



Bible Expositor and Illuminator

SUMMER QUARTER

June, July, August 2022

Large-Print Edition



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LOOKING AHEAD

God demonstrates His power and authority in a number of ways—through His creation, through His Word, and through His people. In the Scriptures, we see a number of examples of godly men and women glorifying the Lord through steadfast ministries, prophecies on His behalf, and even miraculous healing. The God of Creation uses all these means to glorify Himself.

In unit I of our quarter, we specifically look at faithful servants. We see some big names like Samuel, who was dedicated to God’s service for his entire life, and Isaiah, a prophet whose ministry was fueled by supernatural knowledge of God’s holiness. We also learn from lesser-known servants: we observe how the Psalmist Asaph remains faithful even when he sees the wicked prosper, and we see how God used many types of godly servants to rebuild His temple and restore the worship of His people.

In unit II, we look at the ministries of the prophets. While we examine difficult messages of repentance and rebuke that Haggai and Micah were commanded to deliver to God’s people, we find messages of hope through Habakkuk and Ezekiel. Both showed God’s people that He is faithful to fulfill His promises even in the midst of suffering.

The first two lessons of our last unit, which is on healers, shows us God’s most faithful servant—His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus performed healings on earth to show the power of God’s heavenly kingdom and to give weight to the gospel message. We see that He accepted anyone who approached Him in faith.

The last three lessons of our quarter focus on the church after Christ’s ascension. God also used His followers to perform healings to bolster the gospel message, bringing a variety of believers into His family. In these three lessons, God uses His servants to restore a lame man who was rejected by society, convert a Pharisee who was persecuting the church, and reveal God’s glory to a whole tribe on Malta.

Faithful ministry, prophecy, and healing all contributed to the growth of the gospel message. Through these lessons, we can see that God can use any means, humble or dramatic, to display His glory. However, He almost always uses one particular tool—His people. Learn to serve Him faithfully today, and He will use you for His glory too.

—Megan Hickman.

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Contentment and Christian Service

MEGAN HICKMAN

It would be hard to find a greater enemy to genuine and faithful Christian service than our own envy. We usually think of envy in terms of possessions, but we tend to overlook when we envy others' spiritual gifts, ministry positions, and spiritual blessings. Sometimes we do not even realize we are envying, yet a slow discontent begins to creep into our hearts with where God has placed us in His service.

I am sure some of the godly servants we are studying this quarter felt the same way at certain points in their ministry. Sometimes we forget that the Bible is a condensed story of God's work in history. When we look at the lives of God's faithful servants, we are usually seeing the most awe-inspiring parts of their ministries. That can sometimes give us the impression that they were faithful to serve only because God continued to encourage them with miraculous signs and events.

The reality is that these people were faithful because they purposefully remembered the demonstrations of God's character in their lives and chose daily to continue their service to Him. That is our responsibility as well—to keep the glory of Christ ever before us even when much time has passed since we were granted a fresh glimpse of it.

Throughout our study of God's servants and healers this quarter, we can see the potential for discontent in every role. The prophets preached to a stubborn and unrepentant people. Even the healers, the most dramatic examples of God's servants we are

studying this quarter, had frustrations and obstacles to overcome.

So what is the secret to being content in the role that God has given us? How do we reach the level of contentment found with the Apostle Paul when he states, "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: . . . I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:12-13).

In I Corinthians 12, Paul explains that we must all recognize that all our spiritual giftings are different, but none is better than another (vss. 12-26). He begins with some underlying truths: "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (vss. 4-6). The fact that the same God works in all Christians means that they are unified in Christ in one purpose—to work together under His sovereign plan for His kingdom.

Sometimes our discontent can come from a misunderstanding of God's sovereignty, His power to accomplish His purposes, or His intimate care of us. But if we turn to the truths of Scripture, we will clearly see that God orchestrates every aspect of our lives and that nothing can stop His plans for us (Isa. 46:1-10). We will also see His goodness and faithfulness in how He provides for His people, even in times of hardship and suffering (Deut. 1:30-31). Any doubt about God's character can be corrected by a careful and

(Editorials continued on page 186)

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).

Introduction

Faithfulness is one of God's defining attributes. As believers, our hope is founded on the basis that the Lord is faithful to His promises. In response to this, we thankfully and faithfully serve Him with our lives.

This quarter, we will study some of God's faithful servants in the Scriptures. Samuel, who was very young when he was called by the Lord, sets an example for us of what it means to listen for God even in unlikely times. Though God had not spoken through His prophets for a long time, Samuel

would show Israel how one faithful servant can do great things for God.

In turn, each of us as believers should be inspired by the story of Samuel to listen to the Lord's direction, which He provides through His holy Word. Treasuring God's Word is essential to a godly life.

LESSON OUTLINE

- I. SAMUEL'S CALL FROM GOD—
I Sam. 3:1-9, 19-20
- II. SAMUEL'S MINISTRY TO
ISRAEL—I Sam. 7:3-5, 10, 12

Exposition: Verse by Verse

SAMUEL'S CALL FROM GOD

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.

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