

## *An Invitation to Listen and Respond*

God Calls and Speaks to Samuel

Invitation to Leadership Series - Part 2

1 Samuel 2:12-3:21

4/26/25-4/27/25

### Introduction

- The Problem with Israel; the Problem with America – **Hard hearts. The longer we operate from a place of selfishness, the harder our hearts become. The king of America is self. Until we switch allegiances to the Lord, we will continue to waste our potential and dishonor our God.**
- Who God partners with – **Because God does all the valuable and difficult parts of any ministry endeavor and doesn't NEED people to accomplish anything, how does He determine who He partners with for His purposes and who He doesn't? In other words, if ability isn't the criteria, what is?**
  - There's a big difference between someone God USES and someone God PARTNERS with:
    - When God uses someone – **it has nothing to do with them. God needs to get something done and will do it regardless of the quality of the individual.** It's more about the big picture and the person is simply a tool to accomplish the task in the hands of God. They do cool stuff, they achieve great things, but they were never really connected to God in the first place.
      - Great examples of this are: **Saul**, whom we will study at length in this series; **Samson** -a trainwreck (as a matter of fact most of the Judges were merely used); and **Judas Iscariot**.
    - When God partners with someone – When God partners with someone He is looking for the right heart and a healthy relationship. It means that God shares with them and listens to them. It's more relational. The power that is flowing, flows from intimacy with God.
      - Great examples of this type are: **Noah, Job, Abraham, Joseph, Joshua...**
  - Bottom Line: At the end of the day, God is looking for a heart that desires to be used, a person that loves Him enough to surrender their life to Him...

God INTENDS to use the WILLING

- Why it seems that ability does matter – I would imagine that some of you today are struggling to believe what I'm saying. When you look around at the most impactful ministers you see a ton of talent and ability. It's why we compare ourselves to them and figure God can't use us like that. But **here's what you are missing. God didn't select that person BECAUSE they were gifted, talented and anointed. He selected them and then MADE them gifted, talented, and anointed. When God calls, God enables.**
  - When God chose **Gideon** to lead the army he was hiding in fear.
  - When God chose **Moses**, Moses tried to get out of it because he didn't think he could do it.

- When God called **Aaron** as High Priest, he was in the middle of making a golden calf, one of the greatest religious failures in the Bible.
- When God called **Isaiah**, he thought he was too sinful.
- When God called **Jeremiah and Timothy** they both thought they were too young to lead.
- **Shall I go on?**
  - Listen and Obey - God may be inviting you to do something that you feel completely inadequate for. Just because you have disqualified yourself, doesn't mean that He has. Our job is to listen and obey. If you aren't qualified, then He's going to find a way to qualify you. It's not our job to determine how God can use us or what God can use us for.
- Context for Today – 2 weeks ago we started a brand new series that is going to look into the lives of 3 men who are invited by God into high level leadership. Two of them will handle it brilliantly and one will crash and burn. There's lessons to learn from all three. Our series kicked off with a woman crying in church and begging God to allow her to have a child. God answered her cry, and she dedicated this young boy, about 4-5 years old, to go and live in the temple with the priests full time, the big dog's name was Eli. The young boy was named **Samuel**. So, what happened to that little kid?

### Lesson

- Despicable Priests
  - Eli's sons were evil
    - 1 Samuel 2:12-17 – *“Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord. <sup>13</sup> The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, <sup>14</sup> and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. <sup>15</sup> Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, “Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw.” <sup>16</sup> And if the man said to him, “Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish,” he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” <sup>17</sup> Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.”*
    - Now the sons of Eli were worthless men – The term worthless doesn't mean that they didn't have inherent worth as marked with the image of God, but a designation of being a bad guy that was no longer benefitting others or advancing the Kingdom of God. They were steeped in selfishness and therefore no longer good for anything. They would be the disconnected branches in the parable that are only good to be thrown out and burned.

- They did not know the Lord – this is such a telling phrase. It's one thing for a regular person to not know the Lord, or a child to not know the Lord. It's quite another thing for a priest to not know the Lord. The priests were the primary people in the nation of Israel to track with God for the rest of everyone else. They were supposed to be the God-people, the connection to heaven for the regular folks. If they were broken there was little chance for anyone else spiritually to make it since they were the guides. They were held to a higher standard.
- Born into the Priesthood – it's critical to point out, at this point, that we forget that priest didn't choose their calling, choose their career, or choose to be a priest. They were born into it whether they liked it or not. In other words, think through your family tree. What if all of them were pastors, priests, spiritual leaders, how do you think that would go? It's crazy to think that in most cases in Israel's history (especially their dark years), it was secular people doing religious things. What chance did the nation have in that case? If they don't believe in God, or don't believe that what they do matters, and they hate their job, what's going to happen?
- Who were the Priests and the Levites – The priests and Levites were the main temple people, or the godly people, the religious leaders of Israel. So, where did they come from? If we go back to the Patriarchs of Judaism, we see that it all started from Abraham. Abraham's grandson, Isaac had 12 sons and his name was changed to Israel, where we get the name of the nation. At first they were just guys and individual tribes, but by the time we get down to Moses (many years later), those groups became much larger into tribes. Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi. When Moses was on Mt. Sinai, God called Aaron as the first official priest of the Jews which meant that only his family line would be Priests (able to get closest to God). All Levites would be considered special to God and set aside for special purposes but out of the Levites, the line of Aaron would be the big dogs spiritually, the priests. When we finally get to the Promised Land with Joshua (Moses dies and hands leadership off to him), we suddenly get a territory, a Promised Land. Those 12 tribes now need to divvy up the land, to decide who gets what and who lives where. All 12 of them except one were given a portion of the nation to steward (Joseph got two since Levi got cut out – so Joseph gave one of his to his first son Ephraim, and the other to his second son, Manasseh). The one left out was Levi (I believe he is the fourth born of Jacob, but I'm not certain on that). The tribe of Levi was scattered around the nation as representatives of God. They were to be the God-people who would help the nation know what God wanted. They needed to not be in one place, but sprinkled around in every tribe and given certain cities that they could steward. Eventually they would concentrate their focus on the area of where the holiest places were (Tent of Meeting,

Semi-Permanent but Mobile Temple like in this story, and eventually through Solomon a full permanent temple). The Levites would do all the religious grunt work, and the priests would do the fancy work to God.

