

# The Making of a Great Prophet

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, have a Bible with you?

How long has it been since we've been in 1 Samuel?! We're going to be looking at chapter 3 tonight. So chapter 3 of 1 Samuel, in fact, we're going to take the entire chapter. I want to go ahead, even though I'm going to be reading most, if not all, of it again as we kind of walk through this chapter, but I want to read the whole thing to begin with.

It is perhaps one of, not the only one, of course, but one of the familiar stories in 1 Samuel. And when we get to that part of it in this chapter, you're going to remember, oh, yeah, yeah, little Samuel, you know, God's speaking to him.

He thinks it's Eli. You know the story. All right. Now 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.

And 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, that the Lord called Samuel and he answered, Here I am.

[ 1 : 31 ] So he ran to Eli, and he said, Here I am, for you called me. And he said, I did not call you. Lie down again. And he went and lay down.

Then the Lord called yet again Samuel. So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, Here I am, for you called me. He answered, I did not call my son.

Lie down again. Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli and said, Here I am, for you did call me.

And Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, Go, lie down, and it shall be, if he calls you, that you must say, Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.

So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the Lord came and stood and called, as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. And Samuel answered, Speak, for your servant hears.

[ 2 : 40 ] Then the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I will do something in Israel, at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 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. So Samuel lay down until morning and opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision.

Then Eli called Samuel and said, Samuel, my son. He answered, Here I am. And he said, What is the word that the Lord spoke 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 he said to you. And Samuel told him everything. He hid nothing from him, and he said, It is the Lord.

[ 3 : 51 ] Let him do what seems good to him. So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.

Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. All right, so there it is. I have entitled this message tonight, though I'm kind of just teaching through the book of Samuel, so this is more in the, you know, less in the sermonic mode as it is in the teaching mode, and yet I do have a title for the sermon tonight.

And so I've entitled it, The Making of a Great Prophet, because that's what this chapter is all about. The Making of a Great Prophet. And it's interesting when you notice this, and perhaps you did when I read through the chapter a moment ago, that in this chapter, Samuel goes from a young boy, a young boy to what?

A great prophet. All in one chapter. All in one chapter. And so I want you to see this, and this is just by way of introduction, but explains my title, and really explains what we need to get primarily from this chapter.

God's calling of a prophet, making of a prophet. And so in verse one, you have then the boy, Samuel, you see that? The boy. Some versions may have young boy.

[ 5 : 27 ] And it is the Hebrew word, Na'ar. Na'ar. Is, and I don't think that's a pirate word, but that is how it's pronounced.

Na'ar. Na'ar in the Hebrew. And it means boy. Or it could be young boy, as it's translated some versions. Or we could even translate it a youth.

A youth. All right. So Samuel's very young here. Perhaps he's a teenager. When he came into the temple, when Hannah, his mother, brought him, she had dedicated him to the Lord, remember? Samuel is brought to Eli in the temple, and he was probably three or four years old then. You know, every year, Hannah would come and bring him a new little ephod, little garment, because he was growing.

So he needs a new one every year. You know how kids grow. And so he's very young when he came into the temple and lived with Eli and was basically raised by Eli.

[ 6 : 29 ] And it's thought that perhaps at this point he could be a young teenager. All right. But he's very young. And so now look at the end of the chapter, verse 20.

That's not the end, but near the end. Verse 20, where the Bible says, and all Israel from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.

A prophet. And so he is obviously still a young boy. So don't get the idea that suddenly he's a man now and some time has elapsed, because it hasn't.

All this is happening, really in one night. And so now he's a great prophet and everybody has heard about him. All right. So he's still a young lad, again, perhaps a teen, and the emphasis now is not on his youthfulness, but on him as a prophet.

He's a prophet of the Lord. And it is the Hebrew word Nabi. Nabi. Nabi is the word for prophet, and it means a spokesman, a voice, a speaker.

[ 7 : 36 ] And the technical use of the word, and it's being used in the technical sense here, a prophet of the Lord. All right. So Samuel has gone from first a little boy, young boy, to now a prophet.

And really, we could say that Samuel is really the first officially called, as it's described in Scripture, and named prophet in Israel.

Very first one. Now, in one sense of the word, Abraham is called a prophet prophet in Scripture, as is Moses and Aaron.

