

This “Samuel” Generation

1 Samuel 3

1 Samuel 3:1-4:1 (NKJV)

Samuel represented a new generation, a confirmed spokesman to replace that which was profaned. It was God changing from using the priests to speaking through a prophet.

I don't want to go into much detail, but that is what we have today in the religious circles. A profaned representation of Godly leaders.

Samuel was an uncompromised, prophetic voice of courage used by God to call the people back to His ways.

I believe that today, God is raising up a new generation of prophetic voices of courage and challenge to the apathetic and compromised Christian and Church.

A. W. Tozer is one of my favorite authors and preachers. He pastored in the city of Chicago during the corrupt gangster heyday for many years. On one occasion when a new minister arrived in Chicago, Tozer called him and described the difficulty and spiritual warfare involved in pastoring in such a city. He said, “If you ever want to pray with me, I'm at the lakeside every morning at five-thirty a.m. Just make your way down and we can pray together.” A day came when the other minister was troubled in his soul. He made his way to the lakeside at about six o'clock. There he found Tozer prostrate on the shoreline worshiping and receiving from God.

Years after his death A. W. Tozer continues to be a prophetic voice to the twentieth century church because he was serious about his private intimacy with God which also had public repercussions.

In our text we find a time in Israel that parallels our current cultural climate.

The priesthood (spiritual leadership) of the nation, under Eli and his sons Hophni and Phineas, was corrupt and morally weak and soon came under God's judgment. The presence of God had left the land and the Ark of the Covenant had been captured and the priests were dead. After hearing the news of the Ark and the death of her father-in-law and husband, Eli's daughter-in-law (and wife of Phineas, the priest) named her newborn son Ichabod, meaning “the glory of God has departed.”

What was it that led to this dark hour?

How did it come to be that the presence of God departed the land?

And what can we in today's church learn from this sobering time in Israel's history?

The spiritual and cultural outlook in our own nation appears much the same today. Our nation's leaders are either corrupt or standing idly by while others lead us down a morally compromised path.

Many religious leaders are immoral and corrupt in God's eyes, (the pope thinks good works get you to heaven and God makes people gay). Our religious institutions have allowed their light to dim. Our churches are without the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

We have scarcely noticed that God's presence is departing the land.

I cannot express the gravity of our current state strongly enough. There is a warning call within my spirit to prepare for the days ahead. Yet even as God prepared to bring judgment to the house of Eli, He was putting into place His redemptive plan. And I know that the same redemptive plan is at work today.

What is the 'Plan of Action' for the new Samuel generation?

1. Private Disobedience and Public Powerlessness

As I studied on all that had happened in Shiloh, I was struck with this sobering truth: Private disobedience causes public powerlessness.

Hophni and Phineas were engaged in private disobedience. They were profaning the holy things of God, neglecting their responsibilities to steward that which was entrusted to them. They abused their priestly authority and took advantage of the people. It is likely these sons of Eli thought they could continue in their sin with no repercussions.

Like Israel, many in the church today are just going through the motions, relying on traditions and practicing an institutional Christianity. Not realizing, God's presence is no longer there and our institutions are powerless.

We have been fooled into thinking our private sin goes unnoticed, but what we do in private has a public, corporate effect.

The enemy continues to win battles and take ground in our nation, largely while the church goes about our business as usual. We blame our losses on the government, politicians or those who disagree with us, with little understanding of the role we've played in our own defeat.

The key to victory is not the Ark, nor the Church, but Obedience to God.

Disobedience causes the lamp to go out and the presence of God to depart. Without His presence, there can be NO victory.

2. Restoring Covenant

God always has a thread of redemption.

Even when He is in the middle of correcting His people, He has a plan of redemption and restoration. We see this in 1 Samuel 1-4.

Jeremiah 33:2-3 (NKJV)

What some may not know is that this was spoken during a time of judgment on the nation of Israel. Israel and Judah had broken ties with the Lord and had been taken into captivity as punishment for their sins. And yet in the midst of judgment upon the nation, God had something “great and mighty” to tell Jeremiah—the reconfirming of His covenant and the restoration of a nation.

The rest of Jeremiah 33 shares God’s intentions toward this wayward nation if they would return to Him. His promises included health, healing, an abundance of peace and truth, restoration of their fortunes, cleansing from their iniquity, joy and gladness, fame throughout the nations, and safety from their enemies.

All of this was promised if only they would return to the Lord and reconfirm their covenant with Him.

3. A Redemptive Thread

We have been the beneficiaries of the blessings of God in the United States of America.

Our nation was founded on Godly principles, with a strong Judeo-Christian ethic, and as a result we have known God’s blessings. Even those who are not Christians have become beneficiaries of these American blessings. God’s intention for us, just as with Abraham’s promise, was that we would in turn be a blessing to other nations.

