



1 Samuel 3-5

Tape # 7080
By Chuck Smith
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CHAPTER 3

So we turn in our Bibles now to I Samuel, chapter 3: as we continue our study through God's word.

Last week, as we began the book of I Samuel, we saw that the nation of Israel was in a state of great spiritual decline. God was seeking for a man that might lead this nation in a spiritual renewal. There was none to be found. So God caused a woman by the name of Hannah to be barren. For years she experienced the embarrassment, disgrace, and shame in barrenness in her culture. It became such an obsessive thing with her that she got to the place where she couldn't eat, crying all of the time. When she went to Shiloh to the feast with her husband, there praying before God, she made a vow. She said, *"God, if you'll just give me a man child, I will give him back to you all the days of his life."* And she came, thus, in harmony with the desire of God.

God wanted a man. So, God gave to her a son. And true to her vow: once little Samuel, which means "asked of god," was weaned, she brought him back to Eli the priest. She said, *"For this child I prayed. God heard my prayer, and now I am giving him back to God all the days of his life."* He remained there in Shiloh and was trained and groomed by Eli. Actually, he became sort of a servant to Eli there in the temple at Shiloh.

So we come to chapter 3:

And 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.

"Precious" in the sense of scarce. The nation was at such a state that they weren't really seeking God. Thus, God wasn't speaking to them. There was no real prophet of God to bring God's Words to the people. The Word of the LORD was scarce. There was no revelations of God, no visions.

And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, that he could not see; And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; --

So this, *"Ere the lamp of God went out,"* would indicate that it was getting towards morning. It was the time when the oil was just about spent in the lamps. They were to burn all night long. The oil was replenished in the morning. So in the early morning hours, Samuel was asleep.

Then the LORD called Samuel: then he answered, Here I am. So he went running unto Eli, and said, Here I am; for you called me. And he said, I did not call you; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the LORD called again, Samuel. And Samuel ran to Eli, and said, Here I am; you did call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the Word of LORD yet revealed unto him.

Just a child; he had not yet had any real revelation from God. This was all the beginning of a new experience for him. As God was now going to begin to minister to him, and ultimately through him, bring His Word to the nation. This was his first encounter with God speaking to him.

So the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here I am; you did call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child. Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. And the LORD came, and He stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth. And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

That is, “Your ears will ring.” ‘Ring as though they have been slapped on both sides and you get ringing ears.’ It’s not a tingle with excitement; it’s sort of tingling with awe, with having been struck on both sides and your ears are ringing. The Word that God has for Samuel is actually for Eli the priest and the judgment that is going to come upon his house because of his sons and their wicked behavior, and Eli’s failure to discipline them.

Here is perhaps a warning unto fathers. The necessity of disciplining your sons. Eli, it seems, was a fairly good man himself. The Scripture doesn’t really indicate that there was anything wrong with Eli and his relationship with God. But his sons were vile. His sons abused the privileges of their office as priests. They were so vile that they caused the people to abhor the sacrifices of God. Eli would not correct them. He did not stop them: the sin of Eli, and the judgment that is to come upon Eli for his failure to discipline his sons.

Now, in verse 1, *“the Word of the Lord was precious, there was no vision in those days:”* God oftentimes spoke through visions. But there were no visions at this time. Throughout the Old Testament, we find many times, God speaking through people in visions. In the New Testament times God also spoke through visions. Paul the apostle speaks of the vision. He doesn’t recount them in detail but he just speaks of many visions that he had. That capacity to see and to perceive in the spiritual dimension.

Now, for every thing that God does, Satan has a counterfeit. Today, this last week, flood gates have been unleashed upon the public concerning the many different voices that are coming from the New Age movement: as TV has broadcast Shirley MacLaine’s film. And as 20/20 did a thing of this “Mrs. Knight and Her Ramatha Guide:” this channeling and all of these things of the New Age movement where people are being made aware of the spiritual dimension. For so long people have been told that the material is all there is. Yet within our hearts we know there is a spiritual dimension. Thus, the soul crying out to God, is reaching out for anything.

