

## **Your Servant is Listening**

### **1 Samuel 3:1-21**

#### **Introduction:**

“Where is God in all of this?” That may have been the question raised after reading 1 Samuel 2 which revealed the wickedness of Eli’s sons, and Eli’s complicity with them. Chapter 3 reveals in a very dramatic way that God was very much present and was raising up a new priest and prophet for Israel. Young Samuel, raised in the care of a family noted for its wickedness, rises as a beacon of light not only in that home, but also for all of Israel. Through Samuel God teaches us that those who will listen and respond in obedience will hear the voice of God. We also see that God’s messages, though they come from his heart of love, sometimes are very stern. These lessons are relevant to us today as well.

#### **The Call In the Night – 1 Samuel 3:1-10**

1. Verse 1 provides two important points of reference for this story. One relates to Samuel, the other to the nation of Israel. Where do we find Samuel? And what is he doing? Where is the nation of Israel in relation to God at this time? Why?
2. The word used for “rare” in verse 1 is translated “precious” in other places in scripture. What does this teach us about hearing the voice of the Lord? Could the “word of the Lord” become commonplace and we devalue it? Explain.
3. What two things do we learn about Eli in verse 2?
4. In verse 3 we get a time reference and a place reference. The lamps were lit at sundown and continued to burn until sunrise. So the events that were about to unfold took place at approximately what time? And where was Samuel sleeping? Why the reference to the Ark of God (Ark of the Covenant)?
5. According to verse 4 Samuel heard a voice in the wee hours of the morning. What was his response? What is revealed about the character of Samuel?
6. According to verse 5, who does Samuel think called him in the night? What is his response? What is Eli’s response?

7. In verse 6 the call is repeated. Verse 7 gives us a commentary on what is happening. What do we learn? What lesson do we learn about the voice of God?
8. In verse 8 we read about the third time God calls to Samuel (aren't you glad God does not give up on us after one call?). What is different about this time God calls Samuel?
9. What instruction does Eli give to Samuel in verse 9? In your opinion, do you think Samuel was able to go back to sleep? Explain.
10. For the fourth time God calls to Samuel. How does he address Samuel (v. 10)? How does Samuel respond? Where is Samuel when he hears God's voice? Note that it says that God "stood" before Samuel. He let himself be seen in some manner.

### **God's Message of Judgement – 1 Samuel 3:11-18**

11. The message God delivers to and through Samuel is not a pleasant one. "I am about to do..." literally reads, "I am doing..." Things were already coming together for the fulfilment of God's prophesy to Eli delivered earlier by the unnamed man of God (2:27-36). What will happen will be a message for all of Israel. What is the message?
12. "The two ears ... will tingle" is an expression that means the news will bring "horror and dread" to the nation (ref. II Kings 21:12, Jer. 19:3). In what way is this related to the phrase, "The fear of the Lord"? Is this concept still valid in our day and age?
13. In verse 12 it says God will fulfill all he said would happen to Eli's family. What things could he expect to happen shortly?
14. In verse 13 Eli is included in the punishment that was about to fall on his family. What was his sin?
15. Verse 14 expresses a frightening truth for Eli and his family. What is it? (This seems to imply that had Eli, Hophni and Phinehas repented they may have been forgiven through sacrifice – ie. how Ninevah responded to Jonah's message and how God responded).

16. How do you understand that his house would not be atoned for by sacrifice “forever”? (v. 14)
17. What is Samuel’s response to this message he hears from God? (v. 15)
18. In verses 16-17 Eli pries the message from Samuel. How does he accomplish this?
19. What is Eli’s response to what Samuel tells him? (v. 18)

### **The Making of a Man of God – 1 Samuel 3:19-21**

20. What things do we learn about Samuel in verse 19? What does it mean “his words did not fall to the ground”?
21. What is the significance of saying Samuel was known as prophet from Dan to Beersheba? (v. 20)
22. How did God reveal Himself to Samuel at Shiloh? (v. 21) What does this mean for us today?
23. The first line of chapter 4 should be the closing line of chapter 3: “And the word of Samuel came to all of Israel.” What does this mean?

### **Conclusion:**

God is raising up a new class of people – the prophets. They would be the ones to carry His message to the people, to give instruction on how to live as His holy people. Abraham and Moses were called prophets before Samuel, and one unnamed man in Judges 6:8. Samuel would be the first in a long line of men who would speak for God to the people. His authority came from speaking what God told him, and not from his own position or authority. There would be impostors, but those who truly spoke for God sometimes were given the privilege of speaking of the future, of describing Jesus long before He came to this earth. Prophets were people who were willing to speak for God at any cost. They even confronted kings when they strayed from God’s path. How we need people like that today, people fearlessly saying, “Thus saith the Lord.”