We have others mentioned, some unnamed people. In fact, in the very last chapter, in chapter 2, of 1 Samuel, we have this man of God coming to Eli, remember, and saying, thus says the Lord.

That's how a prophet would introduce what he has to say. Thus says the Lord. So we do have an unnamed prophet, though he's not called a prophet. He's called a man of God. But clearly, he's a prophet.

[ 8 : 40 ] He spoke for God, and that's what a prophet does, and that is what we're going to observe about Samuel. And he becomes the mouthpiece for God. The mouthpiece for God, and someone, that is someone who speaks on behalf of the living God.

So from a boy to a prophet, the making of a prophet. Now, Samuel did not choose this ministry, did he? In fact, he didn't really choose to go into the house of Eli, leave his mother, father, and leave home, move into the temple, and live there with this old, aging, blind priest.

He didn't choose any of that. His mother did, in a sense, but in the larger picture, God chose that for him. And Samuel did not go looking for this ministry, to be called as a prophet.

He didn't do that. This was chosen for him. And that's the way it is for all true prophets of the Lord.

And by the way, we still have prophets today, don't we?

You're looking at one. I'm not saying that to puff myself up. I'm not a prophet in the same exact sense in which Samuel was a prophet.

[ 9 : 58 ] I'm not sitting at home or in my bed at night and God gives me visions and then I come and preach them and declare them. I'm not that kind of prophet, obviously. There aren't any more prophets like that.

But I am a prophet nonetheless. And basically, a prophet is one who receives God's word, passes it on to God's people and passes it on just exactly the way God spoke it.

The way God said it. The only difference between Samuel and me is that I have all of what God has said written in His word. It's all written down in the Bible. It's God's holy word. And so I receive the word through study and prayer and preparation and then I pass it on to God's people and, if you're the right kind of preacher, you pass it on exactly the way God said it.

That is my commitment. And that's the heart and soul of expository preaching, by the way. Now, we can truly say that Samuel was an overnight success.

We can really say that. Not success from a worldly perspective. But he was an overnight success. He really was. Samuel became a prophet, a great prophet, in one night.

[ 11 : 18 ] In one night. And let's just see how that happened. So I want to begin tonight with, first, the cause for Samuel's ministry.

That's number one. The divine cause for Samuel's ministry. His, first, his prophetic ministry. And we need to understand that God caused Hannah to be barren.

If we just kind of go back and see, see how this has been unfolding in the story of Samuel. God caused Hannah to be barren. I don't know if you have a problem with that, but God caused that. And God caused Hannah then to cry out to God in prayer for mercy and for a son. And God caused Hannah to have a son. Right?

God's in charge here. He caused Hannah to have a son. He also caused Hannah to dedicate her firstborn to the Lord. as a Nazarite unto the Lord.

[ 12 : 17 ] God caused all of that. And God caused Samuel then to come into the temple and be basically raised and mentored by Eli the priest.

God caused all of that. And all of this because God is the divine cause here. God caused something to happen that's even larger than these other things that God has caused.

And what would that be? Well, God had caused the famine in the last famine. He said, I don't read anything about a famine. Well, you're not looking closely. There's a word about a particular kind of famine and God caused this famine.

What is this famine that God caused in Israel? Well, it's not your ordinary run-of-the-mill kind of famine. Alright? So it's not a famine of food.

But it's another kind of famine and even more severe famine. And if you look at verse 1 you'll see that. Then the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. He was under Eli's supervision.

[ 13 : 19 ] And, now pay attention to this, and the word of the Lord was rare in those days. You have King James that says precious. And I kind of like that translation.

Precious. And it goes on to further clarify that. There was no widespread revelation. No vision. God was not speaking.

The idea is God actually rarely, I mean we could say that God rarely spoke. We know in the last chapter that God did speak. God spoke through a man to Eli. Gave him his word.

But, that was rare. And so therefore precious, precious, meaning it's scarce. I guess we could say it this way, precious few words were coming from God in this time.

God caused that. God did that. What were those days, by the way? Well, we just studied those days before we started in our study of 1 Samuel.

[ 14 : 20 ] The days of the judges. Those days. In the days of the judges, no prophets, no great preachers, no word from God, or very rarely did they hear a word from God.

And by the way, that explains why we have this kind of epitaph hanging over the book of Judges. And you know what it is, everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

That's the epitaph over Judges. That was those days. Those days. Centuries later, in fact, some of you might have been thinking about Amos. Of course, what he wrote and prophesied came centuries after that.

