

# Samuel's Call

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 25 January 2024

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     Let us sing to God's praise from Psalm 71, Psalm 71 from the beginning.
- O Lord, my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone. Then let thy servant never be put to confusion.
- And let me in thy righteousness from thee deliverance have, cause me escape, incline thine ear unto me, and me save.
- Be thou my dwelling rock, to which I ever may resort. Thou gavest commandment me to save, for thou art my rock and fort.
- Free me, my God, from wicked hands, hands cruel and unjust. For thou, O Lord God, art my hope, and from my youth my trust.
- [ 1 : 0 0 ]     Thou from the womb didst hold me up. Thou art the same that me. Out of my mother's bowels took, I ever will praise thee.
- To many I a wonder am, but thou art my refuge strong. For let my mouth be with thy praise and honour all day long.
- Let us sing these verses, Psalm 71, verses 1 to 8. O Lord, my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone.
- O Lord, my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone.
- Then let thy servant never be put to commission.
- [ 2 : 0 6 ]     And let me in thy righteousness from thee, dear land, and soul.
- Cause me escape. And climb thy near, until the end be saved.
- Be thou my dwelling rock, to which I ever may resort.
- And who gave his home and met me to save, For that my home and fort.
- free me, my God, from wicked hands, and scimm and dentists.
- [ 3 : 3 2 ]     For thou art my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone. For thou art my hope and from my youth my trust.
- Thou art my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone. Thou art the same that may.
- Thou art my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone.
- Thou art my love and confidence is placed in thee alone. Thou art my love and confidence is placed in thee alone.
- Thou art my hope and confidence is placed in thee alone.
- [ 5 : 0 1 ]     And we read again in the first book of Samuel, chapter 3, and verse 19. And Samuel grew and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.
- And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord. And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh.
- For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

In the books that are given the title of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel, there are three principal characters.

There's King Saul, there's King David, and the person who is named as the one who appears.

[ 6 : 12 ] In the book of Samuel, there are three chapters within these two books, which originally were considered one, 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel.

We're going to look at Samuel over the next few weeks and consider some of the principal times, principal activities in which he was involved as God's servant.

The main events of a formidable life. But tonight we're just simply going to introduce Samuel to you.

Most of what you hear will already be well known to you. But we'll refer to the account that we have in the first three chapters of this first book.

We know from a reading of the scripture that the time that Samuel came to the fore was a time that was notoriously dark spiritually.

[ 7 : 34 ] And you'll remember how the book of Judges concludes the last verse of that book.

In those days there was no king in Israel. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. That's a summary, if you like, of the spiritual condition of the age of that day.

Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. And Samuel is brought to the scene of such a spiritually dark age as the last judge.

The book of Judges identifies for us several who occupy that role. And Samuel, although he seems to be out of sequence, he is the character that fulfills that role as the last judge.

And the one who occupies that role before Israel as its first king. The theocracy that fulfilled the role of declaring God's word and God's truth.

[ 9 : 11 ] Who was considered to be insufficient for the people's needs. They wanted a king. They wanted a king. They wanted one who would make them like the other nations.

But there's one or two things that we need to understand about the role that Samuel came to play.

First of all, while it seems contradictory, his first involvement is one that left him without any involvement.

And that's the way God works at times. The work that he has for Samuel to do is entirely of God's sovereign purposes.

And part of God's sovereign purposes involves the mother of Samuel and the birth of Samuel.

[ 10 : 26 ] Something which clearly Samuel himself had nothing to do with. And what we find that in the account that is given to us, and the detail that we find in the first chapter of the book, is the book that describes to us the way that Delcana, and it gives us something of his pedigree, of his chronology, if you like.

Those that were his forebearers, tells us about the fact that he had two wives, and that one of them was childless. And the detail which fleshes out the story, if you like.

But the significant part of the telling of the story is that the circumstances that marked out Hannah, the wife that was childless, prompted her and prompted her and provoked her to pray to God to deal with her circumstances and deal with her hurt more than anything else.

So that you are given a description of this woman's pain and the direction into which it took her.

But as you read, you'll find that the God of her providence is described as being responsible for her predicament.

[ 12 : 23 ] In verse 5, And to Hannah he gave a worthy portion, for he loved Hannah, that's Elkanah her husband. But the Lord had shut up her womb.

God was responsible for her childlessness. God was responsible for her childlessness. And that is identified, and that is highlighted, that her childlessness was God's doing.

