

The Double Call of God (4)

‘Samuel, Samuel’

I Sam 3 v 10 “And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.”

Reading: 1 Sam 2 v 12, 17, 18, 22 – 27a, 1 Sam 3 v 1 – 21 ‘The Call of Samuel’

The double call of the LORD to Samuel is different from the previous calls. Abraham, Jacob and Moses were older men with many experiences of life and of God behind them. Samuel was but a boy and 1 Sam 3 v 7 “*Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD*”. God can use anyone at anytime to accomplish his purposes, old or young. If the call of God comes are we ready to reply “*Speak; for the servant heareth.*”

Lessons from the Background to the Call of Samuel

1. **Prayer** – Samuel’s name means ‘heard of God’: a name given to him by his godly mother Hannah. In chapter 1 Hannah is praying “*give unto thine handmaid a man child*” and by the end of the chapter Hannah is rejoicing at answered prayer, “*For this child I prayed*”. Prayer changes things; God hears and God answers prayer today. The Lord Jesus promised Luke 11 v 9 “*And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.*” Believe in the God who answers prayer, pray believing that God will answer ... and prove that prayer changes things.
2. **Vows** - As Hannah prayed in chapter 1 she said, “*give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD*”. She made a commitment, and at great cost she did what she had said (see 1 v 28). There are times in our lives when we determine to do something for God, to live a life that is closer to God: don’t give up on this, be determined, with God’s help, to see it through. It will not be easy, a cost will be involved, and discouragement and difficulties will arise, but remember the word of the LORD in chapter 2 v 30 “*for them that honour me I will honour*”- and God blessed Hannah.
3. **Parents** - A lesson for parents, be ambitious for your children, but make it spiritual ambitions. Hannah’s desire for her son was that he would be a man of God and she supported him in this role 2 v 19 “*Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year*”. It is good to see children doing well, but most important is spiritual 2 John 4 “*I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth*”. Hannah also prayed for her son 1 v 27 “*For this child I prayed*”, how important to support children with prayer.

Setting the Scene – Conditions at the Time

Things are different today? We’re living in difficult days, days of decline, and a day of small things. Conditions were just the same in Samuel’s day and yet at times like these 3 v 10 “*And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.*”

1. **Moral conditions** – It was at the time described in the last verse of the book of Judges, “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*” There were no national principles or standards for living, no statement of right and wrong, “*every man did that which was right in his own eyes.*” This is like the times in which we are living. Legislation, rather than stating principles and setting standards for living is used to make sin acceptable and to be tolerated.

2. **Religious conditions** – The son's of Eli, the High Priest, were acting as priests, but they did not know the Lord, 2 v 12 *“Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord.”* As a result of their behaviour *“men abhorred the offering of the Lord”*. We see similar conditions today, religious leaders who know not the Lord bringing the Church into disrepute. The word translated ‘abhorred’ in 1 Sam 2 is the same word that is translated ‘blaspheme’ in 2 Sam 12. In 2 Sam 12 Nathan, the prophet, had come to David with the word of God after he had sinned in the matter concerning Bathsheba and Uriah. Nathan said to David *“thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.”* The things that we do and say can have an effect on how people view Christians, the Church and the Lord Jesus. The apostle Paul gives a warning in 2 Cor 6 v 3 *“Giving no offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things commending ourselves as the ministers of God”*.

The other religious problem was weak spiritual leadership and spiritual conditions had declined. It is recorded that Eli, the High Priest, *“was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see”*. A spiritual leader who had lost his energy and vision. In chapter 1 we find that spiritual discernment had also been lost, Eli unable to distinguish between a woman in prayer and a woman drunk with wine. In the days of Eli *“there was no open vision”*. The wise writer of the Proverbs states Prov 29 v 18 *“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”* This is a challenge to the people of God today; no energy, no vision and all around us the people perish.

Despite the sad spiritual and moral conditions of the nation religious routine continued, 3 v 3 *“And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord”*. The candlestick in the holy place was still tended, was still lit each evening (see Ex 30 v 7,8). Religious activity is not a mark of spiritual condition (see also the Church at Ephesus Rev 2 v 1 – 7).

The Double Call of God

It was at times like these 3 v 10 *“And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.”* God always has his man, or woman, or young person ready to do his work. No matter how bleak the situation, God is in control and Samuel is called, a man who was to make a difference in his generation. The call of God came in the night season to the child Samuel and Samuel replied *“Speak; for thy servant heareth.”* The word heareth means to hear with a view to obeying. Samuel was receptive to the voice of God and when he heard he was ready to obey. God can use anyone, at anytime, to be involved in accomplishing his purpose. Are we ready to be used today? Are we listening for his voice? Are we willing to respond *“Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth”*?

The message that the Lord had for Samuel that night was one of coming judgement on the house of Eli. The condemnation of Eli is given in 3 v 13 *“because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.”* His failure was that he tolerated sin and error, content to give a mild reproof (see 2 v 23). As Christians we must not tolerate sin and error, nor accept it as the norm, but ever be ready to oppose it and state the truth. This principle is true whether it is sin in the world or error in the Church.

We can notice also the faithfulness of Samuel. Despite the content of the message and the person whom it was about Samuel was faithful in his presentation of it 3 v 18 *“And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him.”* Christians too should be faithful in the presentation of the gospel message. It is a message that is not popular in the world (see 1 Cor 1 v 18), but we are called to be faithful in presenting the gospel.

From this day on Samuel served the Lord and made a difference 3 v 19 *“And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.”*