

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul

E. God's Verification To Israel Of His Truth Through His Prophet Samuel

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

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

If ever we needed to be convinced about what constitutes God's authoritative truth, it would be today. Last week I heard a nationwide secular radio talk show host, Michael Savage, claim that due to the error and wrongs that are being promoted by many in power today, a lot of his listeners are turning to the Bible for direction and hope.

However, being **sure** we **know** God's real truth today even in Christendom is itself a significant challenge:

(1) The neoorthodox claims that the words of Jesus are authoritative, but that the Bible is not, but this is a hopeless claim since Jesus's words come only from the Bible! (C. C. Ryrie, A Survey Of Bible Doctrine, 1978, p. 7)

(2) Liberal Theology claims that man's reason is authoritative for defining truth, but then ethics must rise from human reason, and that has led us to the grotesque political correctness of today's unsettling world! (*Ibid.*)

(3) The Catholic Church claims God's truth resides in it, but then it counters its own Bible: Ephesians 2:8-9 in The New American Bible for Catholics (1986, p. 1279) reads one is "saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God, it is not from works, so no one may boast," but The Catholic Encyclopedia (Robert C. Broderick, ed., 1986, p. 319) cites the "Council of Trent, Sess. III, Ch. 8" to teach that salvation is by faith plus baptism.

(4) Yet, if one turns to other realms of Christendom, that doesn't solve the problem, either: (a) Brannon Howse in Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, p. 153 reported how "New Apostolic Reformation . . . members claim that Christians must yield to their leadership because God has appointed them to be apostles and prophets to lead the Church," and NAR leader "C. Peter Wagner" asserts that "Christians and pastors who stand on the authority of the Word of God and sound biblical doctrine" in resistance to NAR leaders are "under demonic influence," *Ibid.*, p. 145.

(b) On top of this, Jack Deere, a former Dallas Theological Seminary professor, claims: "'In order to fulfill God's highest purpose for our lives we must be able to hear his voice both in the written word and in the word freshly spoken from heaven'" by contemporary prophets, that one of Satan's "'most successful attacks has been to develop a doctrine that teaches God no longer speaks to us except through the written word. Ultimately, this doctrine is demonic even [though] Christian theologians have been used to perfect it.'" (Mark Thompson, "Spiritual Warfare: What Happens When I Contradict Myself," The Briefing, no. 45/46 (24 April 1990): 11 as cited in John H. Armstrong, gen. ed., The Coming Evangelical Crisis, 1996, p. 78)

If these parties in Christendom claim that pastors like me who claim Scripture alone is our authority for faith and practice are thereby under demonic influence, how do you know you are getting God's truth in this sermon?!

Need: So, we ask, "How can we today discern what is God's truth and identify His credible messengers?!"

- I. Due to the 1 Samuel 3:1-19 events, all Israel "recognized" Samuel as a prophet of God, 1 Sam. 3:20 NIV.**
- II. Indeed, the word of God through Samuel consequently came to all the people of Israel, 1 Samuel 4:1a.**
- III. This was a new development, for until then, God's revelation through men had come "through priest and ephod," but due to the abuse of this office and its ministry by Eli and his sons, "a new era was under way . . . revelation through prophets was beginning," Bible Know. Com., O. T., p. 436.**
- IV. Thus, for guidance on gaining God's truth today, we examine the events of 1 Samuel 3:1-19 for insight on how all Israel came to discern God's true message and His credible messenger in Samuel (as follows):**

- A. God called Samuel to be a prophet as witnessed by Israel's Biblical spiritual leader, the high priest, 3:1-8a:
 1. When Samuel as a boy was put under the guardianship of Eli the high priest, due to Israel's sinfulness, the audible word of God was rare, there was no frequent vision from God (1 Sam. 3:1 ESV with 1:24-2:11), so Samuel as a young child would certainly not have known of God's audible utterances.
 2. Well, one night after Samuel was in bed, God repeatedly called him, saying, "Samuel!" without identifying Himself as God, and Samuel repeatedly got up and went to Eli, thinking the high priest was calling him, 3:2-6. The Lord clearly designed these calls to show the nation's high priest that Samuel was not faking a divine call to some ministry, for he as a child in an apostate era would be ignorant of it, 1 Samuel 3:7.
 3. On God's third call to Samuel, Eli realized the Lord was involved, so Eli told Samuel to say the next time that God called him, "Speak Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Sam. 3:8-9), so when the Lord called him a fourth time, Samuel replied as Eli had directed, and he and received God's prophetic message, 3:10-11.

