

I Samuel 3 Handout

Last week we saw Hannah's faith and trust in God. We also learned about Eli, the high priest and his sons. Towards the end of the chapter a prophet came to Eli telling him what was to become of his family.

In this chapter, we are going to see Samuel's first encounter with God. We are also going to see how God's blessing of and through Samuel continues and grows as a result of his faithful commitment to God.

Verse 1

What is Samuel doing? _____

The Hebrew word used to describe Samuel in this verse (naar) in other places refers to a young teenager. It is thought that Samuel was most likely in his early teens here.

What are we told about the word of the Lord in those days? _____

What about visions? _____

At this time in history, special revelations from God were rare. They normally came to prophets in visions or dreams.

Why wasn't God speaking directly to them like he had been doing with Moses and Joshua?

Because of the hardness of heart among the people of Israel, and the corruption of the priesthood, the word of the Lord was rarely seen.

Under the leadership of Moses and Joshua, God had spoken, and His word had led the nation, through both victories and failures. However, during the time of the judges, "all the people did what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 17:6, 21:25). Now under the priesthood of Eli, the nation is languishing without a proper prophetic ministry. Without direction from God, the nation will wander aimlessly and eventually fall into self destructive behavior. The word of the Lord is necessary if Israel is to survive this difficult time.

God will speak and guide when His people seek Him.

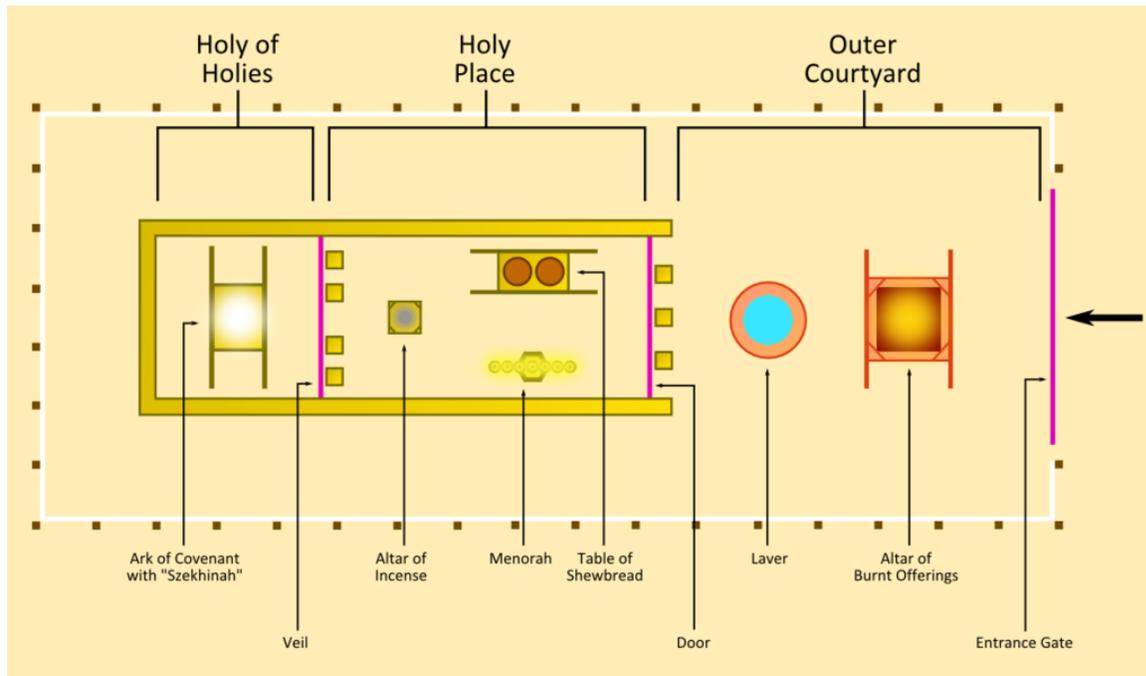
Verses 2-4

What do we learn about Eli's condition in verse 2? _____

The lamp of God refers to the lamps on the sanctuary lampstand that continued to give light through the night. That it had not gone out yet indicates that God had called Samuel in the early morning hours.

We are told that Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was.

The ark of God was kept in the Most Holy Place which was the innermost room of the tabernacle. Only the high priest could enter this area, and only one time a year. In front of the Most Holy Place was the Holy Place. This was a small room where the other sacred furniture was kept including the altar of incense, the table for the special bread, and the lampstand). Just outside the Holy Place was the courtyard that had small rooms where the priests would stay. This is most likely where Samuel was sleeping so he could be of help to Eli whose health seemed to be declining.



We are told the Lord called Samuel. What is Samuel's response? _____

This expression of one who volunteers themselves for service. He is placing himself at the disposal, at the beck and call of his master. Samuel is willing to serve, but he is confused as to the identity of the one calling him.

Verses 5-6

What does Samuel do? _____

What does Eli tell him? _____

We are told the Lord again calls Samuel and again he runs to Eli with Eli giving the same response.

