**Research on: God calling Samuel three times**

I Sam. 3:1, 2-6, 8-10, 19

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.

The name **Eli** in Hebrew is *Eliy* which means “ascension; it can mean going up, perhaps height, a high priest; the predecessor of Samuel one of the judges in Israel” ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) - Strong’s 5941).

**Precious** in Hebrew is *yaqar* which means “valuable, prized, weighty, rare, costly, highly valued, precious like jewels, glorious, splendid” ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), Strong’s 3368).

“The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli—His ministry consisted, of course, of such duties in or about the sanctuary as were suited to his age, which is supposed now to have been about twelve years. Whether the office had been specially assigned him, or it arose from the interest inspired by the story of his birth, Eli kept him as his immediate attendant; and he resided not in the sanctuary, but in one of the tents or apartments around it, assigned for the accommodation of the priests and Levites, his being near to that of the high priest” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“The opening words of this passage are substantially repeated from [1 Samuel 2:11](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/2-11.htm),[1 Samuel 2:18](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/2-18.htm). They come as a kind of refrain, contrasting the quiet, continuous growth and holy service of the child Samuel with the black narrative of Eli’s riotous sons. While the hereditary priests were plunging into debauchery, and making men turn away from the Tabernacle services, Hannah’s son was ministering unto the Lord, and, though no priest, was ‘girt with an ephod.’ This white flower blossomed on a dunghill. The continuous growth of a character, from a child serving God, and to old age walking in the same path, is the great lesson which the story of Samuel teaches us. ‘The child is father of the man,’ and all his long days are ‘bound each to each’ by true religion” (MacLaren’s Expositions, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“**Was precious in those days**.—Precious, that is, *rare.*“The word of the Lord” is the will of the Lord announced by a prophet, seer, or man of God. Between the days of Deborah and the nameless man of God who came with the awful message to Eli, no inspired voice seems to have spoken to the chosen people.

The “open vision*”*refers to such manifestations of the Divinity as were vouchsafed to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and Manoah, and in this chapter to Samuel” (Ellicott’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“*The child Samuel ministered before Eli*— That is, under his inspection and direction. *The word of the Lord was precious —*That is, the word of prophecy, or the revelation of God’s will to and by the prophets, was rare or scarce, such things being most precious in men’s esteem, whereas common things are generally despised. In other words, God did very rarely in those days reveal his mind to any person. *There was no open vision —*Here vision includes all the ways whereby God revealed himself to men. And the declaration implies that though God might privately reveal himself and his will, to some pious persons for their particular direction, he did not impart his mind by way of revelation openly, or to any public person, to whom others might resort for satisfaction. In the whole book of Judges, we find only two prophets mentioned” (Benson Commentary, wwwbiblehub.com).

**Vision** in Hebrew is *chazown* which means “vision, oracle, prophecy, divine communication, as the title of a book of prophecy, a divine vision, revelation” ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) - Strong’s 2377).

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;

“The passage should be rendered thus: "And it came to pass at that time that Eli was sleeping in his place; and his eyes had begun to grow dim; he could not see. And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was; and the Lord called Samuel, etc." Eli's old age and dimness of sight is probably mentioned as the reason why Samuel thought Eli had called him. Being a blind and feeble old man, he was likely to do so if he wanted anything, either for himself, or for the service of the temple” (Barnes’ Notes, www.biblehub.com).

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;*

“And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord, . . .The tabernacle so called; the lamp is put for the lamps in the candlestick in the tabernacle, which were lighted every evening, and burnt till morning;

“. . . where the ark of God was; that is, in the temple or tabernacle; not in that part of it where the lamps were burning in the candlestick, that was in the holy place; but the ark was in the holy of holies, where the Lord dwelt, and was the symbol of his presence; and which is observed to point out the place from whence the voice came, after mentioned; and which the Targum expresses here, "and a voice was heard out of the temple of the Lord, where the ark of the Lord was: ''and Samuel was laid down to sleep; after Eli was in bed, and Samuel had done all his business, he laid himself down to sleep in his place; in the court of the Levites, as the Targum, with which the Jewish commentators in general agree: it must be somewhere near to Eli, so that he could quickly come at him, when he needed his assistance” (Gill’s Exposition of the Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

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

“That the Lord called Samuel, . . . By a voice which came forth from the most holy place, from between the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty:

and he answered, here am I; which was not intended to declare the place where he was, but to express his readiness and cheerfulness to do anything that was required of him” (Gill’s Exposition of the Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

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.

