

I SAMUEL 3

REVIEW...

- **OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF I SAMUEL...**
 - The book of I Samuel picks up at the end of the period of the Judges...
 - About 350 years after Israel first entered the Land under the leadership of Joshua...
 - The book open with the history of the last two Judges of Israel - Eli and Samuel...
 - The book ends with the transition from the Judges - to the Kings of Israel...
- **CHAPTER 1-2 - THE BIRTH OF SAMUEL...**
 - Elkanah had two wives - Peninnah and Hannah - but Hannah could not have children...
 - One year at Passover Hannah went the Temple and asked the Lord for a son...
 - If He granted her requests - she would dedicate him to the Lord his whole life...
 - The Lord heard Hanna - and she gave birth to a baby boy - Samuel!
 - The sons of Priest Eli - Hophni and Phinehas - were evil men...
 - They would take the best of the meat of the sacrifices (*steal*) from the people...
 - They had affairs with the women who came to worship...
 - They were such poor representatives of God - the people hated coming to God...
 - Eli did nothing - so God sent a prophet to tell him both sons would die the same day!

HEARING FROM THE LORD... (3 THINGS)

- **1ST - LISTENING TO THE LORD...VS. 1-3 READ: I SAMUEL 3:1-3**
 - 1st - In those days messages and visions from the Lord were rare... vs. 1
 - God can speak to His people in a number of different ways...
 - God can speak through messages - like He did through Moses...
 - **Exodus 33:11**- "The LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to a friend."
 - God can also speak through visions - like He did through the Prophet Daniel...
 - **Daniel 2:19** - "That night the secret was revealed to Daniel in a vision."
 - But in the days of Eli - there were no messages / and no visions from the Lord...
 - Not because God was not speaking - but because they were not listening!
 - When was the last time you heard of God talking to someone - or God giving a vision...
 - The days of Samuel are just like today - a Word from the Lord is rare...
 - God still wants to speak to His people - but the question is who is listening...
 - From the moment we get up - to the moment we go to bed we are busy...
 - We tend to be so busy in life we rarely have a moment to sit and listen to the Lord...
 - And then we wonder why God is silent - He is not silent / we are not listening!
 - 2nd - One night after Eli - who was almost blind - went to bed... vs. 2-3
 - The Lamp of God - the Menorah - had not yet gone out...
 - The Menorah was never to go out at night - **Exodus 27:20-21**
 - It was always to be light leading into the presence of the Lord - Holiest of all...
 - Eli was no longer diligent in keeping the flame alive - he went to bed...
 - He was a 'part time' priest - he only served the Lord when it was convenient...

- God does not want us to be 'part time' Christians - He wants us to be on fire for Him!
 - **Hebrews 12:29** - "For our God is a consuming fire."
 - Imagine if you had a caribou - young and strong - but who would not obey orders...
 - Or if you had a brand new tricycle - that would only start when it wanted to...
 - A tool is only effective when it submits itself to the master's commands....
 - If we only follow the Lord when we want to - we are not much use to the Lord...
 - If we want to be used by the Lord - we need to be on fire for the Lord!
- 3rd - Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle – near the Ark of God...
 - The Ark held the 10 commandments written on stone...
 - It was meant to keep the most important of all treasures – the Word of God!
 - The cover for the Ark – was called the 'Mercy Seat' – the foot stool of God...
 - It was there – from on top of the Ark – God would speak to His people...
 - **Exodus 25:22** – "I will meet with you... speak with you from above the mercy seat."
 - Samuel never left the presence of the Lord – even while sleeping – he was ready...
 - If you only turned on your phone for 5 minutes a day – miss a lot of texts...
 - If you left your cell phone at home – you would not know if someone called...
 - For that reason we like to have our phones always on / always with us...
 - You never know when God is going to speak to us – we need to be ready...
 - We need to keep our Bible close at hand – in case God sends us a message...
 - Keeping in constant prayer – just in case the Lord gives us a call!
 - **I Thessalonians 5:17** - "Pray without ceasing..."
- 2ND – RECOGNIZING THE VOICE OF THE LORD...VS. 4-10 **READ: I SAMUEL 3:3-10**
 - 1st - The Lord called out – 'Samuel – Samuel!'... vs. 4-5
 - Samuel immediately jumped up and ran to Eli - assuming He was the one who called...
 - But Eli told him he had not called the boy – he should go back to bed...
 - We see here the character of Samuel – I am sure he was sleeping soundly...
 - If Samuel had stayed asleep – we likely we not be reading about his life today!
 - But he did not hesitate when he was called – he was ready to do anything!
 - Too often when God calls us – we ask Him to come back tomorrow...
 - God does not need us – He will get His work accomplished with or without our help...
 - The question is do we decide to be blessed by taking part in the work God is doing...
 - When God comes knocking on our door – are we ready to jump up and go...
 - Or are we too busy to answer – too lazy to care – or too afraid to step out...
 - We never hear the names of those who do not follow – only those who do!
 - 2nd - A second time the Lord called – and Samuel ran back to Eli... vs. 6-7
 - Eli again told Samuel it was not him – he should go back to bed...
 - This was the first time the Lord has spoken to Samuel...
 - And he did not yet know what the voice of the Lord sounded like...
 - What does the voice of God sound like...
 - Elijah was a prophet to the Northern tribes of Israel during the reign of King Ahab...