In Amos chapter 8 and verse 11, you know this passage, Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord God, when I will send a famine on the land. Remember that passage?

I will send a famine. Not a famine of bread, nor of thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. Famine for hearing the words of the Lord. I believe that we're experiencing that in America.

[15:22] I think very definitely a famine of hearing the words of the Lord. Now, not a famine of preachers. There are plenty of those out there. I mean, there really are.

And certainly not a famine of sermons. We don't have a famine of sermons. All you have to do is tune in to the radio. I mean, there are a couple of radio stations where you can hear sermons all day and every day.

And there are preachers right now preaching as I'm preaching in churches all around the country this morning and tonight. Not a famine of preachers, not a famine of sermons.

There are plenty of those. Now, not all of them are biblical. Perhaps we could identify some of the famine in our land by identifying some of the weak, unbiblical, shallow sermons that are being preached in many churches today.

Some right here in our own city. And so, you know, they're not all biblical and so not all of them are expository. But it's not a famine of sermons that we have in our country today.

[16:26] It's a famine of hearing. Right? Is that what Amos said in his prophecy? A famine of hearing. Not a shortage of preachers, not a shortage of sermons, but a problem with selective hearing loss.

Yes, you understand that. You know what that is, don't you? I know all you wives know about that. Selective hearing loss. Huh? What? I know you heard me.

That kind of thing, right? This is much more serious than that, okay? Hopefully your husbands are not having selective hearing loss or deafness when it comes to the word of God. But many in our country have that kind of hearing loss.

They will not hear the word of God. So there's a famine of hearing from the word of God. And that's bad, isn't it? Terrible. And yet, it was even worse than that in the time of Samuel.

In the time of the judges. I mean, any word from God was scarce in that day. It was not so much a problem with their hearing, though that was a problem.

[17:30] It was that God just wasn't speaking. He wasn't speaking. He wasn't revealing himself. And who caused that? God did. God is the one who chooses to shut his mouth and not speak and not reveal himself.

And if God refuses to speak, ain't nobody going to change that. Can do anything about that. So, God caused that. That was the cause for Samuel's ministry was that God's word was rare in that day.

No prophets, no preachers, no word from God. Now, God caused that. But also, God is about to cause the remedy for it in his calling of Samuel.

Because God is going to end his silence. Right? And how gracious that God would end his silence. They don't deserve it. But he's going to do that.

I read a story about a certain Puritan preacher. And I don't know if you've ever heard of this guy. John Rogers was his name. Rogers lived back in the days, he was a contemporary, matter of fact, of Tyndale, William Tyndale.

[18:37] and Rogers was burned at the stake like many in that day, those days. He spoke against the Roman Catholic Church and he was burned at the stake. But in one of his sermons, he did something rather creative.

Preachers today don't hold the market on creativity. I'm not the most creative guy. I'm just a straight Bible teacher. But he's pretty creative. And so this is what he did while he was preaching and reading from the Word of God.

he kind of play acted, kind of did a monologue where he played two parts in his monologue. And so very abruptly while he's reading the scriptures, he just stopped and closed the Bible suddenly.

And he played the part of God as if God were speaking. And he said, I'm angry with you, my people. Can you imagine me doing something like that?

Or any preacher doing something like that? I'm angry with you. You're not listening to my Word.

And so he closed his Bible and he's starting down away from the pulpit and going to walk out of the sanctuary.

[19:40] He's playing the part of God. That's it. You don't listen to me. I'm taking the Word of God from you. And so while he's walking out, he then slips into the role of the preacher, the pastor of the church.

And he falls on his knees and he begins to cry and begins to beg and plead with God not to take the scriptures away from the people. Then he flips back into the part of God and he says, I will give the

scriptures back to you.

I will give you another chance. I will give it back to you for a little longer. It's just kind of a creative way to do it. So that's what God is doing here in 1 Samuel. He had taken away the Word of God. It was very rare that they heard him speak or very rare that there was any revelation from God through any of his spokesmen, the prophets. Now he's going to give it back to them.

So that leads us then to the second thing and that is the divine call. The divine call of Samuel to the ministry. The divine cause was God had stopped speaking.

[ 20 : 46 ] The divine call is going to be here's your second chance and I'm going to send my prophet to you. This is part of the story that you know very well and yet I would point out, highlight a few things in the first few verses.