- The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, - Part of the role of a priest was to offer sacrifices to God on behalf of regular people. Regular people wanted to have a good relationship with God and the sacrificial system was part of that. The priests helped them do that since God only received certain offerings in certain ways and that meant the priesthood were the gateway to getting some spiritual stuff done.
- The sacrificial system – Many of us may not know why there was a sacrificial system in the first place. It goes back to the Garden of Eden (as do most deep truths). When Adam and Eve sinned something had to die. It should have been them, but in God's mercy He allowed something else to die in their stead (vicariously, representative, scape goat, etc.). God killed animals to clothe them. That was a word picture of how the death of an animal could ATONE, cover over, one's guilt for a time. It would allow the satiation of the law that God set up about sin = death. Someone or something had to die, the only question was what, or who. The sacrifice system was set up early on to create an IOU system of atonement (covering) for people's sins. Whether intentional or unintentional, sins had to be dealt with for God to continue working with mankind, especially His people the Jews. An intricate system was developed and enacted formally by Moses way back at the beginning of the nation of the Hebrews/Jews. People would know that they had sinned and wanted to make a sacrifice on their behalf. They would bring the animal or grain or some type of physical goods to offer to God as a way of repenting and confessing their sin. God would accept temporarily their contrite heart along with their sacrifice and call it good for now. This "allowed" Him to continue blessing them without blessing evil and sin-filled people. Payment was partially made.
- Animals for Human Sin? – the greatest challenge with the sacrificial system was that it was ALWAYS TEMPORARY. As I mentioned above it was an IOU (I owe you) system. It was a COVERING for sin but the sin was still under there somewhere. It was like sweeping the sin under the rug, but at some point the rug needs to be lifted and cleaned out, right? That's what Jesus dying on the cross was all about. He died for ALL SINS – past, present – future. He cleaned out under the rug and paid off the IOU's. God made it clear that the blood of bulls and goats cannot true remove sin of a human, it's not good enough, it's not sufficient enough. It was not until the Lamb of God, died for our sins, that things could truly be cleaned.

One of the most important things about the book of Hebrews, in the New Testament, is that it talks about this very issue.

- Heb 9:11–22 – “But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. <sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. <sup>16</sup> For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. <sup>17</sup> For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. <sup>18</sup> Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.” <sup>21</sup> And in the same way he sprinkled with the blood both the tent and all the vessels used in worship. <sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.”
- Heb 10:1–14 – “For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? <sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. <sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; <sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. <sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ” <sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He does away with the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. <sup>11</sup> And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. <sup>12</sup> But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, <sup>13</sup> waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. <sup>14</sup> For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.”
- **How meat sacrifices were supposed to be handled** – God told Moses and Aaron and the Levites exactly how sacrifices should be handled when they were offered by the people. A portion of the sacrifice was supposed to go to God. A portion would go to the priests and Levites to support them (remember they only have religious stuff to make a

living off of since they don't have an official tribal territory). A tiny portion would be burned up to God: Blood and fat (sometimes a certain portion of the animal). A good chunk would be given to the Levites and priests (usually the shoulder, the right thigh, the cheeks and stomach) for all of them to be supported (and remember it was the best meat and offerings in the land since it was an offering to God). And then the rest of it would (depending on the health of the nation, the economic times, and who was leading the priesthood) be given back to the family to have a feast in the Lord's name.

- Dt 18:1–3 – *“The Levitical priests, all the tribe of Levi, shall have no portion or inheritance with Israel. They shall eat the LORD's food offerings as their inheritance. <sup>2</sup> They shall have no inheritance among their brothers; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them. <sup>3</sup> And this shall be the priests' due from the people, from those offering a sacrifice, whether an ox or a sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder and the two cheeks and the stomach.”*
- Le 2:3 – *“But the rest of the grain offering shall be for Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the LORD's food offerings.”*
- Le 7:31–36 – *“The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast shall be for Aaron and his sons. <sup>32</sup> And the right thigh you shall give to the priest as a contribution from the sacrifice of your peace offerings. <sup>33</sup> Whoever among the sons of Aaron offers the blood of the peace offerings and the fat shall have the right thigh for a portion. <sup>34</sup> For the breast that is waved and the thigh that is contributed I have taken from the people of Israel, out of the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons, as a perpetual due from the people of Israel. <sup>35</sup> This is the portion of Aaron and of his sons from the LORD's food offerings, from the day they were presented to serve as priests of the LORD. <sup>36</sup> The LORD commanded this to be given them by the people of Israel, from the day that he anointed them. It is a perpetual due throughout their generations.”*
- Nu 18:8–21 – *“Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, “Behold, I have given you charge of the contributions made to me, all the consecrated things of the people of Israel. I have given them to you as a portion and to your sons as a perpetual due. <sup>9</sup> This shall be yours of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every offering of theirs, every grain offering of theirs and every sin offering of theirs and every guilt offering of theirs, which they render to me, shall be most holy to you and to your sons. <sup>10</sup> In a most holy place shall you eat it. Every male may eat it; it is holy to you. <sup>11</sup> This also is yours: the contribution of their gift, all the wave offerings of the people of Israel. I have given them to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. <sup>12</sup> All the best of the oil and all the best of the wine and of the grain, the firstfruits of what they give to the LORD, I give to you. <sup>13</sup> The first ripe fruits of all that is in their land, which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it. <sup>14</sup> Every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours. <sup>15</sup> Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. <sup>16</sup> And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs. <sup>17</sup> But the firstborn of a cow, or the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat, you shall not redeem; they are holy. You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar and shall burn their fat as a food offering, with a pleasing aroma to the LORD. <sup>18</sup> But their flesh shall be yours, as the breast that is waved and as the right*

