



## Lesson 59

### SAMUEL'S DIVINE CALLING

#### Story Elements

- **Text:** 1 Samuel 3:1-21
- **Setting:** approx. 1105 B.C.
- **Main Characters:** God, Samuel, and Eli
- **Plot:** In a time when divine revelation was rare, God chose to speak to a boy.
- **Key word(s):** “\_\_\_\_\_”
- **Climax:** “...God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.” (v 17)

### Background

1. As promised(1:11), Samuel was given to Eli to serve in the Tabernacle. Every year, Hannah would make her son a new “little coat” which was a knee-length robe worn under the priest's ephod. (Ex. 28:31) Eli blessed Elkanah and Hannah, and God gave Hannah \_\_\_\_\_ more sons and two daughters.
2. Even at a young age, Samuel “ministered before the LORD” (2:18; 3:1) and “grew before the LORD” and in favor with his fellow Hebrews (2:21, 26). The contrast between the young Samuel and the adult sons of Eli puts the wickedness of Hophni and Phineas into perspective – unlike Samuel, they were rejected by God and \_\_\_\_\_ by men.

### Samuel Serves

3. (v 1) The time of the Judges was characterized by spiritual poverty. The Bible says that “*the word of the Lord was precious in those days;*” (3:1) The word “precious” does not mean that people treasured it, but that the LORD \_\_\_\_\_ gave direct revelation in those days. Though prophecies came from time to time, there was no full-time prophet to whom the nation could look for divine guidance (“there was no open vision”).
4. (v 2) One night, while Eli and Samuel slept, the LORD called out to Samuel. Scripture records that this happened “ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord” which would've been near morning twilight when the lamps were extinguished. The golden lamp stand burned from \_\_\_\_\_ until \_\_\_\_\_. (cf. Ex. 30:8; 27:20-21)
5. (vv 3-8) Three times the LORD called out to Samuel, who mistook the voice to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. (v 7) Samuel did not “know the LORD” – he knew of God, read of him, and served in the sanctuary, but he had not come to know God \_\_\_\_\_ and experientially.
  - b. (v 9) On the third time that God called to Samuel, Eli perceived that the LORD was speaking, and he gave Samuel instructions on properly responding to God.

### God Speaks

6. (v 10) At the fourth call, “the LORD came and \_\_\_\_\_” – this intimates that God appeared to Samuel in some fashion, perhaps with his divine glory. (cf. Job 4:16)
7. (vv 11-14) The word God gave Samuel was similar to the message the unnamed prophet told Eli in the previous chapter. It was a message of looming \_\_\_\_\_.

8. God’s message to Samuel emphasized several matters in Eli’s heart:
- That God would choose to speak to a child was instead of the high priest “would humble him the more when afterwards he found it was a message to himself, and yet sent to him by a child. He had reason to look upon this as a further token of God’s \_\_\_\_\_.”<sup>i</sup>
  - Samuel would become the spiritual leader \_\_\_\_\_ needed. (3:19-21)

## Eli Submits

9. (v 17) Eli’s words in verse 17 may sound threatening to us, but he was emphasizing to Samuel how important it is to declare all the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Any man who speaks for God, and does not speak all of God’s word, jeopardizes the spiritual welfare of himself and his hearers. (cf. Ezek. 3:10; Acts 20:27)
10. (v 18) To Eli's credit, he showed he was \_\_\_\_\_ to God's will in this matter and said, “It is from the LORD: let him doeth what seemeth good.”

## Application

11. Samuel’s faithfulness in his duties as a young boy serving in the sanctuary was preparative for the enormous responsibilities he would carry one day as Israel’s spiritual leader.
- He responded to the voice calling to him in the night. How many in the same position would’ve grumbled about being mustered out of bed? Yet Samuel went to Eli’s bedside \_\_\_\_\_.
  - His example reminds us of Luke 16:10: *“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in \_\_\_\_\_: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”*
12. Samuel was a picture of the \_\_\_\_\_ who also grew in wisdom and favor with God and man (Lu. 2:40, 52). We should never underestimate how God can work in the hearts of young people. (3:7)

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## Answer Key

1. three | 2. despised | 3. rarely | 4. dusk; dawn | 5. Eli’s; a) personally | 6. stood | 7. judgment | 8. a) displeasure; b) Israel | 9. counsel | 10. submissive | 11. a) willingly; b) much | 12. Savior

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<sup>i</sup> Henry, Matthew. *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994. Print.