And that didn't lessen her pain. Whether she understood it to be so or not, I'm sure that it was very much part of their culture.

that the woman who was espoused, who was married, if she was childless, that the culture insisted that this was a mark of God's displeasure.

Now there's no hint of her blaming God for that, but she comes to God with prayer, and that prayer is offered and answered.

[ 13 : 40 ] And the description that is given to us of the offering of the prayer, and the answer that is given to it, is itself enlightening.

Because it tells you, as I said, of this woman's pain. It tells her of the grief that she suffered, very probably because of the second wife's superiority, as some described it.

So that in verse 10, we read, she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore.

In verse 12, it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli marked her mouth. She goes to the temple, and she offers prayer. The priest Eli marks out her actions, but doesn't understand them.

And yet, her actions, her prayer offering, is from the deepest recesses of her heart.

[ 15 : 04 ] And then finally, in verse 15, Hannah answered Eli's accusation of drunkenness by saying, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit.

I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have poured out my soul before the Lord. So even before Samuel is born, you have this interaction between Hannah and the Lord.

A prayer offered, or prayers, many prayers offered. And she pours out her heart, out of the womb of her grief, that prayer emerges.

Who can mistake her earnestness, if they were to understand, or have knowledge of her circumstances? And clearly, Eli did not have that.

But this is part of God's hidden purposes, that out of her sorrow, and out of her grief, she would petition the Most High God, and that she would solicit an answer from God.

[ 16 : 27 ] Then we are told that not, that her prayers were not simply abandoned, but that God chose to answer them.

In verse 19, they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the Lord, and returned, and came to their house, to Ramah, and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the Lord remembered her.

The Lord remembered her. In other words, he heard her prayers, and he answered her prayers, and he filled her womb with the child, that she longed for.

And we are also told that she believed, she herself believed, that the child was an answer to her prayer.

On to verse 27, chapter 1, For this child I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition, which I asked of him.

[ 17 : 36 ] Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord, as long as he liveth, he shall be lent to the Lord, and he worshipped the Lord there. It's an abbreviated picture, that I'm giving to you.

I'm sure you're familiar with the story, but you have the offered prayer, and the answered prayer. And the answer to prayer, is understood to be, an answer to prayer.

It's not always the case, that when we pray to God, that we recognize, the answer that God has given to our prayer.

Maybe you say, I prayed specifically for a certain thing, and God specifically gave me an answer, and I recognized it.

It doesn't necessarily follow, that you are able to recognize the answer, even when it is specific, and even when specific, and you recognize the God of heaven, to be the one, who is the hearer, and answer, answerer of prayer, that you acknowledge, that to be the case.

[ 18 : 51 ] Have you ever prayed for something, and God has given you, your desire? Have you instantly gone to God, to give thanks for it?

Or have you, perhaps, without, too much, forethought, simply concluded, well this would be, the conclusion anyway, without prayer.

And, that can happen, that does happen, that even though, we come to God, with prayer, and we know, what we're praying for, we know, what the answer will be, does it always mean, that, when God answers, in light of our desires, and gives us what we want, that we give thanks to him, that we recognize, the need that we have, to acknowledge, that he has, indeed answered.

Sometimes, what we do is, we say, oh well, it may well have, worked out like this, and if I'd have waited, if I'd have done, what I'd done before, then, in time, this would have happened.

And, we sort of, rationalize, with a very, with a very, dead spiritual, appreciation, of what God, had done.

[ 20 : 16 ] That wasn't the case, with, with Hannah. She knew, the answer to prayer, she knew God, to be the one, who answered the prayer, and acknowledged it.

And, it's important, that we, whatever we're praying for, that we, recognize, the answer, when it comes, that we pray, also for discernment, to recognize, that if it does not, conform to, the desire, that we've expressed, if, for example, God says no, or if God chooses, to answer, in a different way, that we recognize, that to be the case, as well.

We need discernment, we need understanding, we need appreciation, if our prayer is earnest, as earnest as this prayer, clearly was. But, in this case, he answered, favorably, and she, acknowledged it.