thigh are yours. <sup>19</sup> All the holy contributions that the people of Israel present to the LORD I give to you, and to your sons and daughters with you, as a perpetual due. It is a covenant of salt forever before the LORD for you and for your offspring with you." <sup>20</sup> And the LORD said to Aaron, "You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them. I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel. <sup>21</sup> "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting,..."

- 1 Co 9:13–14 – "Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings? <sup>14</sup> In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel."
- the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself – it appears that in certain times there was a boiling of meat, which I would assume was how the family would prepare their feast to eat before God with the remainder. While that was happening the Levites (or priests) would come along and take a random portion for themselves as it was being cooked. It is not clear if that was okay and a normal practice or a slight variation of extra that they were taking.
- This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there – Shiloh was an early, pre-temple, location of religious (to Yahweh) worship. It was where Eli and his sons were ministering. It may have been one of a few scattered around the nation, it's unclear. This was a pre-formal-temple time so it was a bit wonky.
- Moreover, before the fat was burned<sup>1</sup> - Remember, the fat portion was specifically God's so no one is to mess with God's portion. But before the sacrifice had been given to God, the priests wanted a cut.
- the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." – The corrupt priests didn't want the people to ruin the meat by boiling it first, so they would come in too soon and demand the raw meat for them first.
- And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," – The people, regular people, knew this was messing with God's stuff and they would object saying, don't mess with God's stuff. Let us offer it to Him first and then you can take whatever you want for yourselves. But this was not good enough for the selfish leaders.

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<sup>1</sup> "The fat was supposed to be burned first as "an aroma pleasing to the Lord" (Lev. 3:5). So, here the phrase before the fat was burned is concerned with the timing of the priest's conduct... The fat was normally removed from certain internal organs and offered as a burnt offering to God (see Exod. 23:18; 29:13; Lev. 3:3–5). In the Punic sacrificial system, that was the portion which the priest should receive, though "the proper disposal of the fat did not have the same ideological significance as in the Israelite cult." It is interesting to note that the "Punic Sacrificial Tariff" states that the oppressive priest who "requires a fee deviating from what is set down in (the text on) this plaque shall be fined";<sup>104</sup> see Exod. 21:22; Deut. 22:19. Here, a lay Israelite protests this priest's freelancing approach, only to be told, Now! You must give it to me! a demand backed up by the threat that I will take (it) by force. The short lines of the speech hint at the priest's growing irritation." NICOT

- he would say, “No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force.” – The priests would use their power and influence to demand selfish gain. This was a tremendous abuse of their power and position.
  - Religious abuse – although it gets thrown around a lot in inappropriate ways, there is religious authority abuse happening in many ways probably in every church setting today. Any time a church leader uses their position and authority for selfish gain to the stealing from God or people, it’s a religious abuse and absolutely unacceptable. God holds religious people, specially leaders to a higher standard.
- Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt. – Contempt means you hate it and wish it was gone. These priests (Eli’s sons) hated their job and hated the system and abused it.
  - When you don’t believe you become bitter – there are a lot of people raised in religious homes that are forced into something they don’t believe. In turn they not only continue to not believe, but their bitterness turns to contempt. Contempt means that you not only consider it worthless, but you wish it would go away. It’s nothing but a nuisance and aggravation.
  - When ritual becomes rote and rote becomes ridiculous – there is a danger for all people of faith and religious people to go into autopilot religiously and only do things because they should. Then, once the heart is out of it, and guilt is the only motivation left, there is resentment and skepticism turns into jadedness which turns into hatred. The hatred starts to view religious things as ridiculous, silly, foolish, and irritating. While the respect for things that honor the Lord start to slip into useless, an animosity grows for the things of the church and even the mention of them causes a visceral reaction. That is how you see a lot of atheists develop.
- More Where That Came From
  - God Blesses Hannah
    - 1 Samuel 2:18-21 – *“Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy clothed with a linen ephod. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, “May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord.” So then they would return to their home. <sup>21</sup> 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.”*
    - Samuel was ministering before the Lord<sup>2</sup> - Early on in the story it says that Samuel was ministering before Eli, so we have some change in tone here,

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<sup>2</sup> “With this verse, Samuel’s story line resumes with an expression, Samuel was ministering before the Lord, similar to that in v. 11b. However, here he is ministering before the Lord instead of “before Eli.” The narrator possibly emphasizes Samuel’s direct relationship with God as well as his growth in the Lord’s presence (v. 21).” NICOT



and also a bit of a change in time. Now, Samuel has been trained up enough to start doing God-stuff on his own.

