

1 Samuel 3.1-21

- Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening -

Author: Evert Jan Hempenius

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Introduction

- ❖ Mary Evans wrote: “**Samuel is a story-book and story-books are meant for reading!** A good story-book might be challenging or comforting, exciting or calming, sad or happy, but it is always readable. The books of Samuel are no exception to this rule. They were written not as academic text-books suitable only as examination material for scholars, but **as story-books for ordinary people, telling the life-history of Israel.** They are a very palatable way for believers to understand what it means to be a believer, Israelites what it means to be an Israelite and kings what it means to be a king. It is more than time for the books of Samuel, along with the other Old Testament historical books, to come down off the shelves and get back into the hands (and heads and hearts) of the ordinary people of the twenty-first century. This ordinary believer (*M.J. Evans*) has revelled in the challenge of getting inside the texts and it is my great hope that any readers of this book will be stimulated more than anything else to read again the books of Samuel both for themselves and to others.”¹
- ❖ “If we are to take the books of Samuel seriously as the word of God, then we must take seriously this concentration on the telling of stories.”²
- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from 1 Samuel. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ An overview of the First Book of Samuel and the Second Book of Samuel.

¹ Evans, M. J. (2004, p. 14).

² Evans, M. J. (2004, p. 15).

Samuel – 1 Samuel 1:1-2:10	
1 Samuel 1:1-2:10	The birth of Samuel and his dedication to the Lord The Prayer (song) of Hannah: “He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed” (1 Sam 2:10).
Eli and Samuel – 1 Samuel 2:11-7	
1 Samuel 2:11-3:1	The sons of Eli and Samuel
1 Samuel 3:1-21	The calling of Samuel and his attestation as a prophet of the Lord.
1 Samuel 4-7	The ark of the covenant captured by the Philistines; the death of Eli and his sons; the ark of the covenant and the Philistines; Samuel subdues the Philistines.
King Saul – 1 Samuel 8-31	
1 Samuel 8-12	Samuel and the Kingship of Saul
1 Samuel 13-15	The Kingship of Saul will not endure forever
1 Samuel 16-31	The Kingship of Saul and David as his anointed successor
King David – 2 Samuel 1-24	

- ❖ The narrative of the preceding chapter (2:11-3:1) shows an interesting pattern. This chapter provides the necessary information for the following chapters.

The sons of Eli, Eli, and Samuel – 1 Samuel 2:11-3:1	
1 Samuel 2:11 (A)	“Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.”
1 Samuel 2:12-17 (B)	The sins of the sons of Eli – “This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD’s sight, for they were treating the LORD’s offering with contempt.”
1 Samuel 2:18 1 Samuel 2:19-21 1 Samuel 2:21 (A)	“But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod.” The LORD was gracious to Hannah. “Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.”
1 Samuel 2:22-25 (B)	Eli rebukes his sons but they don’t listen.
1 Samuel 2:26 (A)	“And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with men.”
1 Samuel 2:27-36 (B)	“Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, ‘This is what the LORD says:’ (27)... ‘Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained’” (30).
1 Samuel 3:1 (A)	“The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli.”

- ❖ Two narratives are intertwined into one narrative:
 - (A): The boy Samuel ministering the LORD and growing up. Including 1 Samuel 2:19-21 in total 5 verses.
 - (B): The sons of Eli, Eli, and the man of God, speaking the words of God. In total 20 verses.
- ❖ This narrative is the background of chapter 3.

Form and structure

❖ 1 Samuël 3:1-21:

The Words of the LORD

The Words of Samuel

The words of Eli

Introductory verse – verse 1

¹ In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

Scene 1: The LORD, Samuel and Eli – verse 2-14

Setting
(verse 2-3)

² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

First call
(verse 4-5)

⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel.
Samuel answered, "Here I am."
⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."
But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."
So he went and lay down.