The second thing, that's true, about, Hannah, is that, she vowed a vow, when she offered, a prayer, she made a covenant, with God, and she promised God, that, if, he answered, then, she would, do this, she vowed a vow, and said, oh Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed, look, on the affliction, of thy handmaid, and remember me, and not forget, thine handmaid, but will give unto thine handmaid, a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord, all the days of his life, and there shall no razor, come upon his head.

that's a very bold, that's a very bold, promise, it's a very, clear promise, if God answers her prayer, then, in respect of the answer, that God gives, she will give the child, back to God, that's essentially, what she said, if the child, is born to me, then I will return, the child to God, he will take, the vows of the Nazarite, in other words, he commits himself, to God, from, from the time, of his conception, onwards, he will be God's child, and the vow was plain, and the vow, was honest, and earnest, and you see that, in the way that, the vow is declared, and the vow, is, honored, and respected, even though, it might appear, that there was some, hesitancy, on her part, in verse 22, of chapter 1,

[ 23 : 18 ] Hannah went not up, for she said, unto her husband, I will not go up, to the temple, until the child, be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear, before the Lord, and there abide, forever, and Elkanah, her husband, said unto her, do what seemeth, thee good, tarry, until thou have weaned him, only the Lord, establish his word, so the woman abode, and gave her son's ark, until she weaned him, and then, when she weaned him, she took him up, with her, so you see, a promise made, a vow, that is kept, and, all of this, is, part of, the providential, interaction, that takes place, place, between the woman, and the Lord, and, all without, the child, having any, part to play, in it, she did, as she, promised, and, the, the, emphasis, that the scripture, places upon, her, obedience, to her own vow, should not, be overlooked, not Samuel's, because, as you can imagine,

Samuel was, yet to be born, and even after being born, he couldn't, he was not, of, in a position, to do anything about it, but when we get, to the second chapter, in verse 18, there we read, Samuel ministered, before the Lord, being a child, girded with a linen, he fought, moreover, his mother, made him a little coat, and brought it to him, from gear to gear, when she came up, with her husband, to offer the early sacrifice, and you see there, how, how she, obeyed the vow, and how she fulfilled, what she had promised, the Lord, and, without emphasis, being given to it, and, suppose, we need to understand, the fact that, before, the child, could minister, in the temple, he had to, belong to, the family, of, the Levites, it wasn't, the role of any, just any child, that was born in Israel, to fulfill this role, and I think, without it being said, at this early point, that,

Samuel, was indeed, a Levite, he was, of the priestly caste, he had the right, to wear the ephod, even though, he was, clearly, a child, I think, the historian, Josephus, suggests, that he was, 10 to 12 years old, and there's no record, of where he, gathered this information from, some of the commentators, suggest, that, to be the age, he was at, when he is spoken of, as ministering, in the temple, with, or, alongside, Eli, but, when you get to the, beginning of the, third chapter, there you find, the child, Samuel, ministered, unto the Lord, before Eli, and the word of the Lord, was precious, in those days, there was no, open vision, so the, the role, that he possesses,

I think, if you remember, in Psalm 99, the, there is, mention made, of the, the priesthood, of, Moses, and Aaron, Samuel, with them, that call upon his name, these called on God, and he, they mansured on, the, the, role, as priest, is identified there, and I think, you cannot but conclude that, as you see, how his life develops, and the, the role that he fulfills there, so his, his entry, into, the priesthood, in his youth, is an entry, that is, first of all, come, on the basis, of the mother's, commitment, and, the commitment, that she, gave, as she, undertook, to raise him, as a Nazarite, from the womb, a razor, shall not go on his head, meaning that he was, consecrated, sanctified, to the service of God, and this is what, eventually happened, but God, is sovereign, even though, you're seeing, the, actions, of the woman, her prayers, are, offered to God, her consecration, of her son, according, to the vow, that she took, is, functioning, within, the role, of the priesthood, which is a role, that God, has commanded, and that God, ordains, to be carried out, in a particular way, it's not of man's choosing, it's not, to, you know, when it comes to, to the Old Testament, rights, and sacrifices, you're told there, that, no person, can take this, office to himself, not, they can't, become priests, because they want to, they can't become priests, because their mother, wants them to, do you think of it, like that, it's a simple statement, there are many, mothers, who, may desire, and, when you look up, at the New Testament, scriptures, and the name, that is given, to the Lord Jesus Christ, that a lot of children, were given this name, because, their parents, were, living in expectation, of the coming Messiah, the anointed of God, and the name, that they gave their children, was, more in hope, than anything else, it was a name, that was speaking, of the hope of Israel, and that he would come, and that maybe, their child, would be that hope, maybe that child, would fulfill that role, so you could argue that, while Hannah was, fulfilling, her obligations, and, paying, paying heed, to the vow, that she took, the Lord, is at work, in that, the Lord, was preparing him, for a work, of leadership, between, his people, and himself, and between, himself, and his people, and you, there's a duality, of role, that is, indicated here, because, not only, are we, to understand, that,