- Was Samuel a Levite or Ephraimite? – It's an interesting question that's debated even today: was Samuel allowed to ministering the temple as an official Levite (from the tribe of Levi) or was an outside helper (from the tribe of Ephraim) who could only do certain things? Due to some very clear old testament passages it seems that he was indeed a Levite, but his family had been living in Ephraim territory (Levites were sprinkled all over if you recall).<sup>3</sup>
- a boy clothed with a linen ephod<sup>4</sup> – A linen ephod only means that he was dressed like the other priest and Levites by wearing a plain white thin dress-like garment. It was a simple uniform.
- And his mother used to make for him a little robe<sup>5</sup> and take it to him each year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. – His mom would make him a new little robe (usually robes were put on over the ephod) that was fancy for him to wear at work, each year. Usually only the priests would wear the official robes of the job, which Samuel would not be able to wear since he wasn't Aaronic lineage, so this would have been just a nice helper robe (Levite).
- Then Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, - Each year the family would come for a visit, see their son, and get a blessing from the main priest, Eli. Each year it may have been the same or different, it's not clear but it centered around them being blessed for having given Samuel into the Lord's work for his whole life, knowing that was a tremendous sacrifice, especially for Hannah.
  - Prophetic blessings of leadership – I truly believe that God endows spiritual leaders with the ability to speak blessings on His behalf to His people. This means it's more than just a well-wish, it's a bit of a command from heaven for good things. I take those blessings very seriously in my life as a pastor. I don't know the limits of them or the efficacy of them at all times, but it's why we do baby dedications.
- and say, "May the Lord give you children by this woman for the petition she asked of the Lord." – Whether this was the same blessing over and over every year or not we don't know, but they had enough kids to cover a number of years. The blessing was for God to extra bless them with kids since they gave away their only one.
- So then they would return to their home. – the whole crew of Elkanah (and likely his clan) would go back home and didn't stay there.
- Indeed the Lord visited Hannah, - God came and helped Hannah get pregnant. The 'visit' from God, means to actively bless, just like

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<sup>3</sup> <https://thebiblehistoryguy.com/blog/f/was-the-prophet-samuel-of-levi-or-ephrain>

<sup>4</sup> "The linen ephod ('ĕpôd bād; also 1 Sam. 22:18; see 2:28 on the ephod worn by the high priest) refers to a simple linen garment, perhaps a white tunic or long shirt. In 2 Sam. 6:4, King David wore it in his dance before the ark. On its etymology, see HALOT, p. 77. "Samuel is thus depicted virtually as a little priest." NICOT

<sup>5</sup> "The small robe which Hannah made for Samuel may be a special garment for priests like the Akkadian tēlītu garment..." NICOT

'remember' means to turn attention toward in order to do something special.

- and she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. – She gave away her first and got five more in return. How beautiful. God didn't just let her sacrifice mean sadness, He filled it with joy. Sometimes we need to just give and sacrifice and it's a loss in one area. That's okay. But sometimes God gives back in that same area.
  - You can't out-give God – I do not believe that God always gives back in the same area that the offering was given. Sometimes He does and sometimes He gives in other ways. For example: money. When we tithe or give an offering to God it doesn't mean we are putting it in the God-stock-market where we get interest and get more money back. It means that sometimes we are blessed financially and sometimes the gift is in other areas like satisfaction, joy, fun, etc. BUT one thing will always be true: You can't outgive God. He is always giving more to us than we could ever give to Him.
  - And the boy Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord. – Samuel didn't just grow up in stature (physically) but also spiritually. He spent a lot of time doing things with God and for God. It's made clear soon that Samuel knew a lot ABOUT God at this time, but didn't KNOW God personally yet nor had he heard from God yet.
- Nasty News
  - Eli chastises his sons
    - 1 Samuel 2:22-26 – *"Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. <sup>23</sup> And he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. <sup>24</sup> No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. <sup>25</sup> If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death. <sup>26</sup> Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man."*
      - Now Eli was very old, - It is sometime later in the story, we are fast-forwarding here. Eli has aged, which means that Samuel was growing up too. Not sure how far in the future we have gone.
      - and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, - he was aware. That meant accountability took root.
      - and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting<sup>6</sup> – Levite men and women both ministered at the holy places. They could have been greeters or cleaners or any of the other things that Levites do although some things were restricted for men. But

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<sup>6</sup> "šb' "to serve"; those who serve at the sacred tent are the Levites (Num. 4:23; 8:24) and women (Exod. 38:8)." NICOT

Eli's sons were having sex with some of the 'temple' women, which was absolutely forbidden in many ways and for many reasons. They were taking advantage of their position here as well. They should have been stoned for adultery.

- Ex 38:8 – “He made the basin of bronze and its stand of bronze, from the mirrors of the ministering women who ministered in the entrance of the tent of meeting.”
- And he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all these people. – To Eli's credit he calls them on it and doesn't avoid the difficult conversation with his older kids. He doesn't go far enough, as we will see, but he does have the talk. Some of us don't have the courage to do even that.
- Why do religious leaders do bad things? – Why do religious leaders do evil things? Here's the disappointing truth: because they are real people too. Although they have more encouragements in one area they have more challenges in others. Although they have a front row to God's miracles, they also have the attacks of the enemy. Although they know what's right, we all do things that we know aren't right. Although they may be anointed to do good things for God that doesn't mean they are immune to temptation. Being a religious leader is a weird place to be. There are perks and there are terrible aspects. You are in a fish bowl and everyone examines everything you do. Usually that forces most ministers to do things in secret. That's why we are so surprised when it comes out eventually.
- No, my sons; it is no good report that I hear the people of the Lord spreading abroad. – Eli doesn't just talk about it but he chastises them for doing bad things. He tells them clearly that what they are doing is wrong.
- If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the Lord, who can intercede for him?” – His point is a warning: You can do stuff to people and get forgiveness from God, but what if you are evil toward God? What then? What if you are doing mean and bad things to the very one that can help you? You are left with nothing but condemnation.
- But they would not listen to the voice of their father, - he vocalized his displeasure and even warned them of the danger, but later we see it's not enough in the mind of the Lord. Something needed to be DONE.
- for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death. – this is a wild statement. It means that due to their terrible actions God was going to punish them, period. They had gone too far, and God was done. No late warning or correction from Eli was going to work. God had it set in motion.
- When God wants someone dead – It's very unusual that we read that God is definitely going to take someone out and they can't repent out of it. Usually it's clear that the individual is so far gone they wouldn't want to repent anyway. The only one that confuses me like this is Judas Iscariot who confessed, repented and yet still went down.