Verse 2 for example and 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.

Now why is that inserted? I think it's a way, a kind of cryptic reference to the spiritual condition not only of Eli but his whole family of course, his sons who were priests and therefore descriptive of Israel, blind, nearly blind, not totally blind yet but almost totally blind.

Verse 3 and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, now let's stop right there a minute. There's another little bit of information that gives you an indication of what was going on spiritually in Israel and actually there's a word of hope here.

You know, it would have been Samuel's, little Samuel or young Samuel's job to keep that lamp lit. That was just part of his job. So, you know, it could just simply be a reference to Samuel's duties.

[ 22 : 08 ] And it was a certain lamp that it was the duty of the priest to keep lit at all times. That light was to never go out. But there's I think more to that in this part of the narration more than that.

And really a couple of things that again give us an indication of what was going on spiritually in Israel and also an indication of some hope. Because it says that the lamp of God was about to go out.

Hadn't gone out yet. But I think the idea is, we'll read between the lines, kind of the implication is it was dimming and it was time to add more oil so it could continue to be lit.

But it's symbolic, this lamp of God, symbolic of God's presence in Israel. And it's about to go out. I mean, already his words are rare.

They're precious, precious few. And now they were in danger of losing God's presence altogether in Israel. But also, and this is amazing, the lamp of God had not completely gone out.

[ 23 : 17 ] That's really what I would prefer to look at. It's a symbol of hope. Hope, it hadn't completely gone out. It's an indicator of hope for Israel. God is about to do something.

He had not completely left. He may have made his words few and he was not speaking but he was still present and he's not through with them.

He's about to do something. That is, he's about to call his chosen prophet Samuel. And so look at verse 4. While Samuel was lying down, that's verse 3, that the Lord called Samuel.

He called Samuel. And he answered, Samuel answered, here I am. And you know this part of the story. And God calls Samuel actually when it's all done four times.

He calls him four times. Now the first three times, of course, Samuel thought it was Eli called. Eli is in bed in another room and yet probably close proximity and so he just thought, well, Eli had called him.

[ 24 : 19 ] And so what did he do? He goes to Eli and says, here I am, you called me. And so three times actually that happens. And after the third time, to Eli's credit, by the way, even though Eli's lights were almost out too, very dim spiritually.

We know about his two sons. And yet, to Eli's credit, on that third time, he gave Samuel some excellent advice. He recognized something in this situation.

So verse nine, therefore Eli said to Samuel, go lie down and it shall be, if he calls you, you shall say, you must say, speak for your servant here.

So Samuel went and lay down in his place. So he gave him the right advice. And so when we get to verse ten, now the Lord came and stood. That's an interesting insertion there in the story.

God come and actually stand there bodily form. Well, it's what it says. I really think, and it's no biggie, but someone disagrees, many scholars would.

[ 25 : 27 ] This is a pre-incarnate Jesus. Anytime you have God physically manifesting himself, it's the second person of the Trinity. It's Jesus.

So he came and he stood. Now that doesn't mean that Samuel saw him. Of course, he must have. Somebody told the narrator about this. But anyway, he stood and called, as at other times, Samuel, Samuel, and Samuel answered, speak for your servant hears.

That, by the way, is the only correct response when God speaks to us, calls us, isn't it? You know, we don't say, Lord, I'm speaking and here's what I say.

We say, Lord, you speak. Here I am. You speak. Your servant listens. And that's how we ought to respond. Every servant ought to respond in that way.

Now, could Samuel have refused the Lord at this point? Could he have rejected the call that he's about to get from God?

[ 26 : 36 ] Certainly. I mean, Jonah did. Remember the story of Jonah. God gave him, called him, and Jonah went the opposite direction.

But Samuel says, speak, Lord, your servant hears. It's more than just, let me just hear what you have to say and then I'll decide what I'm going to do. It's, I'm yours. What have you said?

I will not only believe it, but I will obey. And this is what he said, what all servants should say to the Lord. So the divine cause, for Samuel's ministry, the silence of God, the silence of God, the scarceness of his revelation, that was the cause that brought about Samuel's call to the ministry. And then the divine call of Samuel to the ministry, speak for your servant ears. And then third, the divine content, Samuel's ministry.