Samuel, when he, entered into the, enters into the, fullness, of office, and the role, that God commands him, or requires of him, he will act, as a judge, over Israel, that's a God-given thing, the last one, to fulfill, that role, he is, going to, fulfill, the role, as a priest, in God's house, that, again, is a God-given, role, but the third, role, that he is given, and that is, identified, is the role, of prophet, and, it is, not a usual, combination, but it, it highlights, the significance, of this person, Samuel, a significance, that is his, by God's, ordination, by God's, sovereign, purposes, being fulfilled, in it, how do we know, that,

[ 32 : 09 ] Samuel, functions, as a prophet, well, we are, forewarned, at the beginning, of chapter 3, the child, Samuel, ministered unto the Lord, before Eli, and the word, of the Lord, was precious, in those days, there was no, open vision, that just, tells us, of, the spiritual, malaise, that affected, Israel, at the time, the darkness, that was a, spiritual darkness, meant that, God, restricted, his own, revelation, and, the way, that he chose, to speak, to his people, they had gone away, from him, and, he, withdrew himself, from them, and part of the way, that that happens, is, that his word, is, no longer, working, as efficaciously, as it might, he is, shutting the heavens, and the heavens, are as, brass, and the, earth, is as iron, beneath, the feet, when God judges, when God withholds, his favor, this is one way, in which, that happens, that's the circumstances, into which,

Samuel, is, raised, he is not yet, called to the, role of prophet, but in chapter 3, we see, this happen, we read clearly, in verse 7, Samuel, did not yet, know the Lord, now clearly, he did know the Lord, so, that must mean, something, then, a simple statement, of ignorance, about God, because he was, not ignorant, about God, he ministered, alongside, the priest, the high priest, he, functioned, within, the temple, he understood, the rights, as far he was, as he was able, but he did not, yet know the Lord, so what does, that mean, what can that mean, it means, that, he was, not yet, the, endowed, with the spirit, of God, that was, necessary, for him, to function, as the prophet, of the Lord, neither, was the word, of the Lord, yet revealed, to him, now it's not, simply, a matter, of, describing, to us, what is going, to happen, when, when,

God, begins, to speak, to Samuel, and Samuel, doesn't recognize him, although that's, part of it, but it, tells us, something, about, the role, of the prophet, the prophet, is not, somebody, who's born, into it, it is, somebody, who is called, to it, it is, somebody, who, God, requires, to respond, to the call, of God, made upon, and the claims, of God, made, upon his life, and that, is what we see, taking place, here, the, the, the sequence, of events, that we have, we're all familiar, with it, when, Samuel, lies down at night, and God's voice, is heard, and he thinks, it's, it's Eli, that's speaking, to him, and three times, he rises, from his bed, and the Lord, speaks to him, each time, and Eli, helps him, understand, that this, is not him, but God, and he teaches him, and he, he instructs him, in how, to respond, and, while, there's, the side, of this account, that, that tells us, about the, the lowly, condition, into which,

Israel, had fallen, and the condemnation, that God, places upon, his servant, Eli, because of it, and because, of the, sinfulness, of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, that, the, the, displeasure, of God, is spoken about, and is, reinforced, you know, he had earlier, sent a servant, to tell, Eli, what the consequences, of his, of his, failure, to reprimand, his sons, would, would, would, result in, now, if you go back, to, to the, second chapter, there came, a man of God, unto Eli, and said unto him, thus saith the Lord, did I plainly, appear unto the house, of thy father, when they were in Egypt, in Pharaoh's house, did I choose, him out of the tribes, of Israel, to be my priest, to offer upon, mine altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod, before me, did I give unto the house, of thy father, all the offerings, made by, fire of the children, of Israel, wherefore, kick ye, at my sacrifice, and at my offering, and so on,