David, in Psalm 42 said, *“As the deer panteth after the waters brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.”* David was not talking about an experience that was unique to himself. David was talking about an experience that every man has. The experience of his soul thirsting after God, for the living God. There is, universally, that thirst in man’s soul for God, that was created by God when He made men, as we are told in Romans chapter 8. *“The creature, [man] was made subject unto emptiness: and that, by reason of Him who created him.”* When God created us, He created in us that need for God in order to be complete. No man is complete without a meaningful relationship with God. Before you have a meaningful relationship with God, your spirit is dead. You’re operating on two cylinders. You are living in the body conscious realm, which is the animal realm. Men were aware of the missing ingredient. Yet they didn’t know what it was.

Suddenly, here comes all of these people that are channeling these spirit forces and entities. They are speaking these lies. But people are gullible because of their need for God. The Bible tells us that in the last days there would be many who would come claiming to be the Messiah, many false Christ’s. There will

come one who will have all kinds of lying wonders and will declare that he is God, demanding to be worshipped as God. All of the world will wonder after this man because of his unique powers, uncanny abilities. Many will worship him as God. The stage is being set with this whole movement today. Shirley MacLaine, and the whole outfit, are setting the stage for the unveiling of the anti-Christ. In fact, in USA Today a week ago, there was a big full page ad that "Christ is here." He gave his words that 'He was about ready to reveal himself.' "My words for you: is that the world can have peace; and we need to come unto understanding." This full page ad in the USA Today paper was entitled, "The Christ is here." Jesus said that is what it will be. We shouldn't be alarmed at these things. The Lord said that's what it will be.

You wonder when you see this woman up there, changing her expressions, and doing these weird things - going around like she's possessed! Which I wouldn't be surprised if she were. But to think that people would pay \$1,100 for a weekend of that bologna. Makes you wonder, how can people be so stupid as to listen to that stuff and follow it?

This thirty-five thousand year old warrior, who, thirty-five thousand years ago, came to the consciousness that he was God. Everybody was God. He is revealing these marvelous truths, some thirty-five thousand years later, as he channels himself through this woman. Weird! You see the people sitting there in wrapped attention, just hanging on every word. Lord, help us.

How can they be so gullible? I'll tell you why: in II Thessalonians it says that *the LORD will give them over to a delusion, that they will believe a lie: because they did not have a love of the truth.* Is it just God letting them become what they have become. Because they did not have a love for the truth, God lets them believe a lie. Tragic, indeed, that the Word of God is rejected. The minute you reject the truth of God, I want to tell you something, you are a sucker, and you are going to grab onto something that's really weird. I mean,. . . well we got more to talk about.

So the LORD began to speak to Samuel. He said, "I am going to do a thing in Israel. When the people hear of it their ears are going to ring."

In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. In other words, 'What I start, I'm going to finish.'

Now, in the previous chapter: chapter 2, verse 27, -- "*There came a man of God [unidentified] unto Eli, he said, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear to the house of your father, when they were in Egypt and in the Pharaoh's house? And did I not choose him, [that is Aaron,] out of all of the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon my altar, to burn incense, to wear an ephod before me? and did I give unto the house of your father all of the offerings that were made by fire for the children of Israel? Why then do you kick at my sacrifice and my offerings, which I have commanded in my habitation; and you honor your sons above me, --*

That is, he let them get by with all of this wickedness. Rather than obeying God, and really dealing harshly with his sons, he just let them go.

"Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of your father, will walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honor me I will honor, those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. And, the days come, that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of your father's house, that there shall not be an old man in thine house. And you will see your enemies --"

Then he prophesied concerning Jesus, The Faithful Prince, that will be raised up.

But the LORD is saying to Samuel, “I’m going to do it to Eli. It’s coming. And I’m going to perform against him all the things that I spoke concerning his house; what I started I’m going to finish. I’m going to cut them off.”

For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli’s house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering. In other words, there’s no sacrifice that he can offer at this point. And Samuel lay unto the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here I am. And he said, What is the thing that the LORD has said to you? I pray that you will not hide it from me: Then he did a rather dirty thing. He said: God do so to you, and more also, if you hide any thing from me of all the things which he said unto you.

