

Adult BIBLE Class

For Adults Ages 26 & Up

SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2022



Union
Gospel
Press

Adult Bible Class

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Servants and Healers

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Eternal Servants

MEGAN HICKMAN

We often look at the people documented in the Scriptures as untouchable. We think they were always willing to do what God asked them to do the moment He asked them to do it. Then we look at ourselves and wonder what is wrong with us. We are stubborn, proud, struggle with self-pity, and would not consider ourselves very faithful. Though God clearly shows us that many of His followers struggled with sin in the same ways we do, He wants us to do something more than compare ourselves with these figures. He wants us to read His Word with a God-centric mindset, seeing His grace, empowerment, and faithfulness throughout His relationship with His people.

This quarter, we will look at various servants of God and how they worked, prophesied, and healed to the glory of God. We will see their challenges and doubts, but we will also see that God—despite the weaknesses of His people—gave them grace and reason to carry on His work. All these servants were able to persevere because they knew God had proved Himself to be faithful.

In our first unit, we look at various commitments to serve God. Samuel chose to serve the Lord from a very young age, resulting in a vibrant and fruitful ministry. This can be an encouragement for all of us to raise up young people in the church; their ministry has potential to grow immeasurably if they commit to God early on.

Though we look at other prophets in unit II, we cover the commission of the Prophet Isaiah in unit I, where we see the sources of his motivation for serv-

ing the Lord. Isaiah received a unique vision of God's holiness that fueled the rest of his ministry. In a similar way, when God reveals His character and worthiness to our minds and hearts, it fuels our ministries and keeps us committed to serving Him.

We then turn to a psalm of Asaph, who was a Levite worship leader in the tabernacle choir. Psalm 73 has brought much comfort to believers who are struggling with injustice in the world. Though it is generally true that life is easier if you live in righteousness (cf. Isa. 3:10; Prov. 11:10), that is not categorically guaranteed; we live in a world marred by the effects of sin. But Asaph shows us that we can still exercise trust in the Lord and His purposes by remembering His faithfulness.

To conclude unit I, we look at the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian Captivity. Though God's people faced much opposition, godly leaders were able to work together to bring the work to completion, allowing the people to worship Him rightly again.

In unit II, we look at the challenges the prophets faced when giving God's messages to His people. We take a closer look at our previous lesson by zooming in on Haggai's role of exhorting the people of the importance of God's house. Then we go back in time to before the Captivity and see the ministry of Micah, who prophesied God's message faithfully even while false prophets were prophesying against Him.

Micah had the particular difficulty of rebuking the people and calling for their repentance. The people chose to listen

to the false prophets, which resulted in their demise. There are times when God allows us to serve without seeing the results we hoped for, but we must always remember that He is sovereign and will use our faithful service for His glory in ways we are never aware of.

Habakkuk's speech in chapter 3 is an excellent example of seeing God's faithfulness even in uncertain times. The prophet sees the power of the immoral Chaldeans (Babylonians) and knows that it will mean suffering for God's people, yet He concludes that no matter what happens, he will have joy in the Lord and take refuge in Him. What a beautiful truth that we can take refuge in Christ when it seems like our world is turned upside down.

The last prophet we learn from is Ezekiel. He had the privilege of bringing hope to Israel. But that message of hope was given in a rather bizarre manner and required faith from the prophet to receive it. Many times, God requires us to take a step of faith before we can gain the full fruit of His message.

Finally, we look at healings in the New Testament and how they served the purposes of the gospel. Two of our lessons focus on healings by Christ. We see over and over again in the Gospels His great compassion for people and His indiscriminate acceptance of those who come to Him by faith.

The last three lessons show God using disciples of Jesus—Peter, Ananias, and Paul—to heal others. The healings in the New Testament had a major role in validating the gospel message. Though many of the people cared only about receiving physical comfort, for those who saw their spiritual need, these healings proved that God could do everything, including reconcile them to Himself through Jesus Christ's atonement and resurrection.

We can see from our examples this quarter that being a servant of the Lord has a lot to do with trusting in



His character, even when we face opposition. God has the power to complete His kingdom work without us, but He included us in His great plan so that we could have the opportunity to have a relationship with Him. Our work for God was planned before we were even saved (Eph. 2:10) and tailored to help us grow in our love for Christ.

Therefore, we should see our service to God as a privilege, one that will grow us and conform us into the image of Jesus and help prepare us to worship Him in heaven. Our service to God does not cease after our life on earth. At God's appointed time, we will all continue to serve Him in His perfect kingdom. And the peace and closeness with God that we experience there will be all the sweeter because of our perseverance now. Let us move forward in our service with this great hope.

Scripture Lesson Text

1 SAM. 3:1 And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

2 And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that he could not see*;

3 And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;

4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, **Here *am* I.**

5 And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

6 And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, **Here *am* I; for thou didst call me.** And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, **Here *am* I; for thou didst call me.** And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

9 Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So

Samuel went and lay down in his place.

19 And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

20 And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

7:3 And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, **If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, *then* put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the LORD, and serve him only: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.**

4 Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, **Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD.**

10 And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel: but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them; and they were smitten before Israel.

12 Then Samuel took a stone, and set *it* between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it **Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us.**

Samuel's Call and Ministry

Lesson Text: I Samuel 3:1-9, 19-20; 7:3-5, 10, 12

Related Scriptures: I Samuel 1:1-28; Judges 2:16-23

TIMES: about 1093 B.C.; 1047 B.C.

PLACES: Shiloh; Ramah; Mizpeh;
between Mizpeh and Shen

GOLDEN TEXT—"The Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth" (I Samuel 3:10).

Lesson Exposition

SAMUEL'S CALL FROM GOD—

I Sam. 3:1-9, 19-20

The circumstances of the call (I Sam. 3:1-3). Our lesson introduces Samuel as a child, carrying out duties at the tabernacle for Eli, the high priest. Although humble and inconspicuous at this point in his life, Samuel was to become a towering figure in the history of Israel. He marked the period of transition from the judges to the monarchy. He is known to us as the last judge, the first named prophet after Moses, and the anointer of kings.

Samuel was from the outset a special child, born in answer to the prayer of the childless Hannah. She vowed that a son born to her would be dedicated to the Lord and under a Nazarite vow for his entire lifetime (I Sam. 1:1-11). True to her word, Hannah took Samuel to the tabernacle at Shiloh after she had weaned him. There she presented him to Eli for service (vss. 24-28).

The days in which Samuel grew up were difficult ones. Politically, Israel was a loose confederation of tribes, sometimes warring against each other, and having no central authority to

organize them against their enemies (cf. Judg. 21:25). Under these conditions, the Philistines threatened to overwhelm them.

Israel's spiritual condition was deplorable. The aging high priest, Eli, could not control his wicked sons, who brought the priesthood into disrepute through dishonest and immoral acts (I Sam. 2:12-17, 22-25). Moreover, "the word of the Lord was precious (rare) in those days; there was no open vision" (3:1). God did occasionally send a prophetic message, as He did to Eli (2:27-36), but the nation as a whole did not receive special revelation.

These were the general circumstances in which God called Samuel. The immediate circumstances at the tabernacle are given in our text as well. The call came at night, "when Eli was laid down in his place" (I Sam. 3:2).

Samuel himself had lain down to go to sleep (I Sam. 3:3). This does not mean he slept in the tabernacle proper, but within its courtyard, where dwelling places for priests had been built. No longer a traveling tent, the tabernacle at Shiloh had taken on some aspects of permanence (see the "doors" in verse 15).