

Intro

~ There are many great callings from God we can read in the bible - 1 Noah, 2 Abraham 3 Jacob 4 Moses 5 Samuel 6 David 7 Elijah 8 Elisha 9 Isaiah 10 Jeremiah 11 Disciples 12 Paul

~ The culture of this calling is Eli's sons Hophni and Phineas were corrupt, Eli was negligent as a father and spiritual leader, the word of the Lord was rare, there's no open vision, and it's a time of spiritual hopelessness. Yet, in this time the Lord is planning. God hasn't forgotten his people. He's ever mindful of his people's spiritual needs. When God seems to be silent he's still working and planning. He was planning on calling a young boy named Samuel

~ God is fulfilling his plan of redemption and he's calling men and women to be his instruments in fulfilling his calling

~ This calling in 1 Samuel 3 is 1) from God 2) to Samuel and 3) for a purpose

- This calling originated from God
- This calling extended to Samuel as the instrument of God's plan
- This calling's purpose was to be a prophet of the Lord for the Lord's people

~ The word calling as we use it here refers to a divine summons or invitation to participate with God in his will

~ God said through the man of God that the Lord will do a "new" thing (1 Sam 2:27-36) and here in chapter 3 the Lord begins setting up the things for the Israelites through the calling of Samuel (here in chapter 3)

~ This chapter goes from not much happening spiritually (v1) to the Lord appearing again in Shiloh (v21)

Outline

V1-3 = Samuel's Calling (Its setting – at the house of the Lord)

V4-10 = Samuel's Calling (It's joyful)

V11-14 = Samuel's Calling (Its intention = to do a new thing)

V15-18 = Samuel's Calling (it's hard)

V19-21 = Samuel's Calling (it's established)

Text**V1-3 = Samuel's Calling (Its setting – at the house of the Lord)****V1**

~ The Lord's house = The setting is worth noting = It's a holy place but a lack of God's work

~ Samuel is ministering to the Lord

~ Child = Josephus says Samuel is about 12 years old. It could refer to a young teenager per the Hebrew word used

~ The word of the Lord was precious in those days = few revelations. This is because during the time of the Judges there was limited prophetic activity.

~ There was no open vision = no publicly accredited prophet

~ But this need not be a reason of discouragement for we know that in the Lord's silence he was beginning to do a new thing – he's going to bring an end to Eli's line as a priesthood and raise up a faithful prophet/priest (Samuel)

~ Amos 8:11 – perhaps the Lord sent a famine of the word because of Israel's waywardness and lack of spirituality taking place at Shiloh. Now there will be someone who will say, "Speak Lord for your servant is listening."

~ There's a lot of preaching that takes place but if that preaching isn't correct doctrine it's still a famine

V2

~ We see something of Eli's personal condition - his sight is failing

~ *1 Sam 4:15 Now Eli was ninety-eight years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see*

~ Eli is lying down and Samuel in his own place near the tabernacle

V3

~ The Lamp of God (3:3)

- The lamp mentioned in this verse is the golden lamp stand found among the tabernacle's furnishings. This lamp stand stood opposite the bread of the presence in the holy place (Exod. 25:31-40). It was a violation of the priestly regulations to allow this flame to go out before morning (Exod. 27:21).

~ The Tabernacle of the Lord (3:3)

- Although the Hebrew text uses the term for "temple" (hekal), the portable tabernacle is meant (Exod. 26). In 1 Samuel it is also called "the house of the Lord" (3:15), "the Tent of Meeting" (2:22), and "my dwelling" (2:32). Since the tabernacle may have been located at Shiloh for 40 years (the length of Eli's judgeship; see 4:18), a larger, more permanent building complex may have grown up around it. This would justify the use of the term temple.

~ The Ark of God (3:3)

- The ark of God, a chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold inside and out, symbolized the presence of God with Israel (Exod. 25:10-22). Two cherubim sat on top of the mercy seat on the ark, and the Lord Almighty was said to be enthroned between them (1 Sam. 4:4). The ark led the people of Israel through their wilderness journeys and into the Promised Land. It was kept in the most holy place of the tabernacle behind a curtain (Exod. 26:33).

~ Samuel must have had his sleeping place near the ark. Perhaps near the courtyard

~ Eli's room must have been close to Samuel's because when Samuel hears the Lord calling he thought it was Eli calling him

~ The lamp represented the word. It was the only form of light in the Holy Place. This was to be kept burning until sunrise per Exodus 27:21

V4-10 = Samuel's Calling (Its joyful)

~ God is certainly persistent. The verb call occurs eleven times in verses 4-10. Anyone who has ever experienced a call from God can tell you that sometimes it is relentless. God does not give up. This time God spoke his name, Samuel. (*Holman Old Testament Commentary - Holman Old Testament Commentary – 1, 2 Samuel*)

~ We see the kind of youngster Samuel is. It's late but yet when he thinks he hears Eli calling he goes to Eli

~ The Lord calls 3 times and 3 times Samuel goes to Eli

~ We have here the best thing we see Eli do – he teaches Samuel how to hear the Lord

V7 – Samuel didn't yet know the Lord probably means the Lord hadn't personally appeared and spoke to Samuel.

~ Later in this book we see the Lord speaking to Samuel and Samuel is listening and obeying

~ This would seem to make sense because of his age, he thought it was Eli calling him, and at the end of Chapter 3 we see that Samuel is established to be a prophet of the Lord

~ Samuel had a reason for making a mistake about the call. It had never happened to him before. Samuel had never heard God speak. He had never before received a prophetic revelation of the word of God. Getz points out, "*Since this was a new experience for Samuel, he had no way of understanding and interpreting what was happening*" (*Getz, Samuel, 73*). He did not know how to respond, so when God's call came the third time, Samuel went again to wake up Eli.