Man, he put the kid under a curse. “If you don’t tell me everything, God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything and don’t tell me all that God said.”

So Samuel told him everything, he did not hide anything from him. And Eli responded, It is the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

Interesting: there’s no sign of repentance. You wonder about this. When he hears the Word of the LORD, he says, “Well, it’s the LORD. Let him do what he wants.” Rather than repenting and at least trying to correct things at this point, he just accepts it. It probably gives an interesting insight to that man’s character and nature.

And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. He began to speak the prophecies, and they were coming to pass. 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.

So God began to work through this young man whom God raised up to be a prophet and priest in Israel.

CHAPTER 4

Now again, to just give us insight to the confusion of those days; when God was raising up Samuel,
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The word of Samuel came to all of Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and they pitched besides Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the Israelites about four thousand men. And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Why has the LORD smitten us today before the Philistines?

The men, again, sort of just blamed God for their defeat. Rather than getting on their faces and seeking the LORD, repenting before God, they just blamed God for their calamity. “Why has God done this to us?” It is interesting to me how that so often when calamity strikes, people just want to blame God. They

don't want to look at their hearts. They don't want to examine themselves, they just want blame God. "Why did God allow that to happen to me?" They want to accuse God for the wrong things that are happening in their lives.

Had they come to Samuel and said, "Samuel, seek the LORD for us; and find out if God wants us to go to battle against the Philistines," then surely the LORD would have directed them. If they had a time of national repentance and prayer, seeking God, He would have, no doubt, directed them and they would not have experienced defeat. It is interesting to me that people who don't really want anything to do with God, don't really want to seek the guidance of God, they don't want to submit their lives to God, they only want to blame God when things go wrong. Thus, was Israel, like so many people today: just blaming God for the tragedies and the calamities, but never seeking God for guidance and direction for their lives.

Now, someone got the idea: --

Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it comes among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

Rather than, again, seeking the LORD: repenting and turning to God, they were going to take this religious artifact, the ark of the covenant: "Let's bring it out of Shiloh, let's bring it here." It did represent the presence of God. They were longing for the presence of God, but they were seeking it in the wrong way. They were using this religious artifact as kind of a fetish, a magic kind of religious '-thing that brings us power.' As though the presence of the ark of the covenant with them would suddenly bring to them some kind of magical powers over their enemies.

There are people today who look to objects for power within them, rather than looking for the power of God. The objects many times are reminders of God, but we should never worship objects, even though they are reminders of God. But, such is the nature of man. Throughout history man has made themselves objects of worship. Even within the church, we've created fancy alters that become objects of worship. God never intended for us to worship objects. He intended that we worship him.

The ark of the covenant is not some kind of magical charm, though they were looking at it as such. "Just its presence will save us from our enemies." It's the presence of God that we need.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwells between the cherubims: --

They took it out of the holiest of holies. You might know that the two sons of Eli, these wicked boys, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God. They decided that they would come and bring the ark of the covenant.

And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the whole earth rang again. [It was like what happened in Pasadena today in the UCLA game, when the place was just ringing with a great shout as they saw their team moving in.] When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What is the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? When they understood that the ark of the LORD was coming to the camp, the Philistines grew afraid, they said, Woe is us! for there has not been such a thing heretofore. Woe is us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

So it had a reverse effect: the Philistines got frightened. The adrenaline started flowing, and they said, "We better fight for our lives." They became ferocious. They were like men possessed. And they began to smite the men of Israel, and they defeated them with a tremendous slaughter.

Israel was smitten, and they fled every man to his tent: and there was great slaughter; for there fell thirty thousand of the army. And the ark of God was taken; the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain. And there ran a man from the tribe of Benjamin out of the army, and came to Shiloh the same day with his clothes torn, and there was earth upon his head.

A sign of tremendous mourning. To get a real emotional experience, you would always rip your clothes to show tremendous grief, and then you would put dirt on your head. So here came this guy, his clothes were ripped and dirt was on his head. They knew it was bad news.

