

**I. Introduction and review.**

**II. The LORD calls Samuel. 3:1-21**

**A. The setting of Samuel's call. v. 1-3**

1. Samuel is a young man. v. 1a 2:17,26 2:1717:33
2. Samuel is faithfully serving the LORD under Eli. v. 1b,5 Isa. 6:8 Ex. 3:4
3. Prophetic words and visions were rare in those dark days. v. 1c  
Why would this be? 28:6,15 Pr. 29:18 Judges 21 Amos 8:11-12
4. Eli is fading. v. 2 2:22 4:15
5. The LORD came to Samuel before dawn. v. 3 Ex. 27:20f II Chr. 13:1 Lev. 24:2-4

**B. Samuel does not initially recognize the LORD's call. v. 4-10**

1. Why doesn't Samuel understand what the LORD is doing? v. 7
2. Does the LORD reveal Himself visually as well as audibly? v. 10a Gen. 18:22
3. Samuel's faithful response is like that of other prophets. v. 10b,5 Isa. 6:8 Ex. 3:4

**C. The LORD confirms His message of judgment upon Eli's house. v. 11-14 2:27-36**

1. This is a severe (ear tingling) judgment. v. 11 I Ki. 21:12 Jer. 19:3
2. Eli has failed to restrain his wicked sons. v. 13
3. The judgment is irreversible. v. 14 Deut. 17:12 21:18-21 Lev. 24:11ff Jer. 18:1ff

**D. Samuel reluctantly fulfills his prophetic duty to Eli. v. 15-18**

1. Why was he reluctant to deliver the message? v. 15-17
2. Samuel faithfully declares the entire message from God. v. 18a
3. What do you think of Eli's response? v. 18b Lev. 10:3 Job 2:10

**E. Samuel is established as a prophet in Israel. v. 19-21 4:1a**

1. The famine for the Word of God has finally ended! v. 1
2. What is a prophet? Ex. 7:1 Deut. 18:15-22 13:1-5 Num. 12:6
  - a. A prophet infallibly speaks God's Word. v. 19 Deut. 18:18 Ex. 7:1
  - b. God's people must submit to prophecy as God's Word. Deut. 18:19
  - c. Those whose prophecy does not come true, or whose message goes against previous revelation, are false prophets who deserve death. Dt. 13:1-5 18:20-22
  - d. Old Testament prophets look ahead to Christ. Deut. 18:15
3. Samuel proves to be a true prophet of God.

**III. Application: How does God call people to spiritual leadership today?**

**A. Do we have prophets today?**

1. Jesus has brought the final revelation from God. Deut. 18:15,19 Heb. 1:1-2
2. The revelation through Christ has been recorded in the New Testament by the apostles and prophets who laid the foundation for the early church. Eph. 2:20
3. Now that the revelation through Christ has been given and the Scriptures are complete, we are not to expect any further prophetic revelation from God.

**B. Many falsely claim prophetic authority.**

1. The Roman Catholic church adds to Scripture by claiming that pronouncements of Popes and councils have revelatory authority. Mt. 15:3,9
2. Many false prophets have done great harm.

3. Some claim that a less authoritative form of prophecy continues in our day.
  - a. Either someone is an infallible prophet to whom we must submit, or he is not a prophet at all. Deut. 18:15ff
  - b. What is often called prophecy should be re-labeled a possible insight, a teaching, an exhortation, or a hunch.
- C. We no longer have prophets but we do have Elders and Deacons. I Tim. 3:1ff
  1. Should our leaders expect a supernatural call like that of Samuel?
  2. We must be led by men who have been called by God. Acts 20:28 I Tim. 5:22
  3. The Bible gives us clear criteria by which we know whom God has called.
    - a. Desire. I Tim. 3:1
    - b. Character and qualifications. I Tim. 3:1ff Titus 1:5ff
    - c. Gifts of ministry. I Tim. 3:2 Titus 1:9
    - d. Affirmation by God's people. 3:20 Acts 6:3 14:23 and existing leadership.
  4. God has called each of us to serve Him in some capacity. I Pet. 4:10-11

