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1 Samuel 3:1-18, pt.1

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, February 2, 7:00 AM in HHR #5
(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, February 2, 8:30 PM in Office #225
(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

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non-denominational**

God's plan has always been a theocracy (God's kingly rule over his people), but when Israel requested a king it demonstrated a sinful rejection of the Lord. 1 Samuel relates God's establishment of a political system in Israel headed by a human king. Their desire was for a king such as the nations around them had—to lead them in battle and give them a sense of national security and unity. The request for a king constituted a denial of their covenant relationship to the Lord, who was their king.

The king in Israel was not to be autonomous in his authority and power; rather, he was to be subject to the law of the Lord and the word of the prophet.¹ Thus, the prophet speaks God's truth to the king and the king leads the nation under the rule of God.

Chapters 1-7, serves as a necessary preface for the narratives of Chapters 8-12, which describe the rise and establishment of kingship in Israel. Samuel was born 1105 B.C., followed by Saul in 1080 B.C. and David in 1040 B.C. Samuel gave definition to the new order of God's rule over Israel, from the rule of the judges to that of the monarchy.

Life is like a road flying by you at high speeds. Trying to read and understand the road signs can be blurry and confusing.

Might it be easier if we had someone to interpret the signs for us? How wonderful it would be if God spoke with a megaphone every time we needed to have His direction? Well, God does speak to people's heart today, rarely audiblyⁱⁱ, usually inaudibly. From 1 Samuel, Chapter 3, verses 1 through 18, we will study five characteristics of God's voice,ⁱⁱⁱ three in today's message and two in next weeks message.

1. The Quiet Voice

3:1 The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

In other words, not even God was speaking. The Hebrew word boy is *na'ar*. The Jewish historian Josephus records Samuel at 12 years of age when he first heard the Lord's voice. Samuel was doing manual type work in the Temple.

When God refuses to speak or people not hearing from God it's a sign of displeasure. In the day, there was a time of turmoil. Priesthood corruption, moral and religious scandals were replete. Judges 21:25, says, "*in those days there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes*". The nation was in desperate need of a leader.

2. The Teaching Voice

3:2 One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3 The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4 Then the Lord called Samuel.

What would you do if someone woke you at 3 or 4am? Occasionally, when I greet one of my teenage sons at 6am he grunts back. Sound familiar? Well, that's what happened with Samuel only it was God that woke him up.

What environments help us to hear the whisper of God's voice? Some are serving, worshipping, praying, reading the Bible and relating to God. **Any thriving relationship needs connection and cultivation.**

- **Draw near to God in service**

Service is a commitment. Samuel ministered before the Lord under the leadership of Eli by ensuring the lamp of God remained lighted at all times. Any positive act done in the name of Jesus is an act of service to those you serve and to God.

- **Draw near to God in worship**

Worship is more than a song it's living in a way that reflects God's nature and ways to others. We make God's name famous when we our words and actions sound and look like Jesus. Having said that, worship is connected to singing songs to God and about God. We worship



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corporately and individually. One of the most powerful ways to experience God's presence is through song. The Holy Spirit ministers to us from the inside out.

- **Draw near to God in prayer**

We make time for consistent prayer. **Prayer** is talking to God, and, it's listening to God. It's a discipline to be practiced everyday. How about taking the challenge to set aside the same time everyday for the next seven days to talk to God for 5 minutes, and quiet yourself before God for 5 minutes?

- **Draw near to God in reading the Bible**

Too few people, to include Christ-followers **read the Bible**. At large, our culture is biblically illiterate. The best way to discover the authentic Jesus and the ways of God is to read the Bible. Some methods that might help you with reading the Bible:

- Before you read, ask the **Holy Spirit** to open your mind and heart to God's truth
- Begin to read the New Testament, in the **Gospel of John**. Read one chapter a day.
- Begin to read the Old Testament, in the **Book of Proverbs**. Read one proverb a day.
- Begin to read the **Book of Psalms**. Read one psalm a day.

- **Draw near to God in relationship**

If you draw close to the Lord, your relationship with other people will dramatically change. How do you relate to God? Do you have a **relationship with God**? Is your relationship with God thriving and driving? Or maybe stale and pale?

Take a moment, now, to think of a few people you are in relationship with: spouse, children, parents, friends, and colleagues. Are your relationships drawing you closer to God or pushing you farther away from God? What are you going to do about those drawing you away from God?

3. **The First Time Voice**

Samuel heard God's Voice for the first time.

3:4 Samuel answered, "Here I am." 3:5 And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." 6 Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." 7 Now Samuel did not yet

know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. 8 A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9 So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. 10 The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

God had been silent during the dark days of Israel. Suddenly, He speaks to a boy, to Samuel. God's speaking marked a significant change in the spiritual terrain. God initiates His relationship with Samuel.

God's grace is trying to awaken you to draw you to Him. He is wooing you. The question isn't: is God speaking? The question is: are you listening?

Samuel said "Hear I Am" four times. He responded to God's voice. Samuel could have rolled over at 3am only to ignore the voice he heard. He thought it was Eli at first, and could have said, 'oh, I'll talk with him tomorrow.' Our response to God will take an effort on our part.

In this passage, the Lord was breaking His silence to speak once again. He was calling forth a new prophet of God that would lead the people of Israel in truth and spiritual power. He would be a prophet like Moses: one that would lead God's people from spiritual wilderness to spiritual vitality, one that would restore God's covenant with Israel. Samuel was to be God's prophetic voice on earth to Israel under the rule of God, the King of Israel. Theocracy was God's plan (God's kingly rule over his people).

Is it possible that God wants a Theocracy in your life? The Bible teaches He does. His plan has always been for humankind to be His people, led by Him, provided for by Him, loved by Him, but Adam and Eve, rejected God's rule and reign in their lives when they ate the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God's solution—Jesus came to earth, to give His life a ransom on the cross so we could be forgiven of our sins. What do you say?

¹ Biblica.com

² Although I believe it's possible

³ Not meant to be exhausted, simply selective for flow of idea around God speaking to Samuel.



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