God had, previously, spoken to Eli, and, explained, or, instructed him, about the consequences, of his sin, but here, again, God comes, and when he calls, Samuel to him, and he, speaks to Samuel, Samuel, is given a very difficult task, to do, he is, he is given, insight, to God's, what God is going, to do, to Eli's house, and, if you think, that, that, when God calls, his servant, to serve, to minister, to, to act as his, uh, spokesperson, that, it is an easy task, that is given to him, nothing could be, further from the truth,

[ 38 : 58 ] Eli, challenges Samuel, and asks him, what is the thing, that the Lord, has said unto thee, I pray, that I did not, from thee, God, do so, to thee, and more also, if thou, hide anything, from me, of all the things, that he has said, unto thee, and, Samuel, is obedient, he told him, every whit, and hid, nothing, from him, and he said, it is the Lord, Eli said, it is the Lord, let him do, what seemeth, him good, and, I think this is just, the, the beginning, of what you find, throughout, the dealings, that Samuel, has in God's name, you will see, that, the obedience, that God requires, of, his people, is highlighted, and the consequences, of disobedience, is also, made plain, so, as part, of the, experience, of being, the recipient, of God's call, he, was required, to obey, and to, proclaim, what God, had spoken to, no mean, thing, was an easy thing, to do, the truth, that Samuel, had to declare, was not very pleasant, but in a sense,

Eli, made it easy for him, and put him, under a curse, if he didn't tell, the truth, but, I think, I'm, hoping, I'm writing, to say, that, even, here, the call, of God, upon Samuel, even though, there was, preparatory work, that did not, involve Samuel, here, at this critical point, in his experience, that call, was being tested, and it was, important, for Samuel, to, to obey, and, when he, obeyed, when he did, as God requested, and revealed, what God, intended, for, the house, of Eli, then, we read, Samuel, grew, and the Lord, was with him, and did let, none of his words, fall to the ground, I think, you have to take, these two things, with you, that, the blessing, of God, followed on, from the, obedience, of his servant, and then, we have the disclosure, how, this is broadcast, how this is, declared,

I don't know, all Israel, from Dan, even to Bathsheba, knew, that Samuel, was established, to be a prophet, of the Lord, it became, common knowledge, it came, became something, that everyone understood, whether this means, that, the events, were recorded, and rehearsed, and repeated, or, whether it means, that, at that moment, God, endowed, his servant, Samuel, with, greater gifts, that identified, him, as his servant, certainly, following on, from this, there will be, public evidence, of God's call, the Lord, appeared, again, in Shiloh, for the Lord, revealed himself, to Samuel, in Shiloh, by the word, of the Lord, so that, the mouth, of the prophet, you can't be, the Lord's prophet, if you are not, speaking forth, the words, of the Lord, it's not your word, it's not, anybody else's, but,

God's servant, as the prophet, of the Lord, speaks, the truth of God, and God, filled his mouth, with truth, and, the people, knew that, to be the case, and I think also, that these words, although, they're, they're, they're not, elaborated upon, that following on, from this, this, call, to his servant, then, the spiritual, temperature, of Israel, began to change, his servant, was used, mightily, by him, in different ways, as we shall see, and, we shall understand, that, God is, in this, from beginning, to end, everything, that is, good about, this, cause of God, must have him, in it, from beginning, to end, must have him, in it, in all the ways, that you can, possibly, imagine, and, hopefully, we'll look at, different occasions, different events, that highlight, the, the awesome, person, that Samuel was, and the awesome God, that was his God, let us pray, the Lord, our God, we give thanks, that, if these words, appear to us, familiar, or, if they are, easily understood, by us, we give thanks, to you for that, we give thanks, that you remind us, in your word, of the, awesome way, in which you work, sometimes, and be known, to the, those who are, the main players, as it were, on this stage, of life, that you are, going before, these events, you are, undergirding, the, activities, that they are, involved in, with, your own, purposes, brought to fruition, in the time, that you appoint, may we always, understand that, there are, events, that are ongoing, even in this world, of ours, where we would say, there is no sign, of God, there is no work, of God, there is no evidence, that you are, that you are, in control, of what, is before us, and yet, we might be, misleading, misleading ourselves, in our conclusions, help us, to, look to you, and to pray to you, and to wait for you, and to search you out, in ways, that you, will honor, forgive our sins, in Jesus name, amen, amen, amen, we're going to, conclude, by singing, two verses, in Galic, from Psalm 71, Psalm 71, at verse 16, 13, me again.

[ 47 : 13 ] I I Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.