- Now the boy Samuel continued to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and also with man. – Samuel is growing up and connecting with God more (still doesn't know Him personally – Eli didn't do a good job helping there), and also people are starting to respect him as legit.
  - A special phrase for special people – a few characters in the Bible get that special line: Grew in stature and in favor with the Lord and with man. The most important is Jesus (Luke 2:52).
- Smackdown!
  - Eli the Priest gets Rebuked by God
    - 1 Samuel 2:27-3:21 – *“And there came a man of God to Eli and said to him, “Thus says the Lord, ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh?’<sup>28</sup> Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire from the people of Israel.<sup>29</sup> Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?’<sup>30</sup> Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel, declares: ‘I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,’ but now the Lord declares: ‘Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.<sup>31</sup> Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father’s house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.<sup>32</sup> Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever.<sup>33</sup> The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart, and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men.<sup>34</sup> And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day.<sup>35</sup> And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house, and he shall go in and out before my anointed forever.<sup>36</sup> And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, “Please put me in one of the priests’ places, that I may eat a morsel of bread.”*
      - And there came a man of God<sup>7</sup> to Eli – a prophet. He wasn't in Eli's team or his normal group. It's almost like he was a traveling prophet or maybe just in town from somewhere else. Priests had one specific role and prophets had another. Prophets were to speak for God. A 'man of God' is a common way to talk about prophets.

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<sup>7</sup> “The phrase a man of God (‘iš-’ēlōhîm) is a synonym for “prophet” (e.g., 2 K. 1:9).” NICOT

- and said to him, “Thus says the Lord,<sup>8</sup> - this is a key phrase. It means, ‘I’m speaking on God’s behalf so you need to listen to me as you listen to God.’ It’s a HUGE statement and can’t be taken lightly. To defy that is to defy God.
  - The importance, danger, and responsibility of that phrase - I don’t like anyone using this phrase anymore. In the Old Testament it was necessary since God spoke primarily through His prophets and they were to be considered like the walking Bible, inerrant, with HIGH accountability. But in the New Testament we have a different vibe since the Holy Spirit empowers a lot of believers to speak prophetically and we are getting a lot wrong. We need to be more humble and cautious with our words. Although someone may be speaking directly and accurately for God, it doesn’t allow other people to receive it well if they put in the ‘thus sayeth the Lord’ on the front. To say that, you better not be wrong.
- ‘Did I indeed reveal myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt subject to the house of Pharaoh? – this prophet is truly speaking as if God were standing right there talking to Eli and that’s how it was supposed to be received. Take the prophet guy out of the picture and you have a conversation between God and Eli directly. What did God say? First He highlights history with the Jewish people to explain that Yahweh is talking and has been in charge the whole time. Eli was a Jew so God says, didn’t I reveal myself to Aaron (your forefathers) a long time ago and make it clear that I was the one who was going to rescue them from slavery to Egypt?
- Did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? – God continues: Did I not choose Aaron out of all the tribes (Levite) to be the special line of priests, who would minister before me in the sacred things like the offerings, the incense and to discern my will for the people (high priest ephod had a part with two balls that would help a priest decided the Lord’s will)?
- I gave to the house of your father all my offerings by fire<sup>9</sup> from the people of Israel. – God continues: I gave to all Levites and Priests the best food of the land since I shared with them mine. I gave them portions of the burnt offerings of meat.
  - When there is no respect for history or God’s tradition – God is highlighting that Eli and his sons weren’t just the only ones this was

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<sup>8</sup> “Thus says the Lord is the so-called prophetic “messenger formula” where the verb is pf. of performative, the messenger speaking now as Yahweh who sent him. In Samuel this formula appears in 1 Sam. 2:27; 10:18; 15:2; 2 Sam. 7:5, 8; 12:7, 11; 24:12. In the ancient world, the messengers were supposed to recite their messages verbatim, and so the messenger would start “[The sender] has spoken thus:” and use the first person in the body of the message (Gen. 45:49; etc.)” NICOT

<sup>9</sup> “In Lev. 2:2–3, “After taking from [the grain offering] a handful of the choice flour and oil, with all its frankincense, the priest shall cause this memorial portion to go up in smoke on the altar, as an ‘iššê-offering, an aroma pleasing to the Lord. The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the ‘iššê-offering to the Lord” (Lev. 2:2–3; also 10), the ‘iššê-offering is not totally consumed by fire. Most of it was eaten by the priests. So, Akk. eššešu “offering” (CAD, E, pp. 371–73) (a loanword from Sumerian) might be a better candidate for the etymology.” NICOT

about. It started a LONG time before they were born and they were part of something far greater than themselves.

- Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded for my dwelling, - God continues: If I did all of that, then why are you so selfish and self-absorbed that you would dishonor my offerings and the provision I gave you? Who do you think you are?
- and honor your sons above me by fattening yourselves on the choicest parts of every offering of my people Israel?' – God gets specific: Why do you treat your sons better than me? Why would you give them my portion of the offering? Why would you allow them to dishonor me?
  - Eli would never had said his boys were more important than God but they were<sup>10</sup> - I can guarantee you that Eli thought that he was a better leader, a better father, a better worshiper than he was. So do we all. Eli would have said that God was most important and would have said that he had done enough by critiquing his kids. But God didn't think so.
- Therefore the Lord,<sup>11</sup> the God of Israel, declares: - Oh, oh, this is going to get really serious now. God is about to lower the hammer.
- 'I promised that your house and the house of your father should go in and out before me forever,' but now – When God promises something, it's as good as done. God says: In the past I told you that Aaron's lineage would always be my priests. And you are in that line. But now, somethings gone wrong.
  - Did God change His mind?<sup>12</sup> – no, the covenant was broken on Eli's side and the penalties were being enacted.
  - Does God change His mind? – Are His promises fickle? Can they be changed? What good is a forever promise that's temporary? Can God be trusted? There are times when God 'changes His mind' in the Bible based on conversations and situations with mankind, but a deeper dive reveals that it was a set up to begin with. God is simply moving pieces around and when we align with Him, He shifts over to what He was always going to do in the first place. Prayer changes things but usually it changes us.
- the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me, - This is a statement of God saying, 'I don't do this normally.'
- for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. – It's rare, and not in my normal nature, God declares that He's always been fair and right about those who honor Him, He

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<sup>10</sup> "Honoring one's own sons more than Yahweh, thus reversing the priority of devotion, and despising the divine commandment go side by side in the lives of sinful men. In fact, in the Ten Commandments, worshipping God only is the first commandment; next after it is honoring one's parents and treating one's fellow human beings as images of God." NICOT

<sup>11</sup> "The formula the oracle of the Lord (n<sup>o</sup>ūm-YHWH) appears 254 times, mostly in the later Prophets and Psalms, and only here in 1–2 Samuel. This verse is notable in that it repeats the formula twice. The man of God very solemnly announces God's judgment on Eli and his family. The expression forever is almost the same as "all the time" in v. 35; note that God's eternal promise can be changed, but never completely abandoned." NICOT

<sup>12</sup> "Eli has broken the covenant, and his punishment is given in words similar to those of covenant curses. (Curses were a common sanction in ancient treaties.)" NICOT

honors, and those who are bad guys will be cut off from His blessing. That's His normal M.O.

- Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house.<sup>13</sup> – And in this case, God says, you have become bad guys. In the future (God doesn't expressly state the moment), I will start to cut you off and your lineage, from my blessing. I will start killing off your descendants so that there is no longer the blessing of long life in your homes. People will die early.
- Then in distress you will look with envious eye on all the prosperity that shall be bestowed on Israel, and there shall not be an old man in your house forever. – As I bless the rest of Israel, you will take special note and regret what you have done since my blessing will be taken from you and you will be envious. No more would people say that I am blessing your tents with long lives.
- The only one of you whom I shall not cut off from my altar shall be spared to weep his eyes out to grieve his heart<sup>14</sup> - As a matter of fact the only priest in your line to come that I won't literally kill off or take out of the priesthood immediately will only be spared so that he can have a front row to regret.
  - God's vengeance seems cruel – God's getting rough here. He is so angry at them taking advantage of their authority and role (God holds them in far greater accountability), He is getting brutal. Notice the attitude happening here and the dark ways God says it.
- and all the descendants of your house shall die by the sword of men<sup>15</sup> – God just blatantly says, I'm going to kill them all off.
- And this that shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be the sign to you: both of them shall die on the same day. – As a sign that it's not just random and something wrong with your gene pool, I will kill both of your boys in the same day. It's not random. It's me.
- And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest,<sup>16</sup> who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. – And I will replace your family lineage with another lineage of priests. We know from history that He is referring to Zadok the new high priest later.
  - When God has to choose someone else – One of my greatest fears is that God won't find me faithful and will have to go around me to

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<sup>13</sup> "This passage gives the rationale for the later replacement of the house of Eli by the house of Zadok. Solomon exiled Eli's descendant Abiathar to Anathoth (1 K. 2:26–27) at the beginning of his reign, and, after that, Zadok's family controlled the priesthood in the Jerusalem temple until the Exile." NICOT

<sup>14</sup> "This man probably refers to Abiathar, who escaped when Saul killed the priests of Nob (22:17–20)." NICOT

<sup>15</sup> "The phrase "die of men" (\*mwt 'ānāšim) probably means die by the hand of men, for Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died in war (4:11), and most of his other descendants died by the sword (22:20)." NICOT

<sup>16</sup> "The phrase a faithful priest (kōhēn ne'ēmān) seems to refer to Zadok, Abiathar's rival and successor under the aegis of the anointed Davidic kings (2 Sam. 15:24–37; 1 K. 1:22–39; 2:35); note that in 1 Sam. 3:20 Samuel was "established" as a prophet of the Lord, not as a priest. The ne'ēmān can mean both "faithful" and "enduring"; the former meaning goes with priest while the latter sense is reflected in the phrase enduring house. This phrase appears several times referring to David (13:14; 25:28; 2 Sam. 7:16; Acts 13:22). And it is used both for a priestly house and for a royal house (see 2 Sam. 7:16). Thus, in Samuel "the roles of priest and king become closely associated." NICOT

another leader to get His stuff done. I want to be God's first choice for anything special He is going to do. I want to be faithful enough for Him to use me for anything.

- And I will build him a sure house, - I will establish firmly the new priestly line just like I had done with you before all of this.
  - and he shall go in and out before my anointed<sup>17</sup> forever. – that line will last for a long, long time.
  - And everyone who is left in your house shall come to implore him for a piece of silver or a loaf of bread and shall say, "Please put me in one of the priests' places, that I may eat a morsel of bread<sup>18</sup> - Eventually, the remaining priestly line people (in Eli's line) would become desperately poor and have to do menial tasks to survive.
- Horton Hears a Who
    - God calls out to Samuel
      - 1 Samuel 3:1-9 – *"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. <sup>2</sup> At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. <sup>3</sup> The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup> Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" <sup>5</sup> and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup> And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." <sup>7</sup> Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup> And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup> 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."*
      - Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord in the presence of Eli. – Now we have a combination of Samuel doing stuff on Eli's behalf directly for the Lord. This means that Samuel is on his own and Eli is on the back burner at this point in his advanced age.

