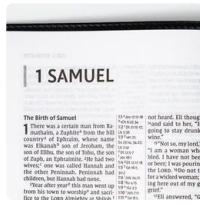


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## 1 Samuel 3 - 4



### 1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

Steve Gregg discusses 1 Samuel 3-4, in which Samuel is called by God at a young age and becomes a prophet. The early Israelites had abandoned the hereditary priesthood, and the surviving priests were corrupt, leading to a lack of widespread revelation. Samuel grew to become a credentialed prophet, and his prophecies helped to rally the Israelites against the Philistines. The Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines in a battle that resulted in the deaths of 4,000 Israelites.

## Transcript

Today we're turning to 1 Samuel chapter 3. 1 Samuel 3-4, in which Samuel is called by God at a young age and becomes a prophet, and his prophecies helped to rally the Israelites against the Philistines in a battle that resulted in the deaths of 4,000 Israelites. It had been in some other locations and had traveled around during the 40 years of wandering, of course. The tabernacle, as described in the end of Exodus, may not have existed even at this stage any longer, because this is almost 500 years after the building of the original tabernacle.

It was made of perishable materials, not very many structures, especially ones you take down and put up and take down and put up, and they're made of cloth and they're made of leather. 500 years would not be easy on them. There's a good chance that they didn't, after the wilderness wanderings, continue to replace curtains and things as they were, but probably built more of a permanent structure.

We don't know this to be true, but we do read of doors instead of curtains here in this narrative. There was probably a solid roof against the weather rather than just tarps, which the tabernacle had had. It may be that there was almost nothing left of the original tabernacle that Moses had made.

We are not told. But what we do see gives the impression of a more permanent building, which would make sense. The tabernacle was built for traveling.

It was a prefab building that you could tear down and reassemble rather quickly and move it about. Once they settled in Canaan, they didn't have to keep moving it about, so

it might have been considered that the tabernacle was somewhat obsolete. As it became worn out, I'm sure they just made some other kind of structure, probably more permanent, but not entirely permanent, because even this structure is destroyed eventually in the time of Samuel.

But we have these two streams of ministry seen at Shiloh at this time. We've got the old priest, Eli, and his sons. The old priest is not a bad man.

He's a pious man, but a weak father, and his sons are corrupt, and he does not control them. They are corrupting the worship rituals by getting involved with taking more than their share of the meat that's offered to God, and more than their share of the women who were ministering at the door of the tabernacle. Although Eli rebukes them for that, he doesn't do anything to stop them.

At the same time that this corruption exists in the priesthood, there's a new move of God through a prophet. While there had been individual persons who prophesied in the past, earlier than this in Israel's history, Samuel is a new type of prophet. He's a prophet who provides leadership for the nation.

Eventually he establishes kings and counsels the kings, and forever afterward in the monarchy, the kings of Israel and Judah would have prophets who were their counselors. Unfortunately, many times they would choose prophets of Baal or false prophets, if that was the way the kings were inclined, but they always assumed that they had to take counsel from somewhere above themselves through the prophets. Samuel, who begins to receive oracles from God in this very chapter, is rising up to replace the old order.

So we might say a charismatic order of a gifted prophet is replacing the old ritualistic order of the priesthood, where there's simply hereditary spiritual leadership. It's interesting that that's happening, because it's happening about the same time that the political systems go in the opposite direction in Israel. Israel has had charismatic leaders in their political leadership, and they're going to transition into a more hereditary monarchical political structure.

But at the same time, the hereditary priesthood, which was never abandoned completely, of course, after this, and continued throughout Israel's history, was nonetheless, in this generation, rejected. And all the priests died on the same day. And Samuel, then, is there as a young man, a young prophet, a young Levite, to fill that vacuum.

And he does serve as a priest, apparently. We don't ever read that he served as a high priest. And it may very well be that during the time after the death of Eli and his sons, that there might, perhaps there was no high priest serving.

I don't really know. We don't read of another right away. However, there were

descendants of Eli, like his great-grandson, Abiathar, who served as a high priest in the time of David.

So we do have the continuing of the priesthood in a later generation. But at the time of Samuel, it would seem that the whole priesthood was vacated by the sudden death of all the existing priests. And the only survivor was the son of Phinehas, who was a baby, and born that very day that his father died.

And he was called Ichabod, as we shall see. But he was not, I mean, he would be probably the next high priest. But he'd have to wait a while.

So Samuel, then, is the one who's filling in for both the political and spiritual leadership here. And he was good for Israel. He was a man of the Spirit.

But we read of the beginning of that feature of his life in chapter 3. He's still a boy. We don't know at what age. But probably still a preteen.

And it says in chapter 3, verse 1, Then the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days. There was no widespread revelation.

Now, the term, the word of the Lord, we tend to think of the word of God being the written scriptures. And, of course, they didn't have any written scriptures in those days except the law. But it's not a reference to that.

It's not saying that the law was rare in those days. It's saying that words from God were rare. God didn't speak very often.

The word of the Lord, in this case, is not a reference to the scriptures, but to God speaking to his people, speaking to Israel, as he had done through Deborah and through others like Moses and Joshua before that. Now, that wasn't happening much. This is at the end of the period of the judges.

And it was a very corrupt time in many respects. And the priesthood was corrupt. And so God just wasn't communicating much with Israel.

Probably because they weren't listening. They weren't listening to his law. So why should he speak prophetically to them? You know, there's a lot of people who neglect the Bible, but they want God to give them special guidance.

They want God to guide them through the Spirit in some mystical way in all their decisions. But on many things, he's already spoken. It's in the word of God, the written word, and they're neglecting that.

