

1 Samuel 3

August 26, 2020

The story of 1 Samuel is a series of hand-offs. In this chapter we see the spiritual authority over Israel passing from Eli, the old priest, to Samuel, the young prophet. Later we will see Samuel confer a royal crown on Saul, only to later transfer it to David. God acts as He wills. “He removes kings and sets up kings” (Daniel 2:21).

We can see many other hand-offs in Scripture. Numbers 27:20 tells of Moses’ leadership devolving onto Joshua. In Daniel 5, the Lord takes away Belshazzar’s kingdom and gives it to the Medes and Persians.

The Father bestows authority on the Son. “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand” and “The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son (John 3:35, 5:22). But the Son will give back to the Father all that He has received (1 Corinthians 15:28) and they will jointly preside over eternity (Revelation 22).

So where do we fit into all this? In Matthew 16 the Lord tells Peter, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” According to Mr. MacDonald, this is the

authority given to Jesus’ disciples to admit persons into the kingdom of those profess allegiance to Christ. The Great Commission gives an idea how we do that: By discipling, baptizing, and teaching. We also one day will sit in judgment over the world (1 Corinthians 6:2).

Are we worthy to receive such keys of authority? Not through any merit of ours, but “the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men” (Daniel 4:17). And just as the Lord promised that God could transform stones into children of Abraham, he can transform us into kings and priests: “You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:5).

Notes

3:3 The temple here would be the tabernacle, and the lamp would be the golden lampstand.

3:20 “From Dan [in the north] to Beersheba [in the south]” was a common phrase to mean the whole nation of Israel.

Questions for study and discussion:

1. What does it mean that the word of the Lord was rare in the days of Eli? Why, do you think?
2. In verse 7 we read that Samuel did not know the Lord. In verse 12 of the last chapter we read that the sons of Eli did not know the Lord. Does it mean the same thing?
3. What does Samuel do in this chapter that speaks of Christ?

4. Does Eli know the Lord?

5. What lessons might the story of Eli have for older Christians?

6. How does Eli react when Samuel tells him the prophecy he has received?

7. How might we keep the Lord's words from "falling to the ground"?