1 Samuel 3:1-19

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli.
The word of the LORD was rare in those days;
visions were not widespread.

2 At that time Eli,
whose eyesight had begun to grow dim
so that he could not see,
was lying down in his room;

3 the lamp of God had not yet gone out,
and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD,
where the ark of God was.

4 Then the LORD called,
'Samuel! Samuel!'
and he said,
'Here I am!'

5 and ran to Eli, and said,
'Here I am, for you called me.'

But he said,
'I did not call; lie down again.'

So he went and lay down.

6 The LORD called again, 'Samuel!'
Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said,
'Here I am, for you called me.'
But he said,
'I did not call, my son; lie down again.'

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD,
and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

8 The LORD called Samuel again, a third time.
And he got up and went to Eli, and said,
'Here I am, for you called me.'

Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy.

9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel,
'Go, lie down;
and if he calls you, you shall say,
"Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening." '

So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the LORD came
and stood there,
calling as before,
'Samuel! Samuel!'

And Samuel said,
'Speak, for your servant is listening.'

11 Then the LORD said to Samuel,
'See, I am about to do something in Israel
that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.

12 On that day
I will fulfil against Eli
all that I have spoken
concerning his house,
from beginning to end.

13 For I have told him
that I am about to punish his house for ever,
for the iniquity that he knew,
because his sons were blaspheming God,
and he did not restrain them.

[14]Therefore I swear
to the house of Eli
that the iniquity of Eli's house
shall not be expiated
by sacrifice or offering
for ever.'

15 Samuel lay there until morning;
then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD.

Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

[16]But Eli called Samuel and said,
'Samuel, my son.'

He said,
'Here I am.'

[17]Eli said,
'What was it that he told you?
Do not hide it from me.
May God do so to you and more also,
if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.'

[18]So Samuel told him everything
and hid nothing from him.

Then he said,
'It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.'

19 As Samuel grew up,
the LORD was with him
and let none of his words fall to the ground.

[20]And all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew
that Samuel was a trustworthy prophet of the LORD.

[21]The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh,
for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh
by the word of the LORD.

Reading the Former Prophet This Week

We last heard this on Sun Jan 14, 2024
For Thursday study, our notes and links were:

For May 2021 text notes and audio of Fox's 2014 translation:
http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2021/05/i-samuel-3.html

Early in Samuel's transition from judges to priest/prophet/king
Eli's old at Shiloh's shrine, sons Hophni and Phineas corrupt,
Hannah's child Samuel still a boy, and Eli's ward
He curses Eli's house, will anoint Saul (then David)

Blithely used in modern glib liberal circles as a model of 'call'
religious experience of any person listening for God with them
the tale will serve a purpose – but not likely the original one!
In successions of 2024, who will be legitimated by whom?

Eli & Samuel may be the last 'judges' amid loose anarchy
Samuel may be the first type of a biblical prophet to power
Why is power legit: violence, charismatic personality?
How do we navigate succession of power?

Judges were one model of leadership,
Part warrior, part inspired seer,
Rising up in anarchy to call tribes together,
And leading against external enemies

Samuel is neither judge, priest, warrior, nor king
He's the archetype of a prophet
Inspired by God to cut off Eli, anoint Saul (then David)

Neither old Eli nor child Samuel recognizes initial call
3-part tale reaches contact & transmission
Then Samuel builds credibility over years
What social locations do you recognize, ours and others?

The RCL in Epiphany Year B gives us 1 Sam 3:1-10 (11-20)
The core tale of the child's call, in a pattern of 3
Then bracketed as optional, the collective implication

The UCC/UCW for a 100th anniversary gives us 3:1-19
They omit v. 20, (as I relied on 20 and also 21 to frame it)

Reading only vv. 1-10 allows the individual call message
Even a child can hear from God, and should be respected

Reading vv. 11-18 includes prophetic challenge to elder,
Confrontation and confess of corrupt decline

Adding only v. 20 concludes with Sam's credibility –
From far north Israel to far south Judah

Adding also v.21 acknowledges Shiloh/Samaria
God still appears there (& Jeremiah's lineage in Ben/Anathoth)

Products of mainline Sunday School will hear 1-10
Reformers will hear and even preach 11-18

For the UCC at its 100th anniversary,
Addressed by its UCW?

I attach the UCW 'Here I Am' script –
Aware that our UCW will improve upon it!

If you didn't get this by email, here's a link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vf50qXel4oePmSIys2T6T9kkz4WMxlTE/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=100085164908748388229&rtpof=true&sd=true

Matthew 10:5-15

5 These twelve Jesus sent out
with the following instructions:

'Go nowhere
among the Gentiles,
and enter no town
of the Samaritans,

6 but go rather
to the lost sheep
of the house of Israel.

7 As you go,
proclaim the good news,

"The kingdom of heaven
has come near."

8 Cure the sick,
raise the dead,
cleanse the lepers,
cast out demons.

You received
without payment;
give
without payment.

[9]Take no gold,
or silver,
or copper
in your belts,

[10]no bag for your journey,
or two tunics,
or sandals,
or a staff;
for labourers
deserve their food.

[11]Whatever town or village you enter,
find out who in it is worthy,
and stay there until you leave.

[12]As you enter the house, greet it.
[13]If the house is worthy,
let your peace come upon it;
but if it is not worthy,
let your peace return to you.

[14]If anyone will not welcome you
or listen to your words,
shake off the dust from your feet
as you leave that house or town.

[15]Truly I tell you,
it will be more tolerable
for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah
on the day of judgement
than for that town.

Reading the Gospel this Week

Matthew's version of sending the 12
(compare Mark 6 or Luke 10)
Is alone in avoiding Gentiles or Samaritans

The mendicant (beggar) model for a missionary,
or Blanche Dubois in 'Streetcar Named Desire'
'I have always depended on the kindness of strangers'
invites more reflection on our century,
told by the UCW, successor to the old WMS

The script provided by the UCW (see link above)
Offers a hagiography of our saints,
In a progressive optimistic triumphal pattern
Deserves a hearing across the country on March 2

The text might better cast light and shadows
On our UCC assimilation strategy toward others
Hospitality offered and received,
Over a century of demographic change in Canada

Are we the disciples,
Or are we the hospitable, sharing peace,
Or inhospitable, provoking departures?

The closing threat
In terms of Sodom and Gomorrah,
Is a exclusive as the opening strategy
Isn't it?