And they want God to keep talking, though they're ignoring what he's already said. Why should he keep talking? You know, I've met people who told me that they have not been baptized, although they've been believers for three years. And I've asked them, well,

why didn't you get baptized sooner than this? And they say, well, I've just been waiting for God to lead me about that.

Well, what are they calling God leading? Isn't the Scripture enough? Isn't a command from God in the Bible leading enough? Apparently not. I mean, God has already made his will clear about certain things. And if we pay no attention to what he's said so far, we're not being good stewards of what he's given us so far.

Why should he trust us with more? Why should he speak more? It's only after we are, I think, making the most use we can of what God has already said that we can expect him to say anything more if he has more to say. But when we're neglecting what he's already said, he's not going to speak much. And in this case, Israel was not very faithful in following the law of God.

And so God wasn't speaking prophetically to them much either. That's what it means when it says the word of the Lord was rare in those days. There was no widespread revelation.

And as God wasn't publicly raising up prophets to speak to the nation, that that was going to change in the person of Samuel. It came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord, where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down to sleep, that Yahweh called Samuel. And he answered, Here I am.

And so he ran to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called me. And he said, I did not call. Lie down again.

And he went and lay down. Now, there are several references here to the timing of God speaking to him. Some of them have to do with apparently the time of the night.

Others seem to speak more broadly. It says it happened, for example, when the eyes of Eli had begun to grow so dim he couldn't see. In other words, it was the time of his life, not the time of the night.

It was the season of Eli's life that he was old and growing blind. Now, that being the case, no doubt Samuel had to do a lot of things for Eli that Eli could have done for himself if he had not been blind. He probably depended on Samuel for a lot of small things, menial things.

Maybe even if he had to use the bathroom in the night or something like that, he couldn't because he's blind, easily find his way. He might have to call Samuel any time, day or night, for assistance for many things. And that is probably why it's mentioned because there doesn't seem to be any other direct reason to mention that Eli was blind at this time since the story is not about Eli's blindness.

But because when he heard a voice calling him, a male voice apparently, Samuel assumed that Eli was calling him. Maybe he didn't think it was a strange thing. Maybe this happened all the time, having a blind older man to care for.

And Samuel was a servant. He was there to serve the needs of the priests. But it also says, after telling us that it was when the eyes of Eli had grown dim so that he could not see, it's also said to be before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark was.

This phrase or this clause has always struck me as being somewhat pregnant, though it's mysterious what it's saying. On the one hand, it could be simply talking about the time of the night, that the oil in the lamp in the tabernacle was growing low. They'd have to replenish it in the morning.

It was not gone out yet, so it was not quite morning. It was not quite the end of the night, but it was late, perhaps in the wee hours of the morning. Perhaps that's what we're being told.

Although the mention of it is spoken of in such a way that it doesn't seem like you'd need that much detail in order to simply mention that this was early in the morning or late at night. I mean, they specifically said before the lamp of the Lord went out in the tabernacle. It almost sounds like it has a double entendre, that it probably is mentioning that it's late at night before the oil was exhausted in the lamp and needed to be replenished.

But the lamp of Israel is actually a term that is used a number of times in the story of David. You might remember from having read in the books of Samuel that there were times when David's life was in danger and it was expressed that God did not let the lamp of Israel go out by David being killed. God preserved David's life so that the lamp of Israel would not go out.

This term is used a number of times in the same book, or at least in 2 Samuel, which means that the author uses the term the lamp in more than simply literal ways. David's existence, David's leadership was like a lamp in Israel, that God did not allow to go out prematurely and thus he kept David alive when he was in danger on many occasions. And the writer may have something along those lines in mind here too, and that's why I've said I've always counted it rather intriguing and mysterious.

I'm not sure exactly what he's saying, except that perhaps he's using the word lamp to mean that Israel had had the light of God but it was growing dim and it had almost gone out of its time. When the priesthood is corrupt, so corrupt that God has to just wipe them all out in a single day and leave none alive, that means that things have come down to a pretty low point. And God, in anticipating that low point, had caused a little boy to be born a few years earlier so that he could raise up something better in its place because

the lamp of Israel had almost gone out.

Things were getting dark in Israel. Perhaps if Samuel had not been called at this time, it would have been a very short time after this that the lamp would have gone totally out, that there would be no light, no leadership of a spiritual sort for Israel. But through Samuel, of course, eventually David came to be king and he became the lamp of Israel.

So I've got a feeling, and I've always felt this when I've read this, so I don't know that there'd be any authority in my instincts about it, but this is saying more to us than just this was late at night and the lamp was going to need new oil added, as it would every morning, to be maintained. But like I said, it could just say very early in the morning, but it has this long, drawn-out way of saying it. Before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

It's like the ark of God was there, but God almost wasn't anymore. However, before he gave up on it entirely, he spoke to a new future leader, prophetically. And the third thing it says about the time was it was while Samuel was lying down to sleep.

So it's when Eli's eyes had grown dim and before the lamp had gone out, and while Samuel was sleeping, or at least lying down. It doesn't say he was sleeping, it says he was lying down. The words to sleep were in italics.

It means it's not in the Hebrew. At that time, the Lord called Samuel, apparently simply just calling his name, because it doesn't quote God, it just says he called Samuel. And Samuel says, here I am, and so we read that he ran into Eli.

He said, here I am, you called me, and Eli, thinking that the boy just had a dream or a hallucination, or heard hearing things, and perhaps a little grumpy about being wakened up in the middle of the night, just said, no, no, no, I didn't call, just go lie down again. And he went and lay down. And Yahweh called yet again, Samuel.