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<sup>17</sup> "The term my anointed means my "king" in this context; see already in 1 Sam. 2:10b. According to the NT, Christ is not only a faithful priest but an anointed king (Rom. 1:1–6):" NICOT

<sup>18</sup> "Eli's descendants will experience extreme poverty, matching their greed. Whoever remains in your house refers to those among the Eli's priestly family, the Shilonite priesthood. That is, "the non-Zadokite priests, excluded from the altar, will have to perform menial tasks in order to subsist." The term 'ägôrat ("a small piece of silver") is a hapax legomenon. In Official Aramaic, the Akk. loanword 'gr means "rent; wages, salary; price." The term 'grt appears in a Punic sacrificial tariff text and is usually identified with Heb. gērāh, which is the smallest division of the shekel, one-twentieth." NICOT



- And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision<sup>19</sup> – This means God was relatively silent to His people during this era. God didn't want to talk to them because they were rebellious and evil. Even the leaders were corrupt, so what's the point in talking to them? And the way that God spoke to people MOSTLY in the Old Testament was through a vision. A vision is an awake dream. It's visual and audible but it's not something anyone else can hear. It's like a trance.
  - When God goes silent – usually when God goes silent it's an indicator that He is not pleased with how things are going. If God is silent in our lives or silent in our churches, or silent in our nation, and we KNOW how to hear Him (Many of us don't so He can't communicate but tries), then it means something's off and it's not good.
- At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his own place. – Eli was getting really old, and his eyes were failing. This is why he wasn't doing much of the main job and letting young Samuel stand in his place. Oddly, Eli, the high priest is blind both physically and spiritually. That's not an accident, that's an author's note (and God's plan).
- The lamp of God had not yet gone out<sup>20</sup> - The lamp of God goes out in the morning when there's natural light, so it was still dark, or nighttime when this story occurred.
- and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. – We are assuming that everyone is sleeping at this point although they could be resting. The Ark of God is the Ark of the Covenant, the special holy gold box that contained special items. We'll talk more about that next week.
- Then the Lord called Samuel, and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." – God audibly called Samuel by name. Samuel thought that it was Eli. Who else would be calling him in the middle of the night? Could other people hear God's voice calling? Maybe, but likely it was for Samuel's ears only.
- But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. – Eli would likely be annoyed that he was awakened so he shut's Samuel down and tells him to go back to bed.
- And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my

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<sup>19</sup> "The term vision (hāzôn) denotes God's revelation, which is the equivalent of the word of the Lord (v. 1). It should be noted that the prophetic "vision" is used for the divine message communicated to the prophets, and the message was usually to be delivered to the prophet's audience orally in words. But, sometimes the vision was directed to be "written down" (Hab. 2:2). In Amos 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Isa. 2:1; etc., the "vision" is recorded in words. Thus, in the biblical prophecy the "vision" was something to be explained or expressed in words, and its message is more important than the visionary experience of the prophet itself. The rarity of the word of the Lord might be construed as a sign of divine disfavor (see Ps. 74:9; Lam. 2:9; Amos 8:11; Mic. 3:6f.)" NICOT

<sup>20</sup> "Note the contrast between the "darkening" of Eli's eyes and the "light" of the God's lamp. Does this note have some symbolic meaning? The lamp of God had not yet been extinguished that is, it was not yet dawn, for the outer compartment of the sanctuary was illuminated by a night lamp (see Exod. 27:20f.; 30:7-8; Lev. 24:1-4). So, it is reasonable to hold with McCarter that the present incident took place "just before dawn." Birch sees here reference "both to the near extinguishing of divine vision in Israel (v. 1b) and to the waning of Eli's literal vision as well as his role as a priestly source of spiritual vision (v. 2)." One might wisely avoid making allegorical interpretation especially in our "post-modern" society in which multiple readings are encouraged and meanings are admittedly created by readers." NICOT

son; lie down again.” – God intensifies the call with a double name-drop. Samuel, Samuel. To make sure he hears it. Samuel goes back to Eli as the only option and gets shut down again. Must have been embarrassing by this time.

- The heart of a servant to keep responding – Notice that Samuel still gets up to respond. He doesn’t harden his heart and ignore it. He doesn’t pretend it away. He’s a servant at heart and knows that if someone needs him he should respond. What a beautiful, soft heart!
- Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. – this is a key phrase. Samuel did a lot FOR God and with God, but didn’t KNOW God. God hadn’t personally connected with Samuel at this point. But that’s about to change.
  - God isn’t mad at the necessary learning curve – God isn’t mad when Christians are learning to hear his voice and struggling. It’s a learning curve. It’s a tough art form to master.
- And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” – This was bold because it’s been embarrassing 2x’s already. But Samuel did it.
- Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. – he may be a failure as a priest, but he’s not stupid.
  - Why did it take 3x’s for Eli to recognize God? – it’s cool that he eventually did but why did it take so long? If anyone should have been used to the voice of God it would be the high priest of the time, Eli. But we heard at the beginning of the story that the word of God was rare in those days. Eli got used to not hearing anything, so he turned that part of his listening off. Do we do that? Are we so sure that God isn’t going to talk to us that we couldn’t hear Him if He did say something?
  - The terrible feeling that God had to go around you – You have to imagine first the jealousy of Eli to know that this young kid was getting a message directly from God and it had been a bit since he got one. But then knowing the last message God gave, it’s likely that he had the sorrow of thinking to himself, ‘well, God told me directly but now I’m getting bypassed.’
- Therefore Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.’ ” – Finally Eli does something positive. He tells Samuel that it’s God. Sometimes we need people in our lives to help point out that it’s God moving because we are too close to it ourselves. The response statement is beautiful: ‘Speak, Master, I’m your servant and I’m listening for your command.’ Humility and willingness is through all of it.
- So Samuel went and lay down in his place. – imagine the excitement that kid must have had. What is God going to say?

