

## **A Profile in Obedience (I Samuel 3:1 – 4:10)**

### I. Introduction

#### A. Israel's History

1. The time period was about 1000 BC.
  - a. 4000 BC – Adam and Eve lived (0 years after Creation)
  - b. 3000 BC – Noah lived (1000 years after Creation)
  - c. 2000 BC – Abraham lived (2000 years after Creation)
  - d. 1500 BC – Moses lived (2500 years after Creation)
  - e. 1000 BC – David lived (3000 years after Creation)
2. The time period of the judges would have been between 1400 BC and 1100 BC.
  - a. Israel had 12 judges.
  - b. Israel continually fell into sin, repented, was delivered, and fell back into sin.
  - c. Judges 21:25 says, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."
3. The author(s) of the books of Samuel is (are) not known. So how do we know that it belongs in the Bible (canonization)? The two books were accepted by a combination of complicated events.
  - a. The book was accepted during its time.
  - b. Ezra, who was accepted as a prophet, is believed to have written I and II Chronicles. I Chronicles 29:29 says, "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer." What he was saying was that Samuel, Nathan, and Gad could be trusted.
  - c. By Jewish tradition, the books of I and II Samuel were written by Samuel and Nathan, and maybe even David and Gad.
  - d. II Samuel 5:2 was quoted in Mathew 2:6, and the writings of Matthew were accepted because he was an apostle and one of Jesus' chosen disciples.

#### B. **Genre is the type of language used by the author(s) to write the book.**

1. The genre of I Samuel is mostly historical or narrative. That means that the book should be read like prose, and except in the most extreme cases, should be interpreted literally.
2. The genre of the book of Romans was theological, which means that a person must compare Scripture with Scripture to understand the truths being taught.
3. The genre of the book of Psalms is poetical, and it relates people's perceptions, experiences, and feelings. Many of the psalms share the author's praise and admiration (feelings) for the Lord. Notice Psalm 109:28-29 (an imprecatory psalm – an individual lament).
4. The genre of the book of Revelation is apocalyptic, and the early church fathers almost omitted it from the canon because of that. **Note: Different views of Revelation occur because of genre.**

## A Profile in Obedience (I Samuel 3:1 – 4:10)

- a. Some people read it as allegory and do not think that many of the events will actually happen.
  - b. Premillennialists read it as literal and believe that the book is reporting events that will happen (“When literal interpretation makes sense, then seek no other sense”). For many reasons, I am a Premillenarian.
  5. Your view of Creation (Genesis 1 and 2) will be based on whether you consider those chapters allegory or literal. I interpret those chapters literally.
  - C. In I Samuel chapter 1, Hannah and Elkanah had a child, and they named him, Samuel (his name means, "name of God").
    1. Hannah had been barren, Samuel was a gift from God, and she gave him back to the Lord to be used by the Lord.
    2. In I Samuel 1:25, she took him to Eli, who was a priest.
    3. I Samuel 2:12 says that Eli's sons were the sons of Belial (wicked, base fellows).
      - a. They were trouble. They did not know the Lord.
      - b. I Samuel 2:13-17 explains how Eli's sons were not performing their duties correctly.
    4. The Lord placed the child, Samuel, in that environment, under the care of Eli.
    5. I Samuel 2:20-26 summarizes the birth of Samuel, the problem that Eli had with his sons, and ends by saying that Samuel grew in favor with the Lord.
  - D. Eli's History
    1. By the time that Samuel came along, Eli was very old (I Samuel 2:22).
    2. He was the father of two boys that had brought reproach upon Israel by the manner in which they conducted their priestly duties.
    3. In I Samuel 2:34-36, he is told that both of those sons will die in the same day. He is also told that a faithful priest will replace him. The faithful priest is Samuel.
- II. The Word of the Lord was precious in those days (I Samuel 3:1).
- A. Samuel ministered unto the Lord (*sharath*) – he was a servant. Compare this to Matthew 20:26-28 (minister (*diakonos*) – the servant of a king and servant (*doulos*) – devoted to another to the disregard of one's own interests).
  - B. Unto the Lord (*Yahweh* or *Jehovah* – the self-existing One). The writer of this book understood God's identity.
    1. Note Moses' experience at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14).
    2. Notice Exodus 6:3 – God Almighty (El Shaddai) and Jehovah (God's proper name).
    3. Notice John 8:58 says, "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." Jesus was telling the Pharisees that He was and is God. He gave Himself the same name as to Moses at the burning bush.
  - C. Open Vision (*chazown*) – divine communication
  - D. What do we know about how the Bible was maintained in those days?