So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, here I am, for you called me. And he answered, I did not call you, my son, lie down again. And we're told here parenthetically, now Samuel did not yet know Yahweh.

That is, he didn't have revelations from Yahweh yet. He knew the theology. He knew who Yahweh was.

I mean, he was serving in the temple, the tabernacle. He knew about Yahweh, but he didn't know him by personal revelation, which is obviously an important part of knowing Yahweh, or else it wouldn't be mentioned so often. We're told of Eli's sons that they didn't know Yahweh.

In chapter 2, in verse 12, now the sons of Eli were corrupt, they did not know Yahweh. Again, they probably had a lack in their theological beliefs about God, but they didn't

know him. And the same was true of Samuel at this point, although he was too young to have corrupted himself by that lack of knowledge.

The sons of Eli had lived a full, you know, at least into adult life, without knowing God, and given plenty of time to become corrupt. Samuel didn't get a chance, because God revealed himself to him while he was young. It says, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.

So he didn't know the voice of God yet. I've always wondered how prophets know that it's God speaking to them. I've never prophesied.

I'm not a prophet. And people have asked me this, how did the prophets know it was God? I have to say, I've wondered that myself, I don't know the answer. If I was a prophet, maybe I would know, but even then I might not be able to tell.

You know, if you hear something in your spirit and you know it's God, I'm not sure how you could tell somebody else how you know that. I have definitely received words from the Lord that I knew were God. They weren't prophecies that I would prophesy to someone else, they were just times when God spoke to me about something about me.

And those have not been extremely frequent. They've been often enough that I know that God knows where I live and knows where to find me if he wants to tell me something. But they have been occasional, where God actually said something to me that I knew was God.

And in many cases were confirmed later on through independent sources that it was God. But I couldn't tell you how I knew. There's times you just know that God's convicting you, God's saying something to you.

You just know that's the Lord. But you wouldn't know that if it never happened. And Samuel had never had that happen previously.

Eventually he became a prophet of God who knew the voice of God. You become familiar with the voice of God by getting acquainted with God himself. That's what Samuel eventually did.

He walked close to God, he heard frequently from God, he recognized God's voice as a person would recognize the voice of their parent or the voice of a friend. Once they're acquainted, and have heard that voice many times. But at this point the voice of God was unfamiliar to Samuel.

That was going to change, but that tells us why he didn't know, didn't recognize this was God's voice speaking to him. And I have a friend who's now gone to be with the Lord, but he used to talk about this story in an interesting way. He compared Eli with the institutional church, spiritually asleep.

And that Samuel is like a more vigorous spiritual movement among certain persons in the church. Often coming with a word from God to speak to the leadership of the institutional church. The church just wants to sleep, they don't want to hear the prophetic word.

They just say, you go talk to God. You go say, Lord speak, your servant hears, let me sleep. And my friend thought of that as an analogy of how the church sometimes is.

The church is content just to keep the machinery running, the religious machinery. And if God wants to infuse some new revelation through some spiritual gifted persons, that spiritual gifted person is awake, hearing from God and has a word from the Lord. The leadership is often just content to continue sleeping.

And they say, oh, you're hearing from God, good for you, go listen to God. But I want to sleep, don't disturb my sleep. And that's kind of how Eli was.

Because the Lord called to Samuel again the third time in verse 8. Then he arose and went to Eli and said, here I am for you did call me. And Eli perceived that Yahweh had called the boy. Now Eli, remember, was the high priest.

He had been in the Holy of Holies every year of his life as an adult. He's now an old man. He had been in the immediate presence of God like no other Israelite could in those days.

Because the high priest alone got to go into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. So he knew something about the Lord. He knew the Lord by personal acquaintance.

He had not been a perfect priest, but he knew the Lord, unlike his sons. And unlike Samuel prior to this. And he said, Eli recognized that's the Lord speaking to the boy.

That's the Lord that I know. He's now communicating with this young man. And so he said, Samuel, go lie down.

And it shall be if he calls you, that you must say, speak Yahweh, for your servant hears. So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Probably didn't go to sleep.

Just waiting to hear that voice again. And he was not disappointed. Then Yahweh came and stood and called as at other times.

Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel answered, speak for your servant hears. Now we read of the oracle that's given to him here.

But it's possible there was more than an oracle. It's possible there was a vision. Or even a theophany.

Because the Lord came and stood and called him. That is to say, it doesn't just say the



voice of God came from heaven to him. But God came and stood next to him, apparently.

And although that could be figurative. You know, I mean, God could invisibly said to be standing nearby. Yet, because there were theophanies and visions in the Old Testament.

Where people saw visions of God. Or saw God himself in a human form. There's no reason to rule that out here.

It's possible that God was visibly present. Talking to him. If not, then some other way.

The word of the Lord came to Samuel. And it says, the Lord said to Samuel, behold, I will do something in Israel. At which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

It's going to make everybody's ears, both of them, tingle. When they hear it. It's going to be, in other words, a shocking thing to hear.

In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house. From beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows.

Because his sons made themselves vile and he did not restrain them. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli. That the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.

And that's the end of the message. So, in a sense, Samuel didn't learn anything that a prophet had not previously already said to Eli. In chapter 2, a prophet, a man of God, had come to Eli.

And had given him the message that God was going to judge his house. Going to bring an end to that line of the priesthood. And going to kill both of his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in a single day.

Now, this really was not fulfilled until the time of Solomon. I mean, Hophni and Phinehas were killed in one day. Shortly after this prediction.