- The people of Israel had all forsaken God – and begun worshiping false gods...
- Elijah faced off against 400 prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel...
- Two sacrifices – two alters – the one whose God lit the alter was the true God...
- God won the contest – and Elijah put to death the 400 prophets of Baal...
- Jezebel – the wife of King Ahab – heard what Elijah had done...
- **I Kings 19:2** – “May the gods also kill me if by this time tomorrow I have failed to take your life like those whom you killed.”
- Afraid for his life - Elijah ran to the mountain of God – Mt. Sinai...
- The Lord spoke to Elijah there on the mountain...
 - There was a mighty wind – but the Lord was not in the wind...
 - An earthquake – but the Lord was not in it / a fire – but the Lord was not there...
 - Then there was a still small voice – and the Lord spoke to Elijah!
 - We often get the idea the voice of God is like Mt. Sinai – thunder and lightning...
 - What does God sound like - **II Kings 19:12** - a still small voice - gentle guidance..
 - We have to learn to sit - wait - and listen - or we will miss the voice of the Lord!
- 3rd – The Lord called third time – and Samuel ran again to Eli... vs. 8-10
 - The 3rd time Eli realized it was the Lord who had been calling Samuel...
 - He instructed him – next time someone calls say - ‘Yes Lord I am listening’...
 - So Samuel went back to bed and the Lord called again...
 - Samuel did as Eli told him – ‘Yes Lord Your servant is listening...’
 - I am sure Samuel had his doubts – was he really talking to God / or just the night air
 - But Samuel was willing to step out in faith – as a result he heard from the Lord...
 - There have been many times I wondered if the Lord was speaking to me...
 - Was I hearing my own thoughts / or from God – how to tell the difference...
 - If you are wondering if that ‘voice in you’ is the Lord or just you...
 - Step out and try – if it does not work / no fruit – then it was not from God!
 - To be honest at least half the time I ‘step out in faith’ – nothing happens...
 - But half the time GREAT things happen – because it is from the Lord...
 - And if we never step out and try – we will never know!
 - Also God will never contradict His Word – **I Corinthians 14:32**...
 - If you think God is telling to rob the local store – you are wrong...
 - If you think God told you to live with the guy before getting married – wrong...
 - If ‘God says something’ to you contrary to His Word - it is not God speaking!
- 3RD – SHARING THE MESSAGE OF THE LORD...vs. 11-21 **READ: I SAMUEL 3:11-21**
- 1st - The Lord was going to do something shocking in Israel... vs. 11-14
 - God was going to bring judgment on the house of Eli just as He had promised...
 - Sometimes what God has to say to us – is not that easy for us to hear...
 - God spoke to Ananias – and told him to go and tell Saul about Jesus – **Acts 9**...
 - I am sure Ananias was thrilled to hear from the Lord – but not at what he heard...
 - **Acts 9:13** – “‘But Lord,’ exclaimed Ananias, ‘I have heard about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem!’”
 - There is a sweetness to hearing from the Lord – God is speaking to us!
 - But what if God is telling us to confront the sin in the life of a friend/family...

- Along with hearing from the Lord – comes the responsibility sharing His Word!
- Judgment because of the sins of Eli’s sons – and because Eli did not punish them...
 - And there was no longer a sacrifice that would cover their sins...
 - Meaning without a change of heart – there was no ceremony that could save them...
 - **Isaiah 1:11-16** – “I am sick of your sacrifices,’ says the LORD... ‘Wash yourselves and be clean! Let me no longer see your evil deeds.’”
 - People think if they come to church Sunday – they can live like the devil on Monday
 - Sunday service does wash away Mondays sins – God looks at the heart!
- 2nd – Samuel laid back down (*no more sleeping*)... vs. 15-18
 - First thing in the morning he opened the doors of the house of the Lord...
 - Where Eli let the light go out – Samuel opened the door to let the light back in...
 - There are only two options in life – draw people to Jesus / or take them away...
 - Samuel was afraid to tell Eli what God had said to him...
 - But Eli called for the boy – and told him to tell him EVERYTHING the Lord has said...
 - If Samuel held anything back – ‘let the Lord do to you what He said – and worse’...
 - The suggestion is that Eli knew that the Word from the Lord was not a good one...
 - People know what they are doing is wrong – they know they are sinners...
 - But they do not like to think about it – so God will use us to remind them...
 - We might be hesitant to tell them – afraid of how they will react...
 - But caring for someone means you cannot let them go on in their sin...
 - Sin destroys lives – it is not loving to let someone destroy themselves...
 - **Proverbs 27:6** – “Faithful are the wounds of a friend...”
 - A true friend is one loves you enough to tell you when you are wrong!
 - Samuel told Eli everything and Eli said – ‘It is the Lord – let him do what seems good...’
 - I have to think that if Eli had repented – disaster could have been avoided...
 - Why else would God tell Samuel – a prophet had already warned Eli...
 - Yet even with this final warning – Eli still did nothing – did not repent...
 - God is patient – longsuffering – giving time to repent and turn back to Him...
 - God waits to punish sin only because He loves the sinner – **II Peter 3:9**
 - God gives time us time so we can choose to repent and be saved...
 - Do not mistake His ‘patience’ for ‘acceptance’ – thinking God will not judge...
 - God is not mocked – **Galatians 6:7** – if there is not repentance sin will be judged...
- 3rd – Samuel grew – and the Lord was with him... vs. 19-21
 - Everything Samuel said was helpful to the people of Israel - and full of wisdom...
 - So that from Beersheba in the south – to Dan in the far north...
 - All of Israel knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet / man of God...
 - And the Lord gave messages to Samuel – began a revival in Israel...
 - It was then that the Lord appeared again at Shiloh / Tabernacle...
 - The suggestion is the Lord had not been there at the Tabernacle...
 - But all it took to bring God close again – was one man willing to listen!
 - We live in a community where the presence of God has been forgotten/lost...
 - But all it takes is for one person being willing to listen – follow God...
 - And God will return and speak to His people - bring revival to our nation!