Throughout our history, America has been a blessing to other nations.

It is my belief that from a benevolent standpoint, the church in America has made America great. No matter what difficulties we have gone through, we have always been a generous people. We give to those who are suffering from disasters or hard times, both in our own country and in other nations.

I believe this generosity has allowed us to hold onto God’s redemptive thread as a nation. By caring for those in need, the church has given the nation access to God’s promise in Isaiah 58: 8, that in our time of need for healing, our “recovery would speedily spring forth.”

4. A Samuel Generation

Samuel was instrumental to the reconfirming of God’s covenant with Israel following Hophni and Phineas’ destructive leadership tenure. Samuel represented a new generation, a righteous priesthood to replace that which was profaned. He was an uncompromised, prophetic voice used by God to call the people back to His ways.

I believe in our own nation, God is raising up a new, prophetic voice of courage, one that will call our nation back to God.

This Samuel generation will challenge the unjust judiciaries and corrupt politicians. They will refill the lamp of God with the oil of the Spirit and restore His light within the church.

Our restoration as a nation, however, requires that we first take an honest look at our true state.

We **cannot** continue on as we have been and expect different results. To remain on the same path will only mean a further moral decline.

God used Samuel to show Israel their true state. His predecessor, Eli, had lost his eyesight (physically and spiritually). Eli had allowed the evil his sons were committing to continue. He maintained the status quo. As a result, the Lord had to raise up Samuel to expose the true state of Israel's leadership. And notice the punishment of fallen spiritual leaders. (no atonement forever (v.14)

I believe God wants to empower a generation in our land who will serve this same purpose.

They are unwilling to allow the evil that is being committed to continue unchecked.

They are not interested in maintaining the status quo.

Their concern is for the current state of the church and of the nation, and they will be courageous in speaking forth God's truth.

5. Who Will BE A SAMUEL?

My question to you is, "Will you be a Samuel in our generation?"

Will you be one whose life is dedicated and set apart to the Lord? (A high calling)

Will you be one who listens to hear the voice of God and who answers in obedience? (or continue to sleep)

Will you be a voice of courage to a wayward generation? (ridicule/abuse)

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only hope for our wayward nation. He alone is Savior and it is only by His blood that our redemption and restoration comes.

God is looking for a generation to partner with Him in his restorative work. He is looking for a people who will be part of his redemptive work to save America. The Lord is looking for Samuels in this generation.

Our nation needs their voice, now more than ever.

6. In Search of the Faithful

Ezekiel 22 describes a disobedient Israel that reminds me of much of what I see in our culture today. It describes 5 kinds of people who had turned from the ways of the Lord.

The Lord calls out the Princes, the Politicians, the Prophets, the Priests (pastors), and the People for turning from the Lord and allowing the shedding of innocent blood in the land, allowing corruption and unrighteousness to prevail. Many who were overlooking what was going on around them for personal preference and profit. Sound familiar?

Ezekiel 22:30 (NKJV)

God was looking for a faithful priest, prophet, judge who, like Samuel, who would follow His commands.

I believe God is issuing this same warning to us today. Like Israel before us, we are unaware that the lamp of God is growing dim, the oil is about to run out and the presence of the Almighty is departing the land.

God is looking for a righteous remnant that will follow His commands and honor His word.

Our politicians and princes are corrupt. Our prophets and priests lack moral clarity. The people are drowning in a sea of iniquity and perversion.

What can we do?

7. Three-fold Preparation (Prepare, Prepare, Prepare)

For those who will heed God's warning, there is a call to prepare for the days ahead. There is a 3-fold call to prepare the Bride (ourselves), to prepare the Ark (the Church), and to prepare the way of the Lord.

One man who heeded God's warning and prepared was Noah.

Hebrews 11:7 (NKJV)

Noah lived in dark days full of corruption and immorality but he heeded God's warning that judgment was coming and prepared accordingly. As a result, his household was saved, as were all the living things that came with him on the ark.

Likewise, God wants His church to prepare for the days ahead and be an ark of refuge in times of trouble. By preparing and getting in alignment to God's kingdom principles, both individually and corporately, we can be ready to be a help to others.

Luke 21:12-13 (NKJV)

Today in many Christian circles the Holy Spirit is neglected, forgotten, or misunderstood.

The One given to unite the body of Christ is the center of controversy...So often Christian work is so rigidly programmed that it seems we need no longer depend on the Holy Spirit. yet Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing."

The late Dr. A. W. Tozer, author and pastor, said, *"If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."*

Do you hear the voice of the Lord calling?

Are you sleeping... or answering "your servant hears"?