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Title: Hearing the Voice of God

SCRIPTURE: I Samuel 3:9-10

“Therefore E’-li said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel, Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.”



CONTEXT:

I Samuel 3 is a conversation between E’li the priest of Israel and his servant in the house of God - Samuel. This conversation is at the end of a prophecy E’li received regarding the disobedience of his sons – Hophni and Phinehas. E’li sons were not performing their priestly duties but rather spent their day fornicating with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. E’li questioned the sin of his sons but failed to correct their behavior. Therefore, God responds by a prophet indicating what should befall Eli’s household. E’li would be punished of God. God would reduce the strength of Eli’s household, there would not be an old man in Eli’s house, and his sons would die on the same day. This passage of scripture shows the behavior of the Priesthood, the positioning of God’s presence, and the beginning of prophecy for Samuel.

I Samuel 3:9-10

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*Sermons for Pastors and Leaders of the
Christian faith!*

I SAMUEL’S HISTORICAL FACT

Date and Historical Background: The call of Samuel to be the prophet and judge of Israel formed a strong turning point in the development of the Old Testament kingdom of God. Samuel had the tremendous task of directing the rebuilding of social and religious unity. He was God’s instrument for establishing the kingdom of Israel in this great national crisis, second in importance to the Exodus experience. He also laid the foundation of the prophetic office and developed it to the level of priesthood and the kingship. From Samuel, the prophets sustained and fostered the spiritual life of the nation and were the instruments through which God’s will was communicated to ruler and to people. Scholars suggest that the early part of I Samuel could have been written about 1000 B.C. and the remainder some thirty to fifty year later. It is believed that Abiathar wrote the book of I Samuel because of his association with King David. (Ref. KJV 268)

I Samuel 3:9-10

Hearing the Voice of God

INTRODUCTION:

I Samuel chapter three is the call of Samuel to be priest and prophet. Samuel had been dedicated to the Lord by his mother Hannah who had been barren. The prophet and priest E'li spoke a word to Hannah in her despair confirming that the Lord heard her petition to conceive a man-child.

Hannah was very careful to dedicate Samuel to the Lord just as she promised (I Samuel 1:11). Upon weaning Samuel, Hannah went to the temple to dedicate Samuel to the Lord and to make the yearly sacrifice. Hannah confirmed for E'li that Samuel was indeed the child of her petition (I Samuel 1:26-27).

Samuel ministered unto the Lord before E'li at a very young age and remained in the temple of the Lord as his mother had promised. God had provided for himself a prophet and priest that would do according to what was in His heart and mind (I Samuel 2:35). I Samuel 3 is the introduction of Samuel hearing the voice of God so that God's will could be done.

MESSAGE:

Chapter three begins with Samuel as a young child ministering unto the Lord before E'li. The scripture makes is very clear that "the word of the Lord was precious (rarely given) in those days" because there were no open visions. There are three points to note in I Samuel 3:1 that are relevant to our key verses. (1) Samuel was young. He had been given to the Lord by his mother (Hannah) after she had weaned him to serve in the temple of God for life (I Samuel 1:28). (2) Samuel **ministered** unto the Lord before E'li [*Hebrew 8334 minister – shâraṯh meaning to attend as a menial or worshiper, to contribute to, minister unto, do serve, servant, service, servitor, and wait on*]. At this point, Samuel was considered a worshiper although he fills this position in a menial way. (3) The word of the Lord was precious (rarely given) in those days. I Samuel 3:1 state that there were no open visions. This was likely so because

those that filled the position of priest and prophet were corrupt and without correction (I Samuel 2:22).

I Samuel 3:2-3 continues with the state of E'li and the temple. There is great symbolism in these two verses as it relates to the sight of man and the light of God. Verse three is a recontextualization of Exodus 27:20. It suggest that an **ere** [*Hebrew 2962 ere - terem meaning not yet, before that, to interrupt or suspend*] had taken place in the temple of the Lord. Eli and Samuel allowing the lamp of God to suspend. According to Exodus 27:20, the lamp was to remain lit in the temple. Eli's eyes had become dim. He could not rightfully see that the lamp of God was suspended. Because Samuel was young and not well versed in the things of God, Samuel slept through the interruption of the lamp. This verse allows the reader to see the error upon Eli's life in that the temple is of non-importance just as the correction of his sons. It was in this state (verse four) that the Lord decides to call out for Samuel. The darkness in the temple was an error that was perhaps unbearable to the Lord.

I Samuel 3:4-7 is a place of growth and understanding for Samuel. It is very clear that Samuel ministered and held a menial position in the temple of the Lord. The Ark of God - God's very presence was there, but Samuel did not yet **know** [*Hebrew 3046 know – yeda meaning certify, know, make known, teach*] the Lord and neither was the word of the Lord revealed unto him (I Samuel 3:7). It is important to note - ministers can do the work of the Lord by ministering in the temple in a menial position and not know the Lord because they lack revelation (i.e. ministers lack revelation because the Lord has not been revealed unto them).

As a young man when the Lord called out to Samuel, he ran to what was most familiar to him – E'li priest and prophet. Because there were no open visions during this time, the voice of Lord was not yet known to him. The Lord's voice would be unfamiliar to Samuel. This is also a transitional time in the prophetic – seeing versus hearing.

MESSAGE CONTINUED...

