, apply it to our lives and hear what the Lord is saying to us as Samuel was doing!

What a great lesson for us to learn, especially in the days we are living in when experience seems to be more important to people than the Word of God.

It is as we are told in Acts 4:13, **“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.”**

That is what we need to do, spend time with Jesus, be in His Word, be in prayer and let the Spirit of God move you to do the work of God!