But the end of the line of Eli didn't happen until Solomon ejected Abiathar, Eli's great grandson, from office. And put Zadok, the high priest, in his place. And that's what the man of God had predicted would happen when he was talking to Eli about this.

That he was going to put a more righteous priest in his place, in chapter 2. And he says in verse 35, chapter 2, verse 35. The man of God had said to Eli, Then I will raise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and in my mind. And I will build him a sure house and he shall walk before my anointed forever.

Now, he shall walk before my anointed forever simply means that as long as the

priesthood endures, this new priest will, and his descendants, will be walking before God. As priests standing before God instead of the house of Eli. Now, of course, as I said at the time when we looked at chapter 2, one might think he's referring to Samuel.

Because the books of Samuel don't actually ever make reference to the fulfillment of this. And it does seem that Samuel is the guy who's coming up and does seem to serve as a priest. So the righteous priest who would do according to God's will in place of Eli might temporarily be seen as Samuel.

But Samuel's offspring did not walk as priests forever. His own sons were corrupt like Eli's sons were and probably did not perform priestly duties. He had made them judges, but they were corrupt in that role.

And eventually were, of course, removed because King Saul came to power instead of the judges. So Samuel's priesthood is not what's referred to here. The Zadok priesthood is almost certainly what's referred to because that is what replaced Abiathar.

I think it's in 1 Kings chapter 2. It talks about how Solomon ejected Abiathar, the last of Eli's priesthood, from the office and put Zadok in his place. Who was a righteous priest? And the Zadok priesthood continued then permanently. You know, the word Sadducees is thought to be related to the word Zadok.

The Sadducees were the party that mainly the priesthood held. You didn't have to be a priest to be a Sadducee in the time of Jesus. You just had to have the same opinions.

It was more of a denomination, but it was the party of the priesthood. And some scholars feel that the word Sadducee derives from the root Zadok. And that would be the righteous priest, although the Sadducees were not exactly righteous themselves.

Obviously, there was a righteous priest that God raised up who walked before him forever in Christ, the high priest. And there could be sort of a secondary glimpse that far ahead. Not only would Abiathar be replaced by Zadok, but eventually even Zadok's priesthood would be replaced by Jesus.

And he would walk before God forever. So there's maybe more than one layer of meaning in that prediction. But what God now says to Samuel is that these things that he said to Eli are going to happen.

So he's basically just confirming what another man had said prophetically. And that it would happen in such a way that the ears of everyone in Israel would sizzle, would tingle when they heard about it. It would be a spicy piece of news.

Now, verse 15, so Samuel laid down until morning, and he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, which was apparently his daily duty in the morning, to open the doors. But notice it's not a veil. It's not a tabernacle with a curtain.

There's apparently solid doors, probably a solid building too. And so he opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. Yeah, poor kid.

He's got a word that's condemning the man who has become like his foster father. And a man who's a good man and has probably been good to Samuel. But it's a very hard word that he knew would not be an easy one to deliver.

So this is kind of the first test of Samuel's qualification to be a prophet to Israel. Is he going to be able to deliver a hard word? One that he'd rather not give? And he's put to the test about that, as we see in verse 16. Then Eli called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son.

And he answered, Here I am. And he said, What is the thing that Yahweh has said to you? Please do not hide it from me. God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that God said to you.

Now this was a little bit abusive, frankly, to utter a curse upon Samuel if he hides anything. It seems obvious that Eli suspected this prophecy would have something to do with him. After all, the most recent prophecy had been about him and his house.

And he was obviously curious to know whether this was further information along those lines. And it was. Or it's more just like a repeat of the same information.

But Eli was not content to not hear about it. And even if Samuel was not comfortable presenting it, Eli kind of puts pressure on him. He says, The Lord do so to you and more if you don't tell me every word.

That should have been probably left to Samuel to decide. But the kid is being intimidated in this way. Then Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him.

And he said, Eli said, It is Yahweh. Let him do to me what seems good to him. Let him do what seems good to him.

So this is really similar to what Mary said when the angel told her that she was going to have a son. She says, Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it unto me according to your word. It's a privilege for her, but in some ways it's going to be difficult.

But she says, I'm God's servant, so whatever he says is fine. And Eli was resigned to it. He said, Well, if that's what the Lord says, then I guess he's going to have to do what he's going to do.

So Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. An expression that apparently means that from time to time, Samuel would speak on behalf of the Lord, probably even predictively, as prophets often did. And his words did not fall to the ground, meaning they didn't fail to hit their mark.

The imagery probably is of shooting at a target. And if you're not a good shooter, the arrow might hit the ground before it gets to the distant target and it doesn't hit its mark. But Samuel's words always were spot on, always hit the bullseye, as it were.

They never fell to the ground, never failed to come true. He had, in other words, a perfect record of prophesying. And that is really what was required of a man who would be regarded as a prophet in the Bible.

A true prophet would have to have a perfect record of prophesying. If they spoke in the name of the Lord and it didn't occur, they were regarded to be a false prophet, according to Deuteronomy 18, verses 19 and following. And so a true prophet isn't one who just experiments at prophesying and gets it right sometimes and not at other times.

A true prophet is not somebody who learns gradually to get better at it. There is, in the 90s, and still residually to this day, there arose in the 90s a movement in certain charismatic circles called the New Prophetic Movement. And it was a movement that said that God is restoring prophets to the church in these last days.

And so a school of prophets was formed. And people who felt like they wanted to be prophets were encouraged to do so. And they would come and they'd come to this church in Kansas City and they'd prophesy there.