~ Eli, on the other hand, had no excuse. It took him three tries to figure out what God was doing. This was certainly not a good reflection on Eli's spiritual insight. But finally, Eli realized that God was calling Samuel.

V9 – Eli instructs Samuel on how to respond to God = speak Lord for your servant hears

~ The stress lies on listening to God

~ This is important if we're to do God's will – hearing his calling when he speaks to us

~ *Eccles 5:1 when you go to the house of God be more ready to hear than to offer the sacrifice of fools*

~ We have there the wisdom of listening to God

~ Lets we be too hard on Eli he did do a valuable thing – he taught Samuel how to hear that voice and to say speak Lord because your servant is listening

~ V10 This time when the Lord calls Samuel 1) the Lord came 2) stood and 3) called as the other times but here calls his name twice

- We see a number of times when the Lord is standing (Stephen's stoning – Acts 7:56; when Paul was in prison – 2 Tim 4:17)
- Samuel follows the advice of Eli and says, "speak Lord, for your servant hears."

V11-14 = Samuel's Calling (Its intention = to do a new thing)

~ V11 God will do a thing. This thing could be what happens in chapter 4

1. The ark of God is taken
2. Eli's sons are killed
3. Eli's daughter-in-law dies in childbirth
4. Eli himself falls off his chair when he hears the ark is taken and dies

~ V12 God's "thing" will be an end to Eli's familial priesthood

~ V13,14 God will judge Eli's family. The reasons are given again for this judgement

1. Hophni and Phineas made themselves vile
2. Eli didn't restrain them

~ Eli's family sin was so grievous to the Lord it couldn't be atoned for with sacrifice or offerings

~ This shows us the severity of sin

~ We're also instructed in this passage that the Lord isn't shy to discipline his people

~ Discipline is the means God uses to draw his people back into fellowship

V15-18 = Samuel's Calling (it's hard)

~ The Lord's calling to Samuel was to do a hard thing – not easy – he had to tell Eli the Lord would punish Eli's house

~ Samuel didn't go around bragging about his experience with the Lord. He went back to his tasks of opening the doors. Samuel only talked about his encounter with the Lord when he was pressed by Eli.

~ Samuel had to do a hard thing – tell Eli what the Lord told him

~ This is the painful aspect of the call – having to do hard things, sacrifice, speak truth and confronting worldliness

~ Jeremiah experienced this in his call (Jer. 1:4-19). Six verbs were used to describe Jeremiah's ministry. The last two were positive: "to build and to plant." The first four, however, were negative: "to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow" (1:10).

V19-21 = Samuel's Calling (it's established)

V19

~ Now not only is Samuel growing but for the first time we see the Lord was with him

~ Not only was the Lord with him but God let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground, because Samuel heard when God spoke and spoke what he heard God say

V20

~ The Lord established Samuel as a prophet – Samuel didn't have to promote himself but the Lord established him

21

~ Notice what hasn't been normal that we now see – The Lord appeared in Shiloh

~ And the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh

~ Notice how the Lord revealed himself to Samuel – by the word of the Lord

~ Notice where we started in this chapter in v1 – word of the Lord was rare and there was no open vision

Characteristics of Samuel's Calling

- ~ Samuel was serving – This is what was Samuel doing when the Lord called him because he's a servant
- ~ Samuel's age has nothing to do with it – he was a young teenager at best
- ~ Samuel's calling was for a purpose – all Israel knew he was established to be a prophet of the Lord (1 Sam 3:19-21)
- ~ Samuel's calling was in a corrupt world - the sons of Eli were wicked
- ~ Samuel's calling was unexpected – who would have thought that the young lad they saw helping Eli at the house of the Lord would be the one who would be there next prophet of God
- ~ Samuel's calling was established by the Lord – Samuel didn't have to go around and tell people, "hey, God's called me to be a prophet." I think the people knew Samuel was called because he was growing, ministering, serving, hearing from God, and saying what God told him to say
- ~ Samuel continued to do the right things in preparation for his calling
- ~ Samuel had to wait on God's timing for the execution of that calling – he didn't go ahead of God but he waited on God – sometimes we get impatient and we want what God has told us now
- ~ Samuel's obedience – the early test of his calling was that he had to tell Eli (his mentor) that God was going to judge Eli's house
- ~ Samuel's calling was from God – he didn't purchase it or pray for it because God was the designer of the calling
- ~ Samuel had to be attentive to receive his calling – Sometimes we don't hear and sometimes we're too busy to hear God speak and call us
- ~ Samuel's call was joyous and painful at the same time. It was a joyful because the creator was calling him but painful because he had to bear bad news to Eli. The call of god will include saying hard things. All through the bible God's spokesmen have had to say hard things to God's people. Many times it got them in trouble

Three Callings in the Word of God

- 1 To Salvation – to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and enter into a relationship with him
 - *Isaiah 45:22 Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.*
 - *Isaiah 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*
 - *Jn 3:16*
- 2 To Sanctification – To be set apart spiritually in our relationship with Christ
 - *1 Thess 4:3,4 For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication:*
 - *1Thess 4:4 That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*
- 3 To Service – As we're being set apart we'll enter into service and usefulness for Christ
 - *Acts 9:15,16 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.*
 - *Acts 22:14,15 And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. 15 For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard*
 - *Rom 1:1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God*
 - *2 Tim 2:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus*
 - The disciples were chose by Christ to establish the N.T. church