

Do You Know the Lord?

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his 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. Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (NRSV translation)

The Context:

- The time: The end of the days of the Judges:
- "Everyone doing what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25).
- God had a work to do and needed someone to do it.
- But Eli was getting old and couldn't do it.
- Eli's sons (heirs to Eli's role) were evil ("scoundrels").

The Personal Story:

- In that time, Elkanah, a priest, took his two wives and family to Shiloh.
- Peninah, had children and gloated over it.
- Hannah wanted a child & sought the Lord.
- God blessed her with a son & she gave him to the Lord.

Samuel and the Call of God:

- Born to a godly family
- Dedicated under Nazarite vow
- Raised in the house of the Lord
- Godly Mom cared for him
- Sat at the feet of Israel's godly leader all his life
- He grew in favor with God and the people.
- Ministered unto the Lord (3 times mentioned!)

The Problem: But...!

- God called him to do a work, but he could not perceive the call of God!
- The narratives of Samuel's life (3:7)
- If that was true of Samuel, what does that mean for us?
- What do we mean, Samuel did not yet know the Lord?

3 Meanings of Hebrew word "Know": *Yadah*

- A knowing of the mind
- Knowing from an intimate relationship
- Knowing with the heart
- New Testament: Matthew 7:21-23; Philippians 3:8-14

The Big Questions:

- If God had a work to do in this area, Could we hear his call?
- Can we distinguish the call of God from other voices?
- How can we distinguish the Call of God?
- Good News: Vs. 10, "Speak Lord for your Servant Hears."