And when he came, Eli was sitting on his seat by the wayside watching: for his heart trembled for the ark of God. He knew that was wrong. He knew that the ark of God should not have been taken into the field of battle. And when the man came into the city, and told it, all the city cried out. And when Eli heard the noise of the crying, he said, What means the noise of this tumult? And the man came in hastily, and told Eli. Now Eli was ninety and eight years old; and his eyes were dim, that he could not see. And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled today out of the army. And he said, What is done there, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people, and you two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken. And it came to pass, that when he made mention of the ark of God, then this old ninety-eight year old man fell over backwards off of his seat where he was sitting by the side of the gate, and he broke his neck, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel for forty years.

So the ignominious death of Eli the priest: as God had said through Samuel that judgment was coming quickly upon his family. God was going to cut it off. Now, we find the fulfillment of that prophecy.

And it came to pass that his daughter in law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, she was about to deliver the child: and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken, her husband and her father in law were dead, she bowed herself and travailed; for the labor pains had come upon her. And about the time of her death the women that stood by said to her, Fear not; for you have son. But she answered not, neither did she regard it. And she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed from Israel: -- The word, 'Ichabod' literally means, "no glory -- because the ark of God was being taken by the Philistines, and because of her father in law and husband's death. She said, The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.

So this word 'Ichabod:' "the glory of God has departed," is a word, really, of judgment. I'm afraid it's a word that should be put over the door of a lot of churches. 'Ichabod:' "the glory of God has departed from the assembly of the people."

CHAPTER 5

And the Philistines took the ark of God, and they brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. Which was one of the large cities of the Philistines on the coast. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon.

Now 'Dagon' was one of the many gods of the Philistines. Dagon looked sort of like a mermaid

only with a male torso and head, along with a fish tail and body. He was worshipped by the Philistines. Just like you would see a mermaid with a fish's tail, this came from Dagon, who had a fish tail bottom with the head and torso of a man. The idol of Dagon was sitting in the temple of Dagon. They made the mistake of setting the ark of the covenant of God next to this pagan idol. The god that they had worshipped in Ashdod was 'Dagon.'

When they of Ashdod arose early in the morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early in the morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon and both of the palms of his hands were cut off upon the threshold; only the stump of Dagon was left to him. Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house, would walk on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day. It became a superstitious thing: 'Don't step on the threshold because that's where the head and the hands were clipped.' But the hand of the LORD was heavy upon them of Ashdod, [I love this:] and he destroyed them, and smote them with these boils, even Ashdod and all the area around it. And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so, they said, The ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god. They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them, and said, What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel? And they answered, Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried over to Gath. And they carried the ark of the God of Israel over to Gath. And it was so, that, after they had carried it about, the hand of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction: and He smote the men of the city, both small and great, and they had boils in their secret parts. [God is really coming against the cities of the Philistines] Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. [The third of the Philistine cities] And it came to pass, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the people cried out, saying, They have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us, to slay us and all of our people. So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, [Let's get rid of this thing] let's send the ark of God of Israel, away from us, lest it will wipe us all out.

It is interesting that God began to bring the judgment against the Philistines because they had in their possession this sacred instrument of God. They had enough sense to realize, 'Hey, we better get rid of this thing before we're all dead.'

There was already destruction throughout the city; and the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men that died not were smitten with these boils: and the cry of the people was sent up to God. So the heavy judgment of God came upon the three cities of the Philistines that harbored this ark of the covenant.

As we move into chapter 6, we'll see their getting rid of this ark of the covenant, sending it back to Israel and the interesting things that surround it. They are sending the ark back.

The Bible warns us that *"in the last days perilous times will come. Men will be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."* The Bible warns us about all of these things that we see beginning to happen to us in the world today. The tremendous interest in the occult: in spiritualism, channeling, etc.. The Bible tells us that the deception will be so great, that *if it were possible, even the elect would be deceived.* Thank God that isn't possible. But it will be a strong delusion that Satan will bring. And if you are the child of God, let me tell you this: that you are very apt to be discovered by the things that are going to transpire. We are seeing the beginning of a tremendous surge. If you are not a child of God, you have no real defense or buffer against these things that are going to come. If ever there was a time where we needed to make a real commitment of our lives to Jesus Christ, and a real commitment to the Word of God, it is today.