Verses 7-8 READ

What two things are we told in this verse?

This doesn't mean that Samuel doesn't know the Lord, but rather that he doesn't know Him as he was about to know Him (hearing the Lord's voice speaking directly to him). Samuel's willingness to serve, together with his holy parentage and his acceptance of religious instruction has prepared him to experience the Lord in a new way.

Verses 8-9

We are told the Lord calls Samuel a third time, and again he goes to Eli.

What does Eli finally realize? _____

What does Eli instruct Samuel to do? _____

What is he to do if the Lord calls again? _____

Samuel does as he is instructed.

It's interesting that an audible message from God would be given to a child rather than the high priest. We see here though that God's chain of command is not based on age or position. Rather it is based on our faith and openness to listen.

Verses 10-14

What are we told the Lord did? _____

Apparently Samuel is now receiving not only a word, but also a vision. This would be quite significant as we were just told that this was rare in those days. This seems to have been I am going to do a thing in Israel.

What does the Lord say about the ears of everyone who hears what He says?

In the Old Testament, ears "tingle" when people receive news of approaching punishment (II Kings 21:12; Jeremiah 19:3)audible and a unique appearing of the Lord. Samuel responds just how Eli instructed him.

The Lord proceeds to give a message to Samuel.

How does the Lord begin His message to Samuel? _____

What message does he give to Samuel? _____

From _____ **to** _____.

Verse 13 starts with "For I have told him", him being Eli. We read last week how a man of God came to Eli and told him what the Lord said about the judgment coming on his house.

Eli did say something to his sons back in chapter 2:23-25, but it was weak. He didn't follow through with what needed to be done.

The Lord says He is going to judge Eli's house forever. Why?

Other translations say he didn't 'restrain' them. Eli's responsibility was not just that of a father, but as the high priest with his sons as priests under his supervision. Eli seemed to have failed in both positions.

There is a clear contrast between God's dealing with Eli and Eli's dealing with his sons. God gave a warning, spelled out the consequences of disobedience, and then acted decisively. Eli only gave a warning. He should have followed that warning with decisive action when they didn't heed him.

What does the Lord say as far as the wrongdoing of Eli's house?

"Atoned for" - means forgiven. God was saying that the sin of Eli's sons could not be covered by sacrifice and that their punishment was certain. There is no remedy for the wicked ways of his sons.

What a horrible judgment being declared on this family. The opportunity for repentance has passed and the judgment is sealed.

Under the Mosaic Law, the penalty for showing contempt for the priesthood, for disobeying parents, and for blasphemy, was death (Deut. 17:12; 21:18- 21; Lev. 24:11-16, 23). This is what Eli's sons would experience. The cutting off of Eli's line happened about 130 years later (cf. 1 Kings 2:27, 35).

Some see the judgment that the man of God gave to Eli in chapter two as a warning that was calling for repentance. Since repentance wasn't forthcoming, God confirmed the word of judgment through Samuel.

This judgment applies to us as well. Hebrews 10:26 says, *if we reject the work of Jesus for us, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.*

Verses 15-

Samuel goes back to bed. How does he feel about sharing what the Lord told him with Eli the next morning?

What a difficult position to be in. Samuel's first message as a prophet was an announcement of doom to his mentor.

Verses 16-18 Notice how Samuel responds every time he is called. What does he say when Eli calls him? _____

He doesn't stay where he is and say what? He comes to him and says "Here I am." I don't know about you, but I would have loved for my kids to have done this!

What does Eli want to know? _____

What does Eli not want Samuel to do? _____.

He goes on to say, "May God do the same to you, and more so, if you hide a single word from me of all the words that He spoke to you!"

You kind of have to wonder if Eli already knew what the Lord's message was all about.

Samuel tells Eli everything God had told him. **What is Eli's response to what Samuel tells him?**

Verses 19-21

In these last three verses we see the validity of Samuel's prophetic ministry.

What two things are we told about Samuel?

The Lord continues to grant His supernatural presence to Samuel as he matures.

What else are we told? _____

In other translations it says "let none of His words fall to the ground". This phrase shows us the success of Samuel's words. All of his prophecies came to pass and were known to be true words from God.

What did all Israel know about Samuel? _____

The validity of Samuel's ministry is shown in his public acclaim.

From Dan to Beersheba was a phrase often used to describe the boundaries of the Promised Land. Dan was one of the northernmost cities in the land, and Beersheba was one of the cities farthest south. It would be like saying from New York to California. By saying this, God was saying that everyone in Israel would know that Samuel was called to be a prophet.

Where are we told the Lord appeared again? _____

Why? _____

In this chapter we see three truths for us to think about:

1. God's word is true and certain. It presents undeniable parameters in which life must be lived and enjoyed.
2. God's word represents a claim on individual lives, calling us to service and submission.
3. God's word has a renewing and transforming force for all who respond to His call.

What can we learn from Samuel's attitude towards God's message and his response to it?