And they'd go to this school of prophets. But they weren't always right. In fact, they were very seldom right in their prophecies.

But that was not considered to be overly discouraging. They were baby prophets, we were told. And the official position was that a prophet does not have to be 100% correct while they're learning.

They have to learn. And I remember reading from this particular literature, from this particular ministry, and it was very popular, it was a nationally known ministry in charismatic circles. People from all over the country, all over the world would go to this ministry to participate in this school of prophets.

But their material said that some prophets are only 10% accurate. Some are 50% accurate. They said they didn't have any that were 100% accurate, but a baby prophet has to grow in his gift.

Well, apparently God never knew that. Because Samuel was a baby prophet, and he was 100% accurate right from the beginning. Because that's what established him as a prophet.

That's what credentialed him as a prophet. If a person is 10% correct when they prophesy, hey, I don't even claim to be a prophet. I'm probably 10% correct if I make predictions about things.

I mean, 10% is a pretty low success rate. And even 50%, a person who has no prophetic powers might be right 50% of the time if they're perceptive. This is not a spiritual gift.

Prophecy is a spiritual gift. And the gift of the Holy Spirit, if it's true, is authentic and real and true. It's not going to be missing the target.

And what's evident is that those who were speaking that way about the gift of prophecy were just desperate to find prophets, and they didn't have any. And so they defined down what a prophet could be so that they could have some. This is part of a larger movement that you may encounter if you're in the right circles.

It's been around since the 1940s. It started with what's called the Ladder Rain Movement. But it's also called the Restoration Movement.

And it's very, very common to hear influential teachers, especially in charismatic circles, talking about how God is restoring to the church the five-fold ministry of Ephesians 4, verse 11. It says, God gave some to be apostles and some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors, and teachers. Now, the five-fold ministry, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, are said to be the way it goes.

The teaching of this group is that after the time of the apostles, the persecutions under the emperors kind of killed off all the charismatic leadership of the church that was there in the first century. And the tree of the kingdom of God was kind of cut down to a stump, and it remained dead, like that stump in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with a band around it keeping it from recovering. And it remained dead for centuries.

And then they say, then God began to restore in the last days, and he's going to restore the five-fold ministry. Because they say the church in the last days has to come back to what it was in the first century. And so God's got to restore apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers.

And they said he's doing it in reverse order, that he's already restored pastors and teachers long ago in the Reformation. And then evangelists in the 19th and 20th century, the crusade evangelists and missionaries and things like that, that God's restoring evangelists. And they said that he's now restoring prophets.

And eventually he'll restore apostles. Actually in the 90s they said this is the decade that God's restoring the prophetic ministry. And they thought in the year 2000, then we're going to see the apostles coming in.

And then God will have restored the five-fold ministry. In certain circles you'll hear this kind of talk a lot. Its premises, first of all, are not biblical.

The Bible doesn't anywhere talk about God restoring the five-fold ministry in the last days. But the thing that was particularly troublesome about this is the way that human

nature played on this doctrine. Because churches that wanted to be on the cutting edge of what God is doing, they didn't want to miss out on the new move of God.

They wanted to make sure they were moving forward as much as God was. They began to feel like the normal church of the 21st century has got to have all five ministries. They've got to have apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

I was attending a Mennonite church for a few years. I became very dissatisfied with it at first, not because it was Mennonite, but because it was a charismatic Mennonite church that was into this movement. They were very naive because they'd been Mennonite all their lives.

They kind of got into the charismatic movement a lot later than I did, like 20 years later than I did. They got into the shepherding movement 15 years after it was already debunked. Everything that we got into in the 70s, they were getting into in the 90s because it was all new and fresh to them.

When I first got baptized in the spirit in the 70s, I got into Kenneth Hagin and the word of faith and stuff because it was all new. It seemed real. I was alive in a new land of spirituality that I was not familiar with.

Everything seemed real until you checked it out and found out it wasn't real. These people were like that. They were older than me.

People had been raised conservative Mennonites, but they had discovered the things of the spirit, and they fell right into this restoration thing. They were so typical of what I've seen in a lot of churches who do this. They had to find in their own midst an apostle, a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, a teacher, or else they were not a cutting-edge church.

They were so desperate to be a normative church that they would define all these things down. The pastor was called an apostle. Another guy was called a prophet, but the guy who was called a prophet didn't have the credentials of a prophet that the Bible would recognize.

The pastor had no credentials whatsoever as an apostle, but they couldn't bear the idea of being subnormal. When you're taught that the church as God wants it in the last days is going to have all five-fold ministry, then you either have to suffer the humiliation of being subnormal, or you have to convince yourself that what you do have is that. But to do that, you have to define down what that is.

Of course, you don't have anyone there who is a 100% accurate prophet, so you figure the guy who prophesies the most often, as long as he can't be proved wrong all the time, he's a prophet. As long as the pastor does something that resembles anything that the apostles did, anything at all, like preach, well, then he's an apostle. Or he oversees a few other sister churches.

This pastor, I actually sat at lunch with him and challenged him many, many times. He didn't like me after a while, but he didn't want me to leave either. He wanted me to be the teacher in the church, so they didn't have one.

He couldn't teach. He kept begging me to become the teacher in the church, because they had an apostle and a prophet. They needed a teacher.

He thought I'd be the best guy for the job in the church, but I told him I can't join with that, because I don't believe what he's going for. I said, for example, why do you say you're an apostle? I don't know if anyone had ever asked him that before. I said, you say you're an apostle.