#### **IV. How does God speak to us today?**

- A. Is there a famine of the Word of God today?
  1. We are blessed to have the completed Scriptures. II Tim. 3:16-17
  2. There is a famine of faithful preachers who fearlessly proclaim the whole counsel of God. 3:18 II Tim. 4:1ff Jer. 6:14 Ro. 1:16ff I Co. 1:18ff I Pe. 2:8
  3. There is a famine of faithful hearers. Is. 6:9-10 Mk. 4:9-12 II Ti. 4:3-4 Jer. 5:31
  4. People are seeking guidance in all the wrong places.
- B. Many professing Christians seek guidance apart from Scripture.
  1. Should we ask and expect God to speak to us as He did to Samuel?
    - a. The LORD takes initiative. Even then, visions and prophecies were rare. 3:1
    - b. The prophetic message is authoritative revelation at a crucial point in the history of redemption. 3:21
  2. Should we put out fleeces like Gideon did? Judges 6:12-16,36-40  
Gideon was setting an example for us to follow, but was acting in unbelief.
  3. Does God lead us by our feelings? Pr. 14:12 28:26 3:5-6 Jer. 17:9
    - a. The Bible never tells you how to discern that a feeling is from God, as opposed to feelings from within your own fleshliness or imagination.
    - b. The Bible tells us to mistrust our feelings. Pr. 14:12 28:26
  4. Can we be led through prayer? Should we listen for God to speak to us?
    - a. The Bible never says that we should listen for God's voice.
    - b. Pray for wisdom -- insight into His Word which you can apply in your decision making. Js. 1:5
  5. What does it mean to be led by the Spirit? Ro. 8:14 John 16:13 17:17 Eph. 1:13
    - a. The leading of the Spirit is never referred to as a feeling.
    - b. The leading of the Holy Spirit is not mystical, but moral. Rom. 8:13,4
    - c. The Holy Spirit helps you to understand and apply God's Word. Jo. 14:26 16:13,8 I Co. 2:12-14 Ezek. 36:27 Ro. 8:4,13
  6. Does God direct us through opening doors? II Co. 2:12-13 John 1:1-3
    - a. Providence may open or close a door, but we have a duty to evaluate every opportunity objectively and biblically.
    - b. The Bible never says that open doors are definitive leading from God.
  7. Should we expect dreams and visions?
  8. What about people who claim to have experienced supernatural guidance?
  9. In the Bible supernatural guidance is unmistakable, authoritative, significant, and exceptional.

- C. What harm results when people seek or claim extra-biblical supernatural guidance?
1. People want knowledge, certainty, and control beyond what God offers. Dt. 29:29
  2. People don't want to take responsibility for their decisions and the consequences.
  3. People neglect the guidance offered by the revealed Word of God as they seek extra-biblical leading.
  4. Some fall into sin, error, or disaster.
  5. Many are confused when mystical guidance fails.
  6. People experience unnecessary anxiety over past and present decisions.
  7. People excuse selfish or irresponsible choices.
- D. God speaks to us through His infallible all-sufficient Word. II Ti. 3:16-17
1. The Bible is a supernatural book which contains all we need to know for life and godliness. II Pe. 1:20-21 1:3
  2. Don't use the Bible mystically, like tarot cards. II Pe. 3:16-17 II Tim. 2:15
  3. Seek wisdom and guidance through carefully studying and applying Scripture.
  4. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand and apply God's Word. I Cor. 2
  5. Seek counsel from those who know the Word of God well. Pr. 15:22 12:15 19:20

**V. Concluding applications: God has spoken!**

**Discussion questions**

1. What is the significance of this chapter in God's plan for Israel?
2. What is a prophet?
3. Do we have prophets today?
4. What was Samuel's first prophetic duty?
5. How is the duty of preachers today like Samuel's duty in this chapter?
6. Is God silent today?
7. Should we expect God to speak to us directly, as He did to Samuel?
8. What harm can come when someone mistakenly thinks God is directing him or her?
9. How can you know God is speaking to you?
10. How does God call leaders today?
11. What would you say to someone who claims to be a prophet of God?
12. How does this chapter point to Christ?