- Hard Start

- God Gives Samuel a Tough Message

- 1 Samuel 3:10-21 – *“And the Lord came and stood, calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” <sup>11</sup> 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. <sup>12</sup> On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.” <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> But Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>17</sup> 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.” <sup>18</sup> 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.” <sup>19</sup> And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. <sup>20</sup> And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord.”*

- And the Lord came and stood,<sup>21</sup> - This is a special Hebrew way of saying that God intensified His presence in a tangible way so that it was clear that it was Him. God is everywhere at the same time so it’s not a spatial shift, as much as an intensity and revelation shift.
- calling as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” – God is consistent and allows them to go through the learning curve while He is patient for them to catch up. This is the heart of God. God isn’t playing games with us (if you don’t hear me once I’ll never talk again to punish you). He’s getting stuff done and training us.
  - Why the double call of the name?<sup>22</sup> – Abraham, Moses and Jacob all got a double name call. It’s a special way of getting their attention and not letting them miss it.
- And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant hears.” – Samuel does what Eli tells him to do to try to connect with God. Many times we need to learn from our mentors and role models and do what they do to connect with God and grow.
- 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. – God speaks

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<sup>21</sup> “For the first time it is said that the Lord “came” and “stood” before he called. Until now, only “calling” has been mentioned. Does this mean that the Lord had been calling from a distance and now, finally, came close and called? Probably so. It is possible that “the revelation to Samuel involved a vision as well as an audition,” but the vision was not so overwhelming and frightening that Samuel could not listen to God’s aural message and comprehend its meaning.” NICOT

<sup>22</sup> “Samuel! Samuel!: see “Abraham! Abraham!” (Gen. 22:11); “Jacob! Jacob!” (Gen. 46:2); “Moses! Moses!” (Exod. 3:4). Such repeated pronunciations of a person’s name may have a special significance. God called them at crucial times in their lives.” NICOT

and that must have freaked Samuel out just to hear Him. Remember, this is a vision, so he's awake but he's hearing stuff as if God is standing right there. What does God say? 'I'm about to do something intense that's going to freak out the whole nation.' Uh Oh, this isn't a friendly message.

- On that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. – God continues: I'm going to do to Eli and his whole lineage what I already told him I was going to do.' At this point, Samuel should be catching on that God already had a conversation with Eli about what He was going to say, but I doubt Samuel was picking up on that. He was probably freaking out over what was going to happen next.
- 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. – God continues: I declare that I'm going to punish Eli and his family and his whole lineage because he knew what his wicked sons were doing in my name and he didn't stop it.' This was the ACTION that Eli was supposed to take. His responsibility to the house of God was greater than his desire to bless his kids.
- 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." – God says: I promise you and to everyone that the sin that has happened in the corruption of Eli's house will be punished. No one can stop it. It doesn't matter what type of apology is done or sacrifice or offering to try to appease me. They are DONE!
- Samuel lay until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the Lord. – Samuel was tripping out. He laid there for a bit. He didn't jump up and tell Eli the vision. He had to process it and that was okay. Eventually he had to get up for work, so he did.
- And Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. – Samuel's first task as God's prophet is a hard one: delivering a tough message to his mentor, Eli (something he will be charged to do repeatedly in the book). This teaches us that sometimes God calls us to deliver difficult truths with boldness. Are we willing to obey, even when the message is uncomfortable?
- But Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Here I am." – Samuel and Eli were seemingly close (Samuel was raised by Eli) and so Eli called him son. He said, 'come here for a second.' Eli knew something was up if God was talking to him. Samuel again, doesn't run from the scary assignment. He owns up to it and obediently goes to Eli.
- 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." – Wow, what a harsh environment. Eli is no softy. Eli wants to know what God said and knows that Samuel is reluctant. He pushes him to reveal it all.

- So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. – Samuel was obedient no matter how scary that was.
- And he said, “It is the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.” – Eli must have surprised Samuel with the grace to which he accepted it and didn’t lash out at him. It shows that deep down Eli still had a high view of God and accepted his fate.
- And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. – More time is passing. AT this point nothing has happened, and you have to wonder if Samuel was doubting what he heard. Eli wasn’t. Eli had already been told, now twice. It was only a matter of time. But Samuel must have doubted himself. But he was growing up and God was ‘with him’ which meant their relationship was growing and God’s hand of favor and anointing was upon him. Whatever Samuel said on God’s behalf, God moved through as if it was fact and didn’t let any of it be discredited.
- And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba – these are the ancient North/South limits of Israel’s territory. Dan is a major city in the North and Beersheba was a major city in the South. It means, ‘all of Israel.’
- knew that Samuel was established as a prophet of the Lord. – Samuel is now all grown up. It’s his day to lead and shine. God was speaking in him and through him.
- And the Lord appeared again at Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the Lord. – And with this young man the religious and holy place of Shiloh began to hear God again. The nation had a restored special spot to commune with God because the old leadership was being moved out and new leadership was rising.
  - How can we be the people for this generation to hear God rightly again? - How can we be people through whom God reintroduces His presence to others? What might happen if we fully embrace our calling?

### Conclusion

- *Speak Lord, I am Listening Prayer*