- B. The high priest realized as divinely authoritative Samuel's call of God to be a prophet, 1 Samuel 3:8b-9: Eli's telling the boy to answer the next time God called, "Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" showed Eli as Israel's Biblical spiritual leader was a witness who would testify that Samuel was called of God to minister.
 - C. The message Samuel reported God told him matched that of another godly man, 1 Sam. 3:10-18a; 2:27-36:
 - 1. The credible godly man's message of 1 Samuel 2:27-36 had been given to Eli, and it spoke of God's judgment on Eli's house for its failure to fulfill its divine commission in the office of the priesthood.
 - 2. God's message to Samuel also spoke of God's judgment on Eli's house for the same sins, 1 Sam. 3:10-14.
 - 3. However, Samuel's message also revealed that God had already told this message of judgment to Eli, that it was not new to him, insight Samuel would not have known though Eli could verify it, 1 Samuel 3:13a.
 - 4. Thus, a series of Biblical precedents of God's working was also involved in validating Samuel's call!
 - D. The high priest ruled Samuel's message to be credible in seeing it match the former godly man's words, 3:18b: when Eli urged Samuel to tell him the message he received from the Lord during the night, and Samuel gave it, Eli accepted it as God's message seen in his response, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good." God thus verified through the witness of Israel's Biblical spiritual leader that Samuel's message was from God.
 - E. Also, all Samuel's prophecies came true, Biblical proof he was God's prophet, 1 Sam. 3:19; Deut. 18:20-22:
 - 1. 1 Samuel 3:19 states the Lord was with Samuel to where God "let none of his words fall to the ground," meaning the Lord fulfilled all of the predictions that He led Samuel to utter, Ibid.
 - 2. This perfect accuracy certified by Scripture in Deuteronomy 18:20-22 that Samuel was a true prophet.
 - F. Accordingly, since all Israel would visit the tabernacle to worship the Lord with their sacrifices, they all heard of Samuel's prophetic credentials and realized he was God's prophet, so all Israel heeded his words, 4:1a.
- V. Scripture modifies these qualifications for God's messengers of Samuel's era for God's messengers today:**
- A. No one today perfectly predicts the future as Deuteronomy 18:20-22 requires, so no one now is a true prophet.
 - B. Indeed, 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 in the Church era claims that written Scripture is sufficient for the man of God to be thoroughly equipped unto all good works until the rapture of the Church, and since God is not a vain God since He does not work in vain seen in His prohibition against taking his Name that represents His character in vain (Exodus 20:7), there is no added divine revelation besides the closed Scripture canon until the rapture.
 - C. Then, Jude 3 claims the Christian faith was "once-for-all" (*hapax*, Th. Dict. of the N. T., v. I, p. 383) delivered to the saints, so the truth taught in 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 is unchangeable by anyone until the rapture!

Lesson: *God used the testimony of an unsuspecting child Samuel that he was hearing an audible voice call him, the witness of Israel's Biblical spiritual leader in Eli to that effect, the precedent of a past message of a man of God that verified Samuel's message from the voice was from God, the high priest's witness of the verification of the message Samuel received with the other credible man's message and the ongoing fulfillment of all of Samuel's words in line with the Biblical definition of a true prophet to lead Israel to accept Samuel's divine call as a prophet.*

Application: (1) *May we trust in Christ to be saved, John 3:16.* (2) *To validate God's truth and discern His true messengers TODAY, may we (a) heed the witness of Biblically reputable leaders (Eli; 2 Tim. 3:14b), (b) precedents of God's past messages (man of God; 2 Tim. 3:14a) and (c) Scripture clarifications that certify the truth and one's credibility as God's messenger (Deut. 18:20-22; 2 Tim. 3:15-16) to identify God's truth and His messengers.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

In our introduction, we noted that New Apostolic Reformation leaders claim we must heed their contemporary apostles and prophets who have new teachings outside of written Scripture, and former Dallas Theological Seminary professor Jack Deere claims God has raised up contemporary prophets for today. Both parties add that holding to the closed canon of Scripture for our final authority of faith and practice is demonic. We now answer these claims:

(1) No alleged prophet today measures up to the standard of having all of his or her predictions come true as established by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:20-22. In fact, Jack Deere claims that today's prophets speak as never before -- with error, that God thus works through errant prophets! (Ibid., Armstrong, p. 83) Mr. Deere greatly errs!

(2) 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 shows there is no need for more divine revelation today, and Jude 3 holds 2 Timothy 3:15-4:2 is unchangeable until at least the rapture, so we reject all contemporary apostles and prophets as false!

(3) Samuel's calling was verified by Israel's Biblically established spiritual leader, the high priest Eli, and by Biblical precedents. However, the NAR and Jack Deere are theologically Charismatic on prophecy (Ibid., Armstrong, p. 79, 87), what Article 3, Section 11 of our Church Bylaws' Statement of Faith for decades has Biblically countered.

May we heed the Bible alone as God's guide for truth, and only those messengers who heed and teach it!