Second call
(verse 6)

⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!"
And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."
"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Comment
(verse 7)

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

Third call
(verse 8-9)

⁸ The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."
Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'"
So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Fourth call
(verse 10-14)

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"
Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

The word of the LORD:
(verse 11-14)

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle. ¹² At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹³ For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible, and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

Scene 2: Samuel and Eli – verse 15-18

<p><i>Setting</i> (verse 15)</p>	<p>¹⁵ Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the LORD.</p>
<p><i>Discourse</i> (verse 16-18)</p>	<p>He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, ¹⁶ but Eli called him and said, “Samuel, my son.” Samuel answered, “Here I am.” ¹⁷ “What was it he said to you?” Eli asked. “Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you.” ¹⁸ So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, “He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.”</p>
<p>Samuel attested as a prophet – verse 19-21</p>	
	<p>¹⁹ The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.</p> <p>²¹ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.</p>

Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

- ❖ 1 and 2 Samuel recount a part of the history of Israel. These two books are preceded by Joshua, Judges and Ruth. Of special importance are:
 - Joshua 24: The renewal of the covenant.
 - Judges 17:6: “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.” Also: Judges 18:1; 19:1; 21:5.
 - The road to the kingship in Israel has been paved.
 - Ruth 4:13-22: The genealogy of (king) David.
- ❖ The main theme of 1 and 2 Samuel:
 - The main theme of 1 and 2 Samuel is that of kingship and covenant. It describes the transition from the period of the judges to the era of the kings.
 - The final words of the prayer of Hannah are the main theme of the two Books of Samuel: “He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

- Who will be this king? The final answer is given in the second half of 1 Samuel. It will be David, not Saul.
 - When Samuel has become old, the people asked for a king. “They said to him, ‘You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now **appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have**’” (1 Sam 8:5). This kingship was at odds with the covenant. It implied a rejection of God himself. The kingship of Saul failed also to correspond to the covenantal ideal. Finally there is David.”³
- ❖ The **LORD** God = “יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים”: **Yahweh is the proper name of the God of Israel**. His name is primarily used in this narrative and is related to the covenant.
- Many recent scholars explain the name as **the one bringing into being, life-giver; giver of existence, creator**; *he who brings to pass, performer of his promises*; or *he who causes to fall*, rain or lightning;
 - But most take it as **the one who is**: *the absolute and unchangeable one; the existing, ever-living*, as self-consistent and unchangeable; or *the one ever coming into manifestation* as the God of redemption, *he will be it*, all that his servants look for, *he will approve himself (give evidence of being, assert his being)*.⁴

Exposition

Verse 1

- ❖ **“In those days.”** The writer refers to the past, and contrast those days with his own (present) time when he writes:
- ❖ **“the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.”** The Lord spoke directly and through visions.
 - In this narrative, both **“the word”** and a **“vision”** of the LORD occur. The LORD is calling Samuel and speaking to him. The LORD reveals himself (**“vision”**) the fourth time: **“The LORD came and stood there”** (10).
 - A vision is not the same as a dream. A dream occurs when one is asleep. A vision occurs mostly during the night, while the receiver is awake. “This term is used in contexts that suggest receiving of words and not visual images.”⁵

³ Elwell, W. A., & Beitzel, B. J. (1988). *Samuel, Books of First and Second*. In *Baker encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol. 2, p. 1892).

⁴ Brown, F., Driver, S. R., & Briggs, C. A. (1977, pp. 217-218).

⁵ Omanson, R. L., & Ellington, J. (2001, p. 90).

- “rare” and “not many” (not frequent, uncommon)⁶ provides the background for: “Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him”(3:7). And: “Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy” (3:8).
- The end of this narrative reads: “The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.”

Verse 2-14 (scene 1)

- ❖ Verse 2 and 3 show a parallel and a contrast:

One night	
Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, (and Eli) was lying down in his usual place (room).	The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.