The content. content. The content is exactly what God says, what God has said. That's the content of any prophet's ministry.

[ 27 : 44 ] Today, as well as in Samuel's day, it's the word of God. It's his word. No more, no less. And preachers get in trouble by adding to and subtracting from the word of God.

The prophet has nothing else to speak but God's word. We represent him. We are his mouthpiece. And so we don't add, we don't subtract, no more, no less, and really no matter how unpopular that content might be.

And certainly what God gives Samuel to say, pretty tough stuff. Look at verse 11. Then the Lord said to Samuel, behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.

What a description. This is going to be big. A big thing. By the way, this goes way beyond just what God tells him to say to Eli.

It goes way beyond that. But this is big. And so we do have to apply this to this very first thing that God has for Samuel to speak to say for him.

[ 29 : 02 ] And it's judgment. It's judgment. This will be the content of Samuel's first word of prophecy. Judgment.

That's pretty tough for this young preacher. That's going to be his first sermon. Judgment. Fire and brimstone. In a sense. And so this is pretty grim. In verse 12, by the way, if we kind of break this down in 12, 13, 14.

First in verse 12 we have the word, the actual word of judgment that is spoken. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house from the beginning to the end.

Well, what had he spoken? All we have to do is go back to chapter 2 in verse 27 and see what the man of God, the man of God came to Eli and said, thus says the Lord.

I'm going to be any old men in your family. That's the bottom line. It ends with you and your sons.

It's over for you. And so that was the word from God and God is then giving the word of judgment to Samuel.

[ 30 : 10 ] Now Samuel has not yet passed that on to Eli but this is the word, the content of the message that God has given to Samuel to preach. It's a word of judgment. Judgment.

And then when you get to verse 13, we have the reason for the judgment. Although we already know it. But he repeats it again. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows.

He knows all about this. Because his sons made themselves vile. He did not restrain them. You know, in this entire chapter, that's the most frightening thing said in the passage.

Frightening to me. And ought to be to every parent. Sobering. Let's just use the word sober. I mean, that's a pretty strong word for all parents. You did not restrain.

Wow. And then verse 14, we have the unalterable promise of judgment. So, begins with just the plain word of judgment. I'm going to do everything I said I was going to do to you, Eli, to your family.

[ 31 : 18 ] And the reason is because your sons are vile and you didn't restrain them. And, what's more, there's no escape from this. It's unalterable.

There's no hope. It's a promise. Not a threat. Have you ever used that word before? It's not a threat, that's a promise. This is what God is saying to Samuel. It's going to be passed on to Eli.

There's no stopping this. There's no hope of getting out of this. No hope of forgiveness here.

There's no salvation from this. Eli and his sons are past saving. What God said.

Look at it. 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.

How long? Forever. Wow. Did God make that kind of judgment? Absolutely.

[ 32 : 16 ] Absolutely. that's just not fair. Well, take that up with God. This is what he said. But, you know, here's the point that I really want to make here.

How would you like to be a brand new preacher and have this as your first sermon? That's basically what has happened here.

so the divine cause for Samuel's ministry, the divine call of Samuel to the ministry, the divine content of Samuel's ministry, when you just cut through all of that, it is God's word.

That's the content of any prophet's ministry in his message is God's word. And then finally, tonight, the divine courage for Samuel's ministry.

You're going to have to have courage to do this. This is not going to be easy. Now, do you think Samuel will need courage not only to deliver this first message God has given him, but all messages that will come after?

[ 33 : 25 ] Because, you know, almost all of the messages that have come through the prophets in the Old Testament are messages of judgment, you know, and messages of repent or else. I mean, that's what a lot of preachers today are kind of shying away from.

We don't want those kind of sermons anymore. But, Samuel is going to need courage for this, and he receives it. Some very strong words of encouragement that come at the close of this chapter.

So, let's just look at it. Verse 15, So, Samuel lay down until morning, and opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision.

Well, bless his young heart. Can we be critical? can you blame him? I mean, I would be afraid too. I've been afraid a lot of times when I'm preaching through God's word and get to a part that I don't think people are going to like very much. He was afraid to tell Eli.

[ 34 : 29 ] He'd been raised by Eli. I mean, I'm sure he loved the man. since he was three or four years old, he's kind of been his daddy and has raised him, and now he has to tell him this.

In verse 16, then Eli called Samuel and said, son, said Samuel, son, my son, and he answered, here I am.