### **A Profile in Obedience (I Samuel 3:1 – 4:10)**

1. The Word of God was placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 40:18-21).
2. The Word of God was carefully handled (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24-26).
3. The Word of God was preserved over time (I Kings 8:9). This is noteworthy because it was about 600 years after Moses.
4. Under divine inspiration, the men of Hezekiah were adding the proverbs of Solomon (Proverbs 25:1).
5. During the times of King Jehoiada, the Word of God, which was the copy of the covenant, was still around and still being kept in the Ark of the Covenant (II Kings 11:12).
6. During the reign of King Josiah, the Word of God was still intact, still being preserved, and still being used authoritatively (II Kings 22:8, 13, 18-19).
7. They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (Nehemiah 8:8).

#### III. Samuel's Call – Was it an audible call?

##### A. I Samuel 3:2-8

1. Notice that Eli had grown old.
2. Notice that Eli's vision had begun to fail.
3. The verses suggest that Eli and Samuel could have been in different rooms.
4. Verse 3 implies that Samuel was sleeping in a dark place because the light had gone out.
5. The verses **DO NOT** say that Eli was losing his ability to hear, although he may well have been.
6. Three times, Samuel heard his name called, and three times he ran to Eli to see what Eli wanted.

##### B. Was Samuel's call audible? I say NO.

1. Eli was losing his eyesight, but the verses do not say that he was losing his hearing.
2. Ephesians 2:8 says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."
3. I Samuel 3:7 says that Samuel did not yet know the Lord or the Lord's Word.
  - a. know (*yada`*) – the Hebrew word that means to be acquainted with. This same word was used in I Samuel 2:12 when talking about Eli's two wayward sons.
  - b. Matthew 7:23 (know (*ginosko*)) - to become acquainted with, to know.
4. Samuel was not saved (he had never become acquainted with the Lord in a personal way through faith), so he did not understand how the Lord speaks to a person's heart.
5. **IMPORTANT NOTES:**
  - a. Samuel's mother had given him to the Lord, but that did not save him.
  - b. He was serving in the temple, but that did not save him.

## **A Profile in Obedience (I Samuel 3:1 – 4:10)**

### IV. The Fourth Call (I Samuel 3:9-10)

- A. Eli told Samuel what to do if it happened again.
  - 1. Answer “speak Lord, for thy servant heareth.”
  - 2. Servant (*`ebed*) means slave, servant, manservant, worshippers (of God). This has the same meaning as servant in Matthew 20:27 (*doulos*).
- B. Notice I Samuel 3:10 – “And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times.”
  - 1. John 4:24 says, "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. "
  - 2. What does anthropomorphism mean?
- C. Conclusion: Samuel probably did not hear God literally speak, and God probably did not literally stand beside Samuel in a physical sense.
  - 1. If He had, then Samuel would not have needed faith to obey.
  - 2. If He had, then Samuel would have had an unfair advantage over the rest of humanity.
- D. The Lord tells Samuel what will be with Eli and his family.
  - 1. I Samuel 3:13: Eli’s house will be judged because he did not restrain his sons.
  - 2. I Samuel 3:16-18: Samuel told the prophecy to Eli, and Eli accepted it without argument or complaint.
  - 3. I Samuel 3:19-21: All Israel knew that God was with Samuel and that Samuel was a prophet
    - a. Deuteronomy 18:20 says, "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die."
    - b. Deuteronomy 13:5 says, "And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death; because he hath spoken to turn you away from the LORD your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage, to thrust thee out of the way which the LORD thy God commanded thee to walk in. So shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee."
  - 4. Samuel did not let any of God’s words fall to the ground. In other words, he was faithful to his calling.

### V. I Samuel 4:1-10: Israel goes to war with the Philistines

- A. Israel was losing. According to J. Vernon McGee, Israel did not consult with their prophet, Samuel, before going to war.
- B. They brought the Ark of the Covenant to the battle in hopes of achieving victory. But they did not get the victory. Why not?
  - 1. They were not winning the conflict because they were acting on their own without supervision from the man that God had given them.

## **A Profile in Obedience (I Samuel 3:1 – 4:10)**

2. The Ark of the Covenant did not gain them victory because they were putting their trust in the Ark and not in the Lord.
  - a. We, too, sometimes put our confidence in things rather than in the person of Christ. We need the Lord for salvation, and we need the Lord's guidance in our life, through the Holy Spirit, after salvation.
  - b. We sometimes get ahead of the Lord, and that often gets us into trouble.
  - c. This is one of the flaws of the Catholic Church. They have seven sacraments, and they think that they receive special blessings from God just by partaking in those sacraments.

### VI. Does a pastor perform the same role as a prophet?

#### A. The roles of a prophet

1. To turn people to the Lord (Deuteronomy 13:1-5)
2. To speak the Lord's literal words to the people that the Lord has spoken (Deuteronomy 18:20).

#### B. The roles of a pastor

1. Elder - a man of spiritual maturity
2. Bishop - overseer
3. Shepherd - having the gift of pastoring
4. Preacher - being a public proclaimer
5. Teacher - explainer of Scripture
6. Servant - a minister to all
7. Messenger - bearer of God's revelation

### VII. Next week's lesson: The High Cost of a Poor Choice (I Samuel 8:10, 21, 22, 9:1-10:8)