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Samuel the Prophet
First Samuel 3:19 to 4:1a

Samuel the Prophet DIG: In what ways did Samuel grow? What does it mean that ADONAI let none of his words fall to the ground? How was Samuel recognized as a prophet? What was the result of Samuel's ministry of the Word of God?

REFLECT: How can we shine the light of God into the dark world? How can you learn to listen more and talk less? How do you treat the Word of God? What commands have you "let fall to the ground?" How do you hear God's Word in your life?

So the word of Samuel came to all Isra'el.

Samuel kept growing into manhood**. He** was conscious that **the** invisible **King**, forgotten by so many of the nation, had chosen **him** to restore **His** chosen **people**. Unlike other judges, **Samuel's words** and influence would reach the entire nation. From time to time, **the LORD** would appear at **Shiloh** (**to see link click Ae – The Tabernacle at Shiloh**) and reveal **Himself** to **His prophet**. **Isra'el** was about to experience a new beginning that would lead to new challenges and dangers as well as to new beginnings and victories.[104]

Samuel's growth to manhood was marked by continuing public recognition that **ADONAI was with him,** authenticating **his** ministry by the fact that what **Samuel** said proved to be right **(3:19a).** As **the LORD's** presence would later be **with David (16:18** and **18:12)**, so **the LORD** was with **Samuel**. A fact evident to **all Isra'el (3:20)**. **The LORD** was against **'Eli and his sons** (see **Ar – 'Eli's Wicked Sons**), but **His** blessing was upon **Samuel** and **his** ministry.

The Targum says (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ei – The Oral Law**) **that the Memra was Samuel's aid** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Af – The Memra of God**)**, and he did not depart from any of His words.** Therefore, this implies that just as the pre-incarnate **Messiah** had

previously stood before **Samuel** (see **Aw – Samuel's call**), **He** would now make sure that **none of his words fall to the ground (3:19b).** This phrase contains a double meaning. On the one hand, it means **Samuel's** prophecies were all fulfilled by **ADONAI**, which proved **he** was a true prophet of **God**. On the other hand, it means **Samuel** never failed to deliver **God's** message to **His people**. **He** recognized **his** high calling as **the LORD's spokesman** to **Isra'el** and treated **God's Word** with care and respect.[105]

All Isra'el from Dan to Beersheba became aware that Samuel had been confirmed as a prophet of ADONAI (3:20). While **the Tabernacle** was at **Shiloh**, and before **David** conquered **Jerusalem** (see the commentary on **the Life of David Co – David Conquers Yerushalayim**), the northern border of **Isra'el** was at **Dan**, while the southern border was at **Beersheba**. But after the division of the monarchy after **Solomon's** death (see the commentary on **the Life of Solomon Ca – Solomon's Death**), **Dan** was the northernmost border of **the northern kingdom of Isra'el**, while **Bethel**, in close proximity to **Beersheba**, was its southern border (see **the Life of Solomon Dd – Golden Calves at Dan and Bethel**). **The people** of **Isra'el** knew **Samuel** was speaking **the Word of God** because **his** prophecies all came true. That same test should be applied today to those who claim to speak **the Word of God** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Dk – A Prophet Like Moses**). If their message does not coincide with the clear teachings of Scripture, it means they are not speaking a message from **the LORD**.[106]

Although earlier, **the Word of ADONAI had not yet been revealed to him (3:7),** now it was. And as **the LORD** had appeared to **him** earlier **(3:10-14)**, **He continued appearing in Shiloh, for ADONAI revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of ADONAI (3:21). So the word of Samuel came to all Isra'el (4:1a). Samuel's** authority came from **the Word of God**, but the actual working out of **God's** will came through **the word of Samuel**, who was, in effect, **God's** mouthpiece. **Samuel's** human **word,** submitted to the command of **YHVH**, is never quite equated with **God's** divine **Word**, but is surely authorized by **ADONAI**. In other words, **Samuel** was speaking for **God**, but was not **God**. This is not unlike **the word** in **Jeremiah 1:1-3**, where **the Word of the LORD** was given in **the words of Jeremiah.**[107]

We now see **Samuel** at the point towards which the whole story has led, from the time before **his** birth through the prayers of **his** godly **mother** (see **Aj – Hannah's**

Prayer), and all through **his** growing into manhood. When it was understood that **Samuel's** credentials as **a prophet** were established, a new era was under way. Revelation through priest and ephod had passed away (see the commentary on **Exodus Gb – The Urim and Thummim: The Means of Making Decisions**), and revelation through **prophets** was beginning.[108] **Samuel**, like **Moses**, was to be the preeminent leader in **Isra'el**, fulfilling in **himself** the roles of **priest** (**he** functioned as **a priest** in **2:18**), **judge** (see **Bm – The Last Judge**), and **prophet**; yet, **his** greatness is most clearly seen in the anointing of others, **Sha'ul** and **David**, as kings in the Land. **So the word of Samuel came to all Isra'el (4:1a).** The question was . . . would **Isra'el** obey it!

Today, we are called to deliver God's Word faithfully, even when it seems unpleasant. Samuel provides a glaring contrast to **'Eli**. **The high priest** was responsible to ensure that the worship of **YHVH** was carried out according to **the LORD's** commandments. Yet, **his** own **sons** were guilty of gross misconduct and sexual immorality. **Their** sins led others into sin, and **God's Name** was violated in the Land. But **'Eli** did nothing to stop **them**, and by **his** failure **he** brought the wrath of **Ha'Shem** on **himself** and **his** whole family.

Samuel, on the other hand, was always faithful to carry out **ADONAI's** instructions, and **he** was willing to deliver bad news **the LORD** commanded. **He** had spent **his** entire childhood in **the Tabernacle**, serving alongside **'Eli**, and loved **the high priest** like a father. But **his** first assignment as **a** young **prophet** was to deliver horrible news to **'Eli** (see **Ax – Samuel's First Prophecy**), a heavy responsibility for a youngster who had never spoken a prophetic word. Nevertheless, **he** understood the weight of **his** calling and faithfully told **'Eli** the heartbreaking news.

In a similar way, we are called to be a faithful testimony to the world around us and teach others **the Word of God**. Our calling is similar to **Samuel's** in that we are **God's** witnesses in the world – and we must take care to deliver **His Word** accurately. The world does not want to hear the eternal judgment awaiting those who reject **Messiah** – for that matter, the world often gets angry when believers teach that **Yeahua** is the only way to salvation. But these teachings are an integral part of the Gospel, unpopular though they might be, and **God's** people need to be faithful in proclaiming **the full purpose of God (Acts 20:26-27 NASB).**[109]