Why do you say you're an apostle? He said, well, I do kind of an apostolic work. I said, what do you mean? He said, well, you know, there's churches that I travel, I itinerate, I oversee, and they call me in when there's troubles and stuff. I say, isn't that the same thing as a denominational supervisor? You call that an apostle? Don't all denominations have guys in their headquarters who do that? If a church has a problem, they send out a guy from the headquarters.

That's not what makes a person an apostle. You don't become an apostle by taking on an apostolic work. An apostle means one who is sent.

You become an apostle by being sent. If you weren't sent, you can do all the things an apostle does, and you're not an apostle. Philip the Evangelist did everything the apostles did.

He planted churches, he did miracles, he preached the gospel. Philip, he's called the Evangelist, not the apostle. He did apostolic work, but he wasn't an apostle.

Why? He wasn't sent by Christ to be an apostle. But see, this church needed an apostle to be a cutting edge, and so the pastor was the closest thing they had. He did something a little bit like what apostles do, like he kind of would troubleshoot in churches that had problems, and so he called himself an apostle.

And they were doing the same thing with the word prophet. And to me, I thought it was disgusting, frankly. It was so lacking in integrity and the use of the word of God to say, this is what we want our church to be seen as.

So we're going to change scriptural definitions, we're going to change everything in the Bible to make us look like we're what we're supposed to be. I'd rather say, it doesn't look like we fit the biblical description. What's wrong with us? But some people find that too hard to bear, and so they'll just change things.

In the Bible, a man who was a prophet, God did not let any of his words fall to the ground. If he spoke for God in the name of God, his words were true. Not 10% of the

time, not some of the time, not while he was learning he could have a margin of error.

There was no margin of error here. Samuel was the real thing. And because he was the real thing, the Lord did not let any of his words fall to the ground.

He did not fail in any of his prophetic statements. Now, verse 20, And all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, we've heard that expression already before and we'll hear it more, Dan, the northernmost extremity, Beersheba, the southernmost. It just means the whole country.

From Dan to Beersheba. They all knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. So even as a youth, he was apparently doing stuff that isn't specifically recorded.

Just like we read of Jesus that in Jerusalem people believed in him because of the miracles they saw, but it doesn't record any of the miracles. These people had heard the prophecies that Samuel had given. We don't have record of any of them.

But God established him by giving him prophetic words, which obviously came true. And because they came true, people knew there was a man they could inquire of God. And that's the important thing.

Israel could know, here's a man when he speaks, it's from God. Why? Because he's always been right. If you had someone in your church that spoke, and 50% of the time he was telling the truth.

The rest of the time he was mixed up. You say, well, he's really a prophet. He's still our prophet here.

He's just 50% prophet at this point. Well then why consult him about anything? Anything he says might be in the other 50%. The purpose of a prophet is so you'll know what God wants to say to you.

But if the man you're calling a prophet is wrong half the time, then you can never know if anything he says is the part that's right or the part that's wrong. You can never hear from God for sure. And that was what God did not subject Israel to.

He gave them prophets who were right all the time. And therefore everyone could know, okay, he's a prophet of the Lord. When he speaks we should listen.

How could God expect anyone to listen to a man who claims to be a prophet, but he doesn't claim to be right? Doesn't claim to be telling the truth all the time. It's absurd. But God didn't subject Israel to that kind of nonsense.

He gave them prophets and he gave those prophets confirmed words that were always true. Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in



Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

Now when it says he appeared again in Shiloh, without that explanatory note afterwards, one might think that maybe the Shekinah glory reappeared in the tabernacle, like it had in the days of Moses. Or maybe that even on the Day of Atonement when the high priest went into the Holy of Holies, there had been no glory in there. God had been gone.

And now he reappeared. But I think, I don't know if this is saying that, or if the second part of the verse is explaining what the first part means. The Lord appeared in Shiloh in what way? In the sense that he spoke through Samuel.

That he revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. He appeared apparently to Samuel and spoke through him. So people knew where to find God and to find a word from the Lord because there was now a reliable spokesman.

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now, chapter 4. Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. Some people, since the word of the Lord, excuse me, the word of Samuel came to all Israel, they think that this is explaining the battle.

That Samuel prophesied that they should go out against the Philistines. However, this is not the way to see it. I think the word of Samuel came to all Israel is a stand alone finish to chapter 3. Just that he prophesied all over the nation.

We are going to find in chapter 7 that he went around on a circuit to several different towns. Bethel, Gilgal, Mizpah, and his own hometown of Ramah. Interestingly, he did settle as an adult in Ramah, not Shiloh.

After the Philistines destroyed Shiloh, apparently Samuel was free to go wherever he wanted to go to live and serve God. He went back to his hometown, probably lived out his life with his mom and his dad there. That was where they lived.

So, even though his mother gave him up, at least he spent his final years in the town that she lived in, if she was still living at that time. So, she did get to have a relationship with him later on. That reminds me of a true story of modern missionary Reese Howells.

In the book, Reese Howells' Intercessor, he was a Welsh evangelist and minister at large, and spent a lot of time in Africa in the mission field. But he felt led, and I've always had trouble with this to tell you the truth, but he felt led, he and his wife, when their son was born, to go on the mission field without their son and leave their son with Reese Howells' brother to raise. Because they felt led to go on the mission field and didn't feel like God was leading them to take their son.

So, they actually had to part with their son. Now, whether this was really God or not, I don't know. But the outcome was positive.

Because when his son grew up, his son joined him on the mission field and took over the work eventually after his father died. So, they gave up their son in his infancy, but eventually had him back in his adult life as a partner and got to enjoy him after having given him up. Now, again, I have some trouble with the idea of parents feeling that they're called to give up their children for missionary work.