- Eli is almost blind. He is old. His poor sight is also symbolic: visions were rare those days.
- “The lamp of God had not yet gone out.” This is also symbolic for the situation of those days. Who will succeed Eli as a priest and judge in Israel?
 - It also indicates the moment of calling. It is the second half of the night. See Exodus 27:20, 21. and 30:7, 8.
 - The lamp of God is a symbol for the presence of God and the Spirit of God.
- “lying down.” Both Eli and Samuel are asleep. Samuel was lying down in the temple. Although he was still young (1 Sam 2), he was already supervising the service and taking care of the lamp of God.
- “temple.” This reference and in 1 Samuel 1:9 and 2 Samuel 22:7 might seem a bit awkward because the temple didn't exist yet. The son of David, Solomon, would build a temple for the Lord.
 - In other instances the “temple” is called “the house of the LORD” (1 Sam 1:7, 24; 3:15; 2 Sam 12:20) and “Tent of Meeting” 1 Sam 2:22.
 - There is no reference to the temple found in the Book of Judges.
- “The ark of the covenant” (Ex 25:10-22). It also symbolized the throne of God.

⁶ Omanson, R. L., & Ellington, J. (2001, p. 89).

- The LORD said to Moses: “There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.”
 - The Israelites even identified the presence of the ark with the presence of the Lord (1 Sam 4:3).

❖ The Lord calls Samuel four times. Compare:

The Lord calling Samuel			
1 st – verse 4-5	2 nd – verse 6	3 rd – verse 8-9	4 th – verse 10
<p>Then the LORD called Samuel.</p> <p>Samuel answered, “Here I am.”</p> <p>And he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”</p> <p>But Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.”</p> <p>So he went and lay down.</p>	<p>Again the LORD called,</p> <p style="background-color: #90ee90;">“Samuel!”</p> <p>And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”</p> <p>“My son,” Eli said, “I did not call; go back and lie down.”</p>	<p>The LORD called Samuel a third time,</p> <p>and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.”</p> <p style="background-color: #00bfff;">Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.</p> <p>So Eli told Samuel, “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’”</p> <p>So Samuel went and lay down in his place.</p>	<p>The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, “Samuel! Samuel!”</p> <p>Then Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”</p>

- The first and the third time, the narrator only refers to the fact of the calling. The second and the fourth time, he records the voice too. See also the calling of Abraham and Moses (Gen 22:1; Ex 3:4).
 - The second time, the narrator summarizes the call of the LORD: “Samuel!”

- It is a summary, as he says in verse 10: “calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel!’ This is probably done to add a climax to the story.
- The fourth time twice: **“Samuel! Samuel!”**
 - The LORD is gently approaching the boy. It would have been possible that the LORD revealed himself to Samuel the first time, like this:
“Samuel, Samuel!”
Samuel is still sleeping.
“Samuel, Samuel!”
Samuel awakes, the Lord came and stood there, and said:
“I, am the LORD, whom you are serving, I am the God of Abraham, Isaak and Jacob...”
 - There are probably two reasons:
 1. Eli must be involved in this revelation of the LORD. He was supervising the boy. He must teach the boy Samuel to listen to the voice of the LORD.
 2. The LORD reveals himself in this gentle approach, not overwhelming the boy Samuel, but more like a father touching a sleeping child. The boy must be prepared before he can receive the words of judgment concerning his tutor Eli.
- The first time, Samuel awoke suddenly. He heard a voice. His immediate response is: **“Here I am.”** This was a normal response when someone was calling.
 - Samuel saw no one, so he got up and ran towards Eli.
- Samuel reports to Eli three times in the same fashion: **“Here I am; you called me.”** He is convinced that Eli was calling him. This implicates that he didn’t see anybody standing next to him or was present in the same room, although there was some light! The LORD is still hiding himself.
- **“My son.”** Eli responds to the boy with fatherly affection.
 - Verse 7 is a comment of the narrator to explain why Samuel was thinking that it was Eli who called him.
 - **“He did not yet know the LORD.”** This is explained in the following sentence: **“The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.”**
 - “Samuel had not yet had a personal experience of receiving a revelation from God.”⁷ Up to thus far he was serving the whole-heartedly and enjoyed his favour already (1 Sam 2:18, 26).
 - This is theologically speaking an important statement. See application.

⁷ Omanson, R. L., & Ellington, J. (2001, p. 93).