I Samuel 3:4-7 also represents the turning point for E'li. At this point, E'li does not quite understand that the Lord is calling out for a new priest and prophet as spoken by the man of God (I Samuel 2:35). E'li suggests that Samuel should continue to sleep. This sleep represents a posture E'li has taken concerning the voice of God. Remember, there had been no open vision and when the word of the Lord did come in those days it was given by another man of God (I Samuel 2:27-36) and considered rare as it relates to E'li.

In I Samuel 3:8, the Lord calls to Samuel once more and E'li perceived that the Lord was calling out to young Samuel. Samuel followed his original plan of searching out what was familiar to him. However, E'li recognized through experience of knowing or having the Lord revealed unto him, that the Lord was speaking to young Samuel. It is important to note - when it is time for your ministering, your elder prophet, pastor, priest, or leader will discern that the Lord has called you.

This is a critical transition for E'li. Not only has E'li discerned that the Lord is now calling young Samuel, but it is his responsibility to train Samuel in what to do.

Verse 9: “Therefore E'li said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.”

In I Samuel 3:9, E'li teaches Samuel [*Hebrew 3046 yeda meaning teach*] how to respond to the voice of the Lord. There are three key points to examine in this verse. (1) E'li instructs Samuel to return to the position in which he first heard the Lord - **Go, lie down**. Samuel takes on a position of rest before the Lord. This position allows Samuel to not become anxious before the Lord. (2) E'li further suggests that Samuel needs to make himself available for the Lord regardless of the Lord's availability - **and it shall be, if he call thee**. E'li is careful to use the word **if** thus knowing that the Lord may or may not call again because Samuel had failed to hear twice before.

(3) E'li teaches Samuel how to respond to the Lord - **that thou shalt say, Speak Lord for thy servant heareth**. It is important to note - E'li allowed Samuel to minister before the Lord without truly knowing the Lord. There is a place of service in the temple without revelation. Samuel was in a place of servant-hood long before he realized himself as the servant. The Lord had not been made known!

Verse 10: “And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for they servant heareth.”

I Samuel 3:10 is a reconfiguration of verses four and six. Something very different takes place unlike in the previous call. The Lord came, and stood, and **called** [*Hebrew 7121 call – qārā meaning to call, call out, recite, to call out loudly in order to get someone's attention so that contact can be initiated*]. Not only has Samuel heard the voice of the Lord, but he has also received a visitation (i.e. a true revealing).

The Lord called to Samuel (as he did in other times) so that the call and the voice would be familiar. The Lord clearly wanted to make contact with Samuel thus calling [*qārā*] him three times in the same manner. One can understand that making contact with the priest that shall be faithful to do what is the mind and heart of God (I Samuel 2:35) requires the extreme - the Lord came, stood, and called. Be reminded that the word of the Lord was precious in those days because there were no open visions (I Samuel 3:1). In the temple, the Lord now shows himself (see by a vision) and calls (hear).

Samuel did just as E'li instructed. Samuel answered the Lord and identified himself as servant. It is at this time that Samuel has made contact with the Lord and yielded himself to the call thus hearing the voice of God.

MESSAGE CONTINUED...**MESSAGE POINTS:**

1. Samuel was a young child when the Lord initiated his call and when he was introduced to hearing the voice of God.
2. Samuel ministered in the temple before he had a true relationship with the Lord.
3. The word of the Lord can become very rare during certain time periods. There maybe seasons of the Lord not speaking to His people frequently. In this case, someone needs to hear and see for all.
4. Be mindful of the things of God that are important. Do not become dormant (sleep) while performing the work of the Lord.
5. When the Lord calls out to you, be prepared to respond as His servant. This should be after you have served in His place of worship under the authority of a pastor, priest, or prophet.
6. Do not refuse training from your elders.
7. Hearing the voice of the Lord is a direct reflection of how you are to be positioned - the role in which you are to play.

PERSONAL MESSAGE NOTES:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

MESSAGE ILLUSTRATIONS:

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- 2.
- 3.
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- 5.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS...

I Samuel 3:9-10 the Lord calls Samuel. Hearing the voice of the Lord is about recognizing that He is calling out to you. In some cases, it may be others that identify the voice of the Lord on your behalf by interpreting what you have shared. In today's dispensation, the Lord can speak in many different ways – audible, the written word, and through His prophets. However, it is important to know when the Lord is speaking and recognizing his voice is essential. It is equally important to be responsive to the call of the Lord. If he calls out to you, then you must respond in a way that identifies you as servant and Him as Lord.

Even though the scripture identifies a physical call, this call was just as much about the call to ministry. Answering the call to ministry is identifying yourself as the Lord's servant. Hearing the voice of the Lord for ministry is essential to your function in the body of Christ. Each person in the body has their part to play as the gospel message unfolds to the non-believer. Keep in mind that the Lord does call to his people, the Lord gives you an assignment, and the Lord may use others to help you identify His voice and call.



E V E T T E

*Sermons for Pastors and Leaders
of the Christian faith!*

The scripture and above reference has been taken from the King James Version of the Holy Bible, Matthew Henry's Commentary, Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words and other sources. The opinions of this sermon are from Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis and should be researched further by the recipient. Rightly Dividing sermon series is a copyright of Dr. Evette Hyder-Davis with permission for use but not distribution. For more sermons, please visit www.evette.co/rightlydividing.

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