But, whatever we think about that, as it turned out, God brought the son back to them. And so also with Samuel, he prospered throughout Israel, but his home was in Ramah, we're going to find out in chapter 7. And that's where his mom and dad lived. So, they apparently, though they took him away to Shiloh, he came back home.

Now, the battle that's mentioned in chapter 4 is a stand-alone story unrelated to Samuel's prophesying. Samuel did not tell them to go out on this battle. It was a disastrous battle.

And to say that Samuel prophesied that they should go to war against the Philistines would be, to me, the first time his words fell to the ground. Because 4,000 Israelites fell to the ground dead. And it was an ill-conceived war.

The Philistines, mentioned here for the first time in the book, have been around since the days of Samson and before. The Philistines have been a problem that Israel was never able to drive out. And, at various times, were more or less oppressive.

In Samson's day, the Philistines were not very oppressive, so much so that the men of Judah would rather turn Samson over to them than stir up trouble with them. They seemed to be satisfied to live under the Philistine overlords. But sometimes the Philistines made war with Israel.

And exactly because of this war, what precipitated it, we're not entirely clear on. It's just there were not peaceful relations between the Philistines and Israel most of the time. And this was one of the times that they clashed on the battlefield.

Now, Israel went out to battle against the Philistines and encamped beside Ebenezer. And the Philistines encamped in Aphek. Now, it may be since the Israelites had not gone to battle against the Philistines for a very long time, even in the time of Samson, they did not.

We don't know that they ever did in the time of Eli either before this. For some reason, the Israelites are feeling their oats and feeling they can go out against the Philistines and win where they never had before. This may be a false inference that they drew from the fact that God had reappeared in Shiloh and that there was now a prophet there.

And they had another man like Moses had been to instruct Israel or like Joshua. And therefore, God was now with them again and they could now overthrow the Philistines. We don't know if this is how they were feeling.

But if that's what encouraged them on this occasion to finally engage the Philistines, they were certainly miscalculating. That was not what God had in mind for them to do. Because God still considered the nation to be very compromised.

He was raising up a prophet. But the people were not godly yet. The nation was at a low point and therefore, they shouldn't think that just because God is speaking, that God is going to be favorable toward every action they do without them being more godly themselves as a nation.

And so they encamped against each other. Then the Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was defeated by the Philistines who killed about 4,000 men of the army in the field.

And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, why is Yahweh defeated us today? Why has Yahweh defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us that when it comes among us, it may save us from the hand of our enemies. So the people sent to Shiloh that they might bring from there the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of hosts who dwells between the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the Ark of the Covenant of God.

And the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came into the camp. All Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. That is, they're extremely encouraged.

And we find that it actually intimidates the Philistines initially. But what's going on here? Notice when they were defeated in the field, they recognized this as God defeating them. Why has Yahweh defeated us? Now that's a good question to be asking.

But they apparently didn't wait around for an answer. They figured out what they could do to fix it. We'll get the Ark and take it out.

That'll save us. It will save us, they said. Now what's going on there? God did, in fact, apparently defeat them at the hands of the Philistines.

And if they had asked and inquired of the Lord in some reasonable manner, perhaps He would have told them that He did not want them in this battle or that He was not on their side yet, they were not yet sufficiently obedient to Him, or whatever, that they're premature and going to battle. But in spite of that, they recognized God's hand in defeating them. They figured they could overcome God's providence in this matter.

We'll just bring the Ark out. And this illustrates a mentality that's very common among religious people. The Jews had it.

Many Christians have it. I'm sure people have it in every religion. And that is that you can manipulate God or the gods through certain means.

It's not like you have to please them in the way you live. If you just know the right rituals, if you have the right artifacts, if you have the right holy objects and so forth, and holy rituals, then the power will be with you. And even if God is displeased with you, He can't help but come through when you're doing the right religious thing.

And putting confidence in a religious ritual, or in this case, a religious object, the carrying of the Ark, they weren't putting their confidence in God. They recognized the Lord was the one who was against them. But they thought, oh well, we'll take the Ark out and it will save us.

Not God, but it. They were superstitious. It's a little bit like people who do the same kind of thing with crucifixes or other objects they consider to be holy, and they think that that will save them.

They think that objects will save them. Relics of the saints, bones of St. Peter, splinters of the cross, or things like that. Somehow this will ward off the vampires.

This will ward off the demons. The holy water will make the demons come out of a man. It's all the same idea.

It's the same superstition. It kind of bypasses the whole issue of a relationship with God where you're expected to monitor his opinion of you and adjust your behavior. And says, well, that's too difficult, too complex.

We'll just get this holy object and it'll take care of everything for us. Put a plastic Jesus on the dashboard and it doesn't matter what we do with our lives because we've got the plastic Jesus there. And so these people have the plastic Jesus of the Ark.

They just thought, well, God isn't on our side, but we are on our side and we're going to exploit the supernatural power of this object, the Ark. By the way, the Ark had not been carried into battle since the days of Joshua. So it had been housed in whatever tabernacle there was for over 400 years without, or about that, 350 maybe, without ever being removed.

So this was quite a brazen and strange thing to suggest. Let's get the Ark out of Shiloh. It'll save us.

I mean, what are they thinking? This is not normal procedure. And it obviously wasn't a good idea because as it turned out, they lost again. They lost 30,000 this time, not 4,000.

They lost the Ark even and they lost their priest. This was a disaster. They thought the Ark would save them and it did not.