- The third time, “Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy.” This must have been a shock to him. The word of the LORD was rare and visions were not many. Now the LORD seems to appear to the boy and not to him, Eli, the high priest and judge in Israel. Eli becomes aware that his days have been counted and that this boy will be his successor (2 Sam 2:35).
 - Eli doesn’t explain anything to Samuel. He doesn’t say: “It is the voice of LORD.” He says:
 - “Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, ‘Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.’”
 - Surprisingly, Eli didn’t instruct Samuel to get up from his bed. The picture seems to be that Samuel received the vision and the word of the LORD, while he was still lying down.
- The fourth time is different from the first three. Samuel was prepared. The narrator informs the reader that “the LORD came and stood there.” He approached Samuel, who was lying close to the ark of the LORD, the ark of the covenant. The narrator doesn’t tell anything about the vision, he recounts only the revealed words of the Lord, in which the LORD reveals himself.
 - Samuel didn’t address the LORD as LORD but he simply said: “Speak, for your servant is listening.” Was this due to inexperience? We don’t know.
- “And the LORD said to Samuel.” The same message had already been delivered by the man of God (1 Sam 2:27-36). And it will shake anyone who hears the prophecy.
 - “See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle.”
 - Why? The sons of Eli were misbehaving themselves badly and were sinning against the LORD. The Israelites might have the impression that their behaviour would go unpunished. See also Psalm 73:2-12. But now every word the LORD had spoken to Eli will come true. The fate of Eli and his sons will be terrible (1 Sam 4:11-18), and the ark of the covenant will be captured by the Philistines (1 Sam 4:11).
 - “Therefore, I swore to the house of Eli, ‘The guilt of Eli’s house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.’”
 - “I swore.” It will surely happen.
 - Because the sin of the young men (the sons of Eli) was very great in the LORD’s sight, for they were treating the LORD’s offering with contempt” (2 Sam 2:17).
 - Eli was well aware of this behaviour of his sons: "So he said to them, 'Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?' His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to

death" (2 Sam 2:23-25). He rebuked them but at the same time: "Why do you scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? **Why do you honor your sons more than me** by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?" (2 Sam 2:29).

Verse 15-20 (scene 2)

- ❖ **"Samuel lay down until morning... He was afraid to tell Eli the vision."** The reader was informed about the contents. It also reflects the good relationship between Samuel and Eli, being in a sense his spiritual father. He called Samuel: **"Samuel, my son."**
- ❖ The structure of the discourse is as follows. Verse 17 has a chiasmic structure (ABCB'A') **focuses our attention on Eli's oath:**⁸

Eli:	<p>A. "What was it he said to you?"</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B. "Do not hide it from me.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">C. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">B'. if you hide from me</p> <p>A'. anything he told you."</p>
Samuel	<p>So Samuel told him everything,</p> <p>hiding nothing from him.</p>
Eli:	<p>"He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes."</p>

- The LORD didn't instruct Samuel to tell Eli what he has heard. Eli
- Eli swore an oath: **"May God deal with you..."** This is the central passage of his utterance.
 - **"be it ever so severely."**
This is contrasted with the words spoken by the LORD to Samuel:
"See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears of it tingle."
 - Samuel didn't hide anything! It must have been a shock to Eli. Eli now realized once more that his day as a priest had been counted. Samuel will be his successor, according to the word of the LORD:
"I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house, and he will minister before my anointed one always" (2 Sam 2:35).

⁸ Youngblood, R. F. (2009, p. 68).

- ❖ **“He is the LORD; let him do what is good in his eyes.”** Eli knows that God's judgment is inevitable. See also 1 Samuel 2:25: “His sons, however, did not listen to their father’s rebuke, **for it was the LORD’s will to put them to death.”**

Verse 21-23 (Samuel as a prophet attested)

- ❖ These verses are a so-called palindrome:
 - A “The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, B and he let none of his words fall to the ground. C And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. A’ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, B’ and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.”
 - A and A’ are parallels. The narrator continues the theme of chapter 2
B and B’ are parallels and form a contrasted with verse 1: “the word of God was rare”.
C is at the centre: the recognition by all Israel.
- ❖ **“none of his words fall to the ground.”** All his words were effective, nothing remained unfulfilled. This seems to be a reference to Deuteronomy 18:21, 22 (the false prophet):
 - “You may say to yourselves, ‘How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?’ If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him.”
- ❖ **“from Dan to Beersheba.”** From the north (Dan) to the south (Beersheba).
- ❖ The end of this narrative is of theological importance. “The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there **he revealed himself** to Samuel through his **word.**” This will not be discussed in this outline.

