

Samuel, Samuel

“And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for Thy servant heareth” (1 Samuel 3:10).

A pastor-friend of mine recently told me a story about one of his relatives who has been in prison for over thirty years. Along with his father, who died in prison, he was involved in a dope deal that went bad and was accused of killing three young men. Although he was a hard-hearted unbeliever and a professed atheist for his first twenty-five years behind bars, the last few years have been different because he was saved and has lived as a believer.

In God’s providence, he was moved to a prison closer to his old hometown. In due season, he was given a pass to attend a Methodist center started in the memory of one of the young men he killed. He went because they provided a weekend of meals and other enjoyments for prisoners. While there, he was awakened at night and sensed a strange presence in his room. Later, after a similar experience in his cell, he bowed and gave his life to the Lord.

Although Samuel was a child, not a grown man; a little boy at the tabernacle, not in a prison; a son who had done very little wrong, not a murderer; the Lord also made His presence known to him in the night. He called unto him, saying, “Samuel, Samuel.” In this fourth double-call found in the Scriptures, we are confronted with the overwhelming greatness of God’s voice. Notice some of the spiritual principles set forth in this wonderful encounter.

The double-call to Samuel reminds us that God’s voice is greater than our age! What an encouragement this account is to parents and grandparents. The truth is that if God spoke to little Samuel, He is well able to speak to our children and grandchildren. Away with the idea that our children have to be a certain age to be aroused toward God. Our God is greater than age, greater than time, greater than all.

The double-call to Samuel reminds us that God’s voice is greater than our awareness! Little Samuel did not have to learn certain principles to hear God’s voice. There were no steps or processes that he had to understand. It is true that at first he mistakenly thought that Eli had called him (see 3:4-9). But in spite of his lack of comprehension, God continued to speak. The Lord carries out His purpose with people on all levels of life.

The double-call to Samuel reminds us that God’s voice is greater than our atmosphere! Hannah did not leave her son in the best of environments. The priest at Shiloh, Eli, was not very sensitive to spiritual realities. Remember when Hannah had first prayed, he thought she was drunken (see 1:13-14). Too, his sons “knew not the Lord” (2:12) and lived wickedly. Yet God pierced through the darkness and called to Samuel. Oh, may our hearts benefit from these truths.