“He ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me—It is evident that his sleeping chamber was close to that of the aged high priest and that he was accustomed to be called during the night. The three successive calls addressed to the boy convinced Eli of the divine character of the speaker, and he therefore exhorted the child to give a reverential attention to the message. The burden of [the Lord's message] was an extraordinary premonition of the judgments that impended over Eli's house; and the aged priest, having drawn the painful secret from the child, exclaimed, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." Such is the spirit of meek and unmurmuring submission in which we ought to receive the dispensations of God, however severe and afflictive. But, in order to form a right estimate of Eli's language and conduct on this occasion, we must consider the overwhelming accumulation of judgments denounced against his person, his sons, his descendants—his altar, and nation. With such a threatening prospect before him, his piety and meekness were wonderful” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

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.

“And he ran unto Eli, and said here am I, . . . He got out of his bed as fast as he could, and put on his clothes, and ran with all haste to the apartment where Eli lay, supposing he wanted some immediate assistance, which he was there ready to give him to the utmost of his ability; and he made the more haste, as knowing his age and infirmities, and being desirous, out of affection to him, to help him as soon as possible:

“for thou calledst me; he took it to be the voice of Eli, partly because there was no other man in the tabernacle, it being in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, before the doors were opened, or any of the priests were come in to minister, and partly because the voice might be very much like Eli's, and which was done to direct him to him:

“and he said, I called not, lie down again; he signified he wanted nothing, and so had no occasion to call him, nor had he, but bid him go to bed again, and sleep quietly:

“and he went and lay down; and very probably fell asleep again” (Gill’s Exposition of the Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

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.

“And the Lord called Samuel again the third time, . . . In the same manner he had done before, expressing his name no doubt:

“and he arose and went to Eli, and said, here am I, for thou didst call me; as if he should say, it must certainly be so, I cannot be mistaken a third time:

“and Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child; he was satisfied now that Samuel must have heard a voice, and he knew there was no man in the tabernacle but himself, and therefore it must be the voice of the Lord out of the most holy place; and he had formerly been acquainted with such voices, and used to them, and now called them to mind; and besides, as Aben Ezra observes, he was the rather confirmed in this, that the Lord called Samuel, because Samuel heard the voice, and not Eli, though Eli lay nearer the most holy place than Samuel did; which showed that this must be the voice of prophecy the Lord makes whom he pleases to hear; and that Eli might be fully persuaded of this, before the matter of the prophecy was delivered to him, Samuel was so often directed to him” (Gill’s Exposition of the Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

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.

10 And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

“*The Lord came and stood,*&c. — Before, the Lord spake to him at a distance, even from the holy oracle between the cherubim: but now the voice came near to him, as if the person speaking had been standing near him” (Benson Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

**“Samuel, Samuel**; his name is here doubled, to engage him to the more speedy and diligent attention”

**“Thy servant heareth,**i.e. I am ready to hear what thou speakest, and to do what thou requires”

(Matthew Poole’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

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

“As the boy grew up to manhood, we hear that while, on the one hand, as, no doubt, in earlier days with Eli, so now with Samuel, the Lord was with His servant, giving him strength and wisdom, guiding him and guarding him; and, on the other, different from Eli, we hear how the young prophet let none of the Divine words fall to the ground. In those dark days of sin and shame at Shiloh, in the midst of scenes of temptation, the boy stood firm; his early life was a perpetual protest against covetousness and iniquity” (Ellicott’s Commentary, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

“And Samuel grew, . . . Not only in years and stature, but in grace and goodness, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, both with respect to things natural and spiritual, and in esteem, credit, and reputation among men:

“and the Lord was with him; he was not only in favour with men, but with God; and had fresh and repeated tokens of the grace and good will of God towards him; he indulged him with his presence, and assisted him in his service, and prospered and succeeded him in all things in which he was engaged.

“*did let none of his words fall to the ground*: The fulfilment of his prophetic utterances was the attestation of his divine mission. [Deuteronomy 18:21-22](http://biblehub.com/context/deuteronomy/18-21.htm). ‘*Falling*’ is a natural metaphor in all languages for ‘*failing*.’ The word rendered ‘perform’ in [*1 Samuel 3:12*](http://biblehub.com/1_samuel/3-12.htm) is the exact opposite, literally meaning ‘to raise up’” (Cambridge Bible, [www.biblehub.com)](http://www.biblehub.com)).

**Grew** in Hebrew is *gadal* which means “to grow, become great or important; to make powerful, to magnify, do great things, to advance, to twist and bind together like a cord with strength and force, to be celebrated with praise” ([www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) - Strong’s 1431).