

## **1 Sam 3:1-9 [6]-CALLED & DEAF to GOD'S VOICE**

PRELIMS. Things are bad spiritually in Israel. God has sent a prophet to warn Eli the priest that judgment is on the way. However, Samuel is also in the temple, albeit a small boy! In the midst of evil, God is doing a good work!

### **A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM**

Right away the author **encourages** us “*Now the young man Samuel was ministering to the Lord*”[1] “*a little child shall lead them*”[Isa 11:6] ie, a child leading a **wolf/lion/leopard!**

Note, Samuel was not ministering to Israel, but to the **Lord!** Whatever spiritual stage and maturity Samuel was at, God's Word tells us here, Samuel **was** ministering to the **Lord!** So encouraging! He **was serving** the **Lord** here at this time!

Even **if** Samuel was **not regenerate**, it is encouraging! **What** is it to be regenerate? It is to have **spiritual life** in you. A person can be ‘in the Covenant’ and yet not be regenerate. To be in the Covenant is to be highly privileged, but if we do not have **faith** and do not **respond positively** to God's ‘call’ we are still in our sins and are **not** ‘right with God’. God's ‘call’ comes **every** day – a call to be holy, obedient, etc! **Pharisees** were covenanted, but some were not regenerate. **Simon** Sorcerer was baptised but **not** regenerate! “*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ*”[Eph 2:4] Do we get that? **God made us alive!** Alive to spiritual things!

In regeneration, God restored **our link** with Him, the link which we lost in Adam when he sinned! As a result, we, by nature are **dead** to God, ie, we do not **respond** to God! We have no relationship with God. It is as if God is dead. But when God regenerates us, fellowship and communion is restored again! God has made us ‘**alive**’ to true spirituality! Alive to **God!** We have spiritual life within us. Regeneration is **vital!**

However, God can still **use** us to fulfil His purposes **even if** we are not regenerate! We read of pagan kings being God's servants and His anointed to fulfil great and wonderful deeds. *"Thus says the Lord to His **anointed**, to **Cyrus** whose right hand I have grasped **to subdue nations** before him and to loose the belts of kings...I will go before you...For the sake of My servant Jacob, and Israel My chosen, I **call** you...I name you, **though you do not know Me**...I **equip** you, **though you do not know Me**"* [Isa 45:1-5] **APP** In history God has used **pagan** nations, and **unbelieving** leaders of Xn nations to fulfil His purposes. And God still uses people **today**, without them realising, they are fulfilling the purposes of God! So Samuel, whether regenerate or not, **was** serving the Lord's purposes. He was **obedient** to the 'call of God' for him at that time.

## **TWO REAL FAMINES**

Now there is a **price to pay** when you sin against God. Sin grieves God – He can't take much of it without responding – and His response very often is to **ignore** the sinner in his plight and **allows** him to go his own foolish way! He not only stops speaking to them, but He stops **protecting them** and stops giving them **special favours**!

Now **two** of the **judgments** that God sends on His covenant people are: **One** God **stops speaking** to them! *"the Word of the Lord was **rare** in those days; there was **no frequent** vision"* [1b] A vision was one of the common ways God communicated with His people in those days. God stopped sending visions and 'Words' from faithful servants and prophets. Judgment!

God stops having fellowship with His people. He **no longer comforts** them with words of **wisdom** and help. But more important still, He no longer **'guides'** them in **special** paths of **safety**. He no longer **shields** them from **evil**! One of the **greatest** blessings in life is to be **sheltered** from **evil**! It is one of those blessings we are not aware of, until it is **removed**!

‘You never miss the water until the well runs dry’! Not until **real problems** we did not have before comes do we realise what protection we had before. God **removes** His care! *“their protection is removed”* was the war cry of Joshua & Caleb to **encourage** Israel to go into Canaan![Num 14:9] Peter talks of believers *“who by God's power are being guarded”*[1Pet1:5] Jesus said *“While I was with them, I kept them in Your name, which You have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost”* [John 17:12]

So, because God’s Word was **rare** and there was no **frequent** communication from God, there was an **escalation** of sin! That is judgment! God allowing us to go our own foolish way! When **unheard of** murders and abuses **to** children and **by children** are prevalent, a nation is under judgment!! When there is little wisdom about and old-fashioned common sense has gone, there is judgment! **APP** Just read our newspapers!

Yes, a famine – a real famine, is an awful thing! But the **worst** kind is as Amos says *“Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord GOD, “when I will send a famine on the land- not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD”*[Amos 8:11]

**Two**: the second **form** of judgment is when God **does speak** and we are **unable** to **hear**! When we are **deaf** to the **voice** of God! Unable to hear it because the **hardness** of our hearts! That is what we have here! God speaking and even the ‘godly’ old prophet Eli has **no ears to hear**! And it has **nothing** to do with **old age** natural deafness! It is **spiritual** deafness! Three times God called before *“Eli perceived that the Lord was calling Samuel”*[8c] So much for our spiritual mentors!

What is it that we read about those who *“ought to be teachers”* They have *“become...”* what? *“dull of hearing”*[Heb 5:11,12] Believers can **backslide** so greatly that one is forced to believe that they never ever knew the Lord! That is why Xnity is an **on-**

**going profession of faith** - not a ‘one-off’ experience! That is why it is written “**Today**, if you **hear** his voice, do not **harden your hearts**” quoting [Psa 95, Heb 3:15]

## **ENCOURAGEMENT**

Ralph Davis tells of Bonar’s story of **Grecian artist** who painted basket of grapes on a boy’s head **so realistically**, birds came to eat them thinking they were real! Friends congratulated him, but he said ‘Oh, no, I failed, I should have painted the **boy** so real the birds would have been afraid to come’! He should have painted **both** to attractive and to repel! That is the way God’s Word comes! It **condemns** and it **encourages**!

The great and encouraging thing was: God **was** speaking again to His people! God does **not forsake** His people!

And God was speaking to a **new generation** of **young** people! Isn’t that encouraging! In my young days it was almost a crime to be young! You were **not allowed** to have an **opinion**, far less to be given authority! You had to be 60yrs old before you could be made an elder. (Calvin **26yr** when he wrote ‘Institutes’!)

And guess what? Sam was **not deaf** to God’s voice! In fact we might say he was **over-sensitive!** And he was **ready** to **obey!** He **jumped up** out of **bed immediately** “*Here am I for you called me*”[5,6,8] Ready at the **drop of a hat** to **serve** the Lord **APP** tha’s the kind of Xns we need today – those who are **ever-ready** and **always available** to **serve** the Lord. Whenever there is a ‘call’ from the **Church**, from God, **that** takes **priority!**

This also has **another application**. As Samuel here, we too often think it is **man** that is calling us, when it is the Lord! ‘Its just my parent/ teacher/minister’ – but it is actually **God - through** His **appointed agent!** God does **not** come **physically** to us – it is **almost always** through **people!** \*\*\*Yes, there is encouragement - God **was** raising up a **prophet**, one who **had** the **mind** of the Lord, and was ready to serve **Him!**