Application

Remark

- ❖ Tell the story (1 Samuel 3) vividly. The necessary background of chapter 2 can be given in a summary.
 - And take the following words of Mary Evans at heart: “read this story, get inside it, interact with it in the light of what you already know about God and his purposes.’ The challenge is twofold: on the one hand, to work out what was in the writer's mind as he recounts the story, and on the other hand, to interpret the accounts personally and to ask 'What relevance does this story have for me and for those I am teaching?’ There is also a third element to take into account when reading historical books, one that is particularly important for the teacher and the preacher, and

that is making sure that there is a relationship between the first and second elements, that the point is genuinely drawn out of the story and not just read into it!"⁹

- "It is exciting because the story itself is exciting and we are called to enter into it, to wrestle with it, to get into the minds and hearts of both the characters and the narrators, to see and feel God at work in the accounts. It is also exciting because the story-telling is masterful."¹⁰
- "The readers are being told (by the narrator), in effect, 'You've read the law, you've heard the prophets, you know who God is and what it means to relate to him, so what do you make of this? **Don't just read this story, get inside it, interact with it in the light of what you already know about God and his purposes.**' The challenge is twofold: on the one hand, to work out what was in the writer's mind as he recounts the story, and on the other hand, to interpret the accounts personally and to ask 'What relevance does this story have for me and for those I am teaching?'"¹¹

Praise

- ❖ Although the word of the LORD is rare and there are not many visions, the LORD is faithful to his covenant. This was true in those days, as it is today.
- ❖ Praise God for his revelation through his word, and with the New Testament in view, the WORD became flesh, Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1-5; see also Jn 17:20; 20:30, 31).

The Word of God

- ❖ "In those days the word of the LORD was rare." God spoke directly to man by his prophets.
 - Nowadays people can read the Bible, do Bible-studies together, listen to sermons, read devotional and theological books. Still, the word of the LORD can be rare, even in our lives, because we are too busy, or for other reasons.
 - Identify the state of the presence of the word in your own life, the life of the church-goers, the church in general.
 - "We each need to examine the state of the light in our own church. Do people receive illumination each time they come to services? Is the lamp of God, which is the word of God (Ps 119:105), still burning brightly? Is it carefully trimmed with prayer so that it can burn more brightly in the hearts of those who hear it? Is there oil to keep the lamp

⁹ Evans, M. J. (2004, p. 16).

¹⁰ Evans, M. J. (2004, p. 17).

¹¹ Evans, M. J. (2004, p. 16).

glowing? Or is the oil of the Spirit dried up, so that it is the wick that burns as people hear only the letter of the word and have their eyes blinded by smoke?”¹²

- Stress the fact that God reveals himself by the word in those days, as it is in our days.
 - **“He did not yet know the LORD.”** This explained in the following sentence: **“The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.”** This is theologically speaking an important statement.:
 - When the word of the LORD will be revealed to us – by the Holy Spirit – we start and grow in the knowledge of the LORD.

The Prophet and Preacher

❖ Calling:

- Pay attention to the call of God, his gentle approach of Samuel, calling him at the right moment. This call must be attested and recognized by the people. (1 Sam 3:4-9; 19-21).

❖ Listening:

- The preacher (prophet) listens to the word of God (1 Sam 3:9).

❖ Speaking:

- The preacher who deviates from the word of God, or the preacher who is promoting his insights of even his interests, resembles more to Eli. He didn't meet up to the standards of the word of God.
 - “Most of the time, prophets are sent to confirm something rather than to inform us of something. Modern prophets do not take the place of the Holy Spirit within a believer. They only speak to confirm what the Lord has said to someone either by the Spirit within or through the Scriptures.”¹³
- The preacher must be prepared to warn people, even when the message is hard to bear. The first message that Samuel received was a word of judgment!
- The preacher is called to make the LORD known.

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