You know, there's a lot of mythology about the Ark and it's all hocus-pocus stuff. Even in

that, you know, Indiana Jones and Search of the Lost Ark, you might remember before he went on the search when the government officials came to inquire about the Ark and he was the expert. He opened up some big picture Bible that he had at the university there.

Do you remember the scene? He had a picture of these guys carrying the Ark and lightning bolts going out from the Ark, striking down their enemies all around them. And he said, yeah, in biblical times, whoever had the Ark, you know, they were invincible. I wonder which biblical times they're thinking of.

There's certainly no record of anyone being made invincible by having the Ark. This story is the only case we know of where they trusted that being the case and it certainly wasn't true here. I mean, it's just people, I mean, the whole idea of that movie was that the Ark had some kind of occultic power.

In fact, Hitler wanted to get his hands on it because he was fascinated with occult objects. And he was, Hitler was fascinated with the occult. I don't know if he ever was looking for the Ark.

He may well have been, but he loved to have, you know, he had the spear. He acquired the spear that had pierced Jesus, allegedly, the Roman Catholic Church had claimed. He'd seen it in a museum and he stole it.

And he just, relics were important to Hitler. He thought there was a lot of power in them. But he was a demonically possessed man.

And, you know, it's more consistent with magic and demonism to put your trust in objects. Even kids can be that way with their Bibles, you know, sleeping with their Bible under their pillow because they feel like it's like a good luck charm or keep the bad dreams away. Frankly, to tell the truth, I think God sometimes honors that childlike faith, but it's still childlike.

It's childish, it's not really spiritual. And the Israelites were not spiritual. They didn't have a relationship with God as they should.

Instead, they decided to trust in this object to save them. And that was not going to do the job. It says, the people shouted because they're so excited that the Ark was in the camp.

They'd never had the Ark among the army since the days of Joshua. And now it's, now they're going to see the Philistines flee. Why they thought so, we don't know.

And when the Ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, what does the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean? Then they understood that the Ark of the Lord had come into the camp. So the Philistines were

afraid for they said, God has come into the camp.

Actually, it's Elohim, probably they said the gods. Elohim can be translated God or gods, it's plural. Probably the Philistines said the gods have come into the camp.

And they said, woe to us for such a thing has never happened before. Woe to us who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods. These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants to the Hebrews as they have been to you. Conduct yourselves like men and fight. So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated and every man fled to his tent.

There was a great slaughter. There fell of Israel 30,000 foot soldiers. Also the Ark of God was captured and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas died.

Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day and came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. Messenger from the battlefield back to the priest. Now when he came there was Eli sitting on a seat by the wayside watching for his heart trembled for the Ark of God.

He didn't feel confident that the Ark should be taken out of the battlefield. It wasn't his idea. He apparently had not approved of it.

It was done over his protest apparently. He just felt that that was a bad thing going to happen and he was trembling for the security of the Ark of God. Not for his sons but for the Ark.

And when the man came to the city and told it all the city cried out. When Eli heard the noise of the outcry he said, What does the sound of this tumult mean? And the man came hastily and told Eli. Eli was 98 years old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see.

Then the man said to Eli, I am he who came from the battle and I fled today from the battle line. And Eli said, What happened my son? So the messenger answered and said, Israel has fled before the Philistines. There has been a great slaughter among the people.

Also your two sons Hophni and Phinehas are dead and the Ark of God has been captured. Four reports, each one worse than the previous. The first report, Israel has fled before the Philistines.

That's humiliating but it's not as bad as the rest of the news. There has been a great slaughter among the people. That's worse.

And as far as Eli is concerned, his two sons being killed was worse yet. But worst of all,

the Ark has been captured. And that's what Eli had been trembling about and worried about.

Then it happened when he made mention of the Ark of God. That Eli fell off his seat backward by the side of the gate. And his neck was broken and he died.

For the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel 40 years. So he lost his balance.

He fainted and all like that and broke his neck when he fell over backward. He was trembling already. He was fearful and he fainted when he heard the Ark had been taken.

Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child due to be delivered. And when she heard the news that the Ark of God was captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth for her labor pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, because she died when she was giving birth, the women who stood by her said to her, Do not fear for you have born a son.

The midwives informed her, but she did not answer, nor did she regard it. Then she named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory has departed from Israel. Now it says that she didn't regard it and didn't answer.

Then it says she named the child Ichabod. It may be that she didn't answer other than to say this. Ichabod means no glory.

Ichabod, no glory it means. She says, The glory has departed from Israel because the Ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. And she said, The glory has departed from Israel for the Ark of God has been captured.

Well, they thought a great deal about the Ark of God being God himself. But the Ark of God was not the glory of Israel. God was the glory of Israel.

And God was manifesting himself in Shiloh quite apart from the Ark. His Holy Spirit was speaking through a prophet there. And the glory had not departed in that sense.

God had not departed from Israel. But apparently Israel had departed from God to the degree that they had to re-consecrate themselves to him. They had begun to think of the Ark as being the same thing as God.

It would be the Ark that would save them. Even the Philistines thought so. The gods of the Hebrews were in the camp, in the Ark.

And so the woman thinking the same way thought, Well, the glory has departed. Now she might have been thinking that for such a disaster to befall Israel, it's a token that the glory had departed, that God had departed from Israel. But that's not entirely clear.

Not clear that she meant that. I think she meant that the Ark was the glory of God. And it had been captured and therefore Israel had no glory.

But that was a miscalculation because God was still there and God was still speaking through Samuel. We'll find that although the Ark did not defend the Israelites from the Philistines, the Ark was quite capable of defending itself in the land of the Philistines. We'll see that when we come back from our break.