And he said, verse 17, what is the word that the Lord spoke to you? And I'm thinking, Samuel is thinking, I wish you had asked me that. I knew you were going to ask me that. All right, what was it? Please do not hide it from me. Eli's very deliberate here, isn't he? He's really thinking God working through him. But Eli wants to know. In fact, he says, God do so to you and more also if you hide anything from me of all the things that he said to you.

I mean, it's pretty strong. Verse 18, then Samuel told him everything. Every detail. He hid nothing from everything that God said. And he, and that is Eli, said, it is the Lord.

[ 35 : 46 ] Eli didn't deny it. It's the Lord. Let him do what seems to do. God gave to Samuel.

But here about the courage that God gave to Samuel. Kind of coming at the close of this chapter, kind of the conclusion of it.

There's some things, now we're moving away from narration to some things that are said about God and Samuel and Samuel's ministry that testified to the courage that God gave to Samuel.

And so, verse 19, so Samuel grew and the Lord was with him. that's the first thing. The Lord was with him.

Couldn't find a better source of courage. The Lord was with him. And really, as I kind of think of all of these things that are said, and just kind of one right after the other, I would say, may it be so for me, with me, and really for all who seek to serve God faithfully in some capacity or another.

[ 36 : 57 ] And that is, first of all, that the Lord would be with you. The Lord was with Sam. Source of encouragement. But not only that, the Lord let none of his words fall to the ground.

That's just kind of an idiom. That means all of his words were true. They didn't fall flat. They didn't fall to the ground. They were true. They were strong words of the Lord.

Boy, I could wish that God would grant that. What courage should you know that the Lord's not going to let any of my words fall to the ground. Now, of course, they're not my words. And they weren't Samuel's either. They were God's words. And so, Samuel faithfully spoke God's word. He didn't let any of them fall to the ground. And not only that, but it goes even further. And all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, that was a pretty large area, knew, they knew something. They knew that Samuel had been established to be a great prophet of the Lord.

[ 38 : 01 ] So, the word spread to the reaches of the nation of Israel. That God had established him as a prophet. Prophet of the Lord.

And not only that, there's another thing. And then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord. that's a statement of God coming back to Israel and speaking again.

I mean, what a change from the condition that is described at the opening of the church, where God's words were rare, precious, and now God has returned.

So, it's the making of a great prophet, one who's not afraid. Well, maybe I shouldn't use the word afraid, because sometimes prophets are afraid, but they still speak God's word, the whole counsel of God's word.

Someone did a little research on some church websites in America. After I read this, I thought, you know, I think I'll do my own little research about that. Might be an interesting thing. Look up church websites, see what they say, what the preachers say, what it said about the ministry of that church, and the preacher's approach to this church.

[ 39 : 21 ] And here's some examples. Church number one, there is no fire and brimstone here, just practical witty messages. What an advertisement for your church.

Here's church number two, services at, and then there's the name of the church, have an informal feeling. You won't hear people threatened with hell or referred to as sinners. sinners. The goal is to make them feel welcome, not to drive them away. Church number three, no ranting, no raving, no fire, no brimstone.

I just can't, I'm trying to imagine this in print on a church website. Our pastor doesn't even use the H word. Call it gospel light, has the same salvation as the old time religion, but with a third less guilt. Gospel light. Believe that. Church number four, the sermons are relevant, upbeat, best of all, short. [ 40 : 29 ] I hated to say that. You won't hear a lot of preaching about sin and damnation and hellfire here. Preaching here doesn't sound like preaching.

Oh, really. It's sophisticated. Urban and friendly talk. Preaching. It breaks all the stereotypes.

This is a real church website. One more, church number five. Our pastor preaches a very upbeat message. It's a salvationistic message, whatever that means.

But the idea is not being saved from the fires of hell. Rather, it's being saved from meaninglessness and aimlessness in this life. I don't know which one of those, Joel Osteen's church, but maybe one of those.

I don't know. See, how we need strong, a strong, prophetic voice in our country.

[ 41 : 32 ] Not men who stand and have their own words to say, you know, lambasting Democrats or Republicans or getting political.

I'm talking about a prophetic voice. God's word preached without apology and preached in its totality, the whole counsel of God's word.

All of it. The good news and the bad news. No, Jesus, it's all good. Thank you.