

**1Samuel 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.**

This verse describes the time in which the “child Samuel” served God before Eli in the tabernacle. It was a time when the LORD spoke to men very seldom and no one was having visions from the LORD.

I think the reference to Samuel as a child probably means that he was not yet a teen. The following verses will reveal that the LORD chose this “child” to begin once again to declare His word among the people of Israel—beginning in the tabernacle that had been built to honor Him, but was now a place in which He was dishonored. This revelation was a declaration of judgment against Eli and his sons. It reminds me of a New Testament principle.

*1 Peter 4:17 “For the time is come that **judgment must begin at the house of God**: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?”*

It is significant to note that children and young people are important in God’s estimation. Scripture is full of that truth—notable examples being Samuel, David, Daniel, Jeremiah, and Mary.

*Psalms 127:3 “Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”*

*Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.”*

*Matthew 19:14 “But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”*

**1Samuel 3:2 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;**  
**1Samuel 3:3 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;**  
**1Samuel 3:4 That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here am I.**  
**1Samuel 3:5 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.**

Eli was getting old and his vision was very poor. Eli and Samuel were in bed, but the lamps of the temple that housed the ark of God were still glowing indicating that it was still night.

*Leviticus 24:2–3 “Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually. Without the vail of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it **from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually**: it shall be a statute for ever in your generations.”*

The LORD called Samuel's name, and he ran to Eli to see what he wanted. Eli assured him that he had not called him and sent Samuel back to bed.

**1Samuel 3:6** 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.

**1Samuel 3:7** Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

The LORD called Samuel's name again, and he immediately got up and went to Eli to see what he wanted. Eli once again assured Samuel that he had not called him and told him to go back to bed.

It is noted that Samuel did not yet "know" the LORD; God had not spoken to him personally before. Samuel knew about God, but he had no personal relationship with God.

**1Samuel 3:8** 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.

**1Samuel 3:9** 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.

**1Samuel 3:10** And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth.

When Samuel went back to bed, the LORD called his name for the third time. Once again he got up and went to Eli to find out what he wanted. Eli finally realized that the LORD was speaking to Samuel. He told the child to go back to bed; and if he was called again, he was to answer: "Speak, LORD, for thy servant hears." So Samuel went back to bed, and the LORD came and stood and called out Samuel's name twice. Samuel answered as he had been instructed.

The statement that the LORD came and stood indicates that He made His presence known when He talked to Samuel. Verse 15 tells us that the LORD communicated to Samuel in a vision.

I think it is significant that Eli recognized Samuel as a servant of God. Though he did not yet have a personal relationship with God, he was faithfully serving Him with the heart of an obedient child. This also reminds me of another New Testament principle.

*Matthew 18:4* "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

*Mark 10:14–15* "...Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein."

**1Samuel 3:11** ¶ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

**1Samuel 3:12** In that day I will perform against Eli all *things* which I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end.

**1Samuel 3:13** For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

**1Samuel 3:14** And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

The LORD revealed to Samuel how He was going to judge Eli and his sons. This judgment would come as a shock to the people of Israel since Eli was the High Priest. The LORD declared that He had already told Eli how and why he was to be judged; it was because of the wickedness of his sons in dishonoring the LORD and abusing their positions as priests and because Eli had done nothing to restrain them. (cf v13 & 2:27-36)

In the previous chapter, an unnamed prophet revealed the specifics of that judgment. The house of Eli would be cut off from the priesthood. His progeny were destined to die young and experience sadness and grief. Eli's two sons were appointed to die on the same day.

Most devastating was the fact that the LORD refused to accept any offering or sacrifice seeking atonement for their actions; judgment was certain. Basically, the LORD was saying that He had given them over to their sins. This is another principle that is presented in the scriptures.

*Psalms 81:11–13* “But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels. Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!”

*Romans 1:24* “Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts....”

There comes a point when God chooses to give a person over to his sin. I believe it is the point of no return—the time in a person's life in which his heart has become so hard that there is no hope of repentance.

“when I begin...end” (v12) – This is a statement confirming the truth of what the LORD is about to say. He is basically saying that He finishes what He starts. This is yet another principle found in scripture.

*Isaiah 46:11* “...yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.”

*Isaiah 55:11* “So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

*Jeremiah 1:12 "Then said the LORD unto me, Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten my word to perform it."*

*Ezekiel 12:25 "For I am the LORD: I will speak, and the word that I shall speak shall come to pass...."*

**1Samuel 3:15** And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

**1Samuel 3:16** Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

**1Samuel 3:17** And he said, What *is* the thing that *the* LORD hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

**1Samuel 3:18** And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, *It is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

When Samuel got up the next morning, he was afraid to tell Eli what the LORD had told him in his vision so he got busy about his work. Eli called for Samuel to ask him what the LORD had told him. Samuel's face must have shown his angst because Eli had to insist that Samuel tell him everything pronouncing a curse if he did not. So Samuel told him everything that the LORD had said. Eli accepted the news with a declaration that the LORD should do what seemed good to Him.

Considering the fact that the LORD had already told Eli how he and his family were going to be judged, his response was matter of fact. He calmly accepted that the LORD should do what seemed good to Him even though he knew that he and his posterity would suffer as a result of that action.

I liked Adam Clarke's words of application: "Parents, lay these things to heart: remember Eli and his sons; remember the dismal end of both! Teach your children to fear God, use wholesome discipline, be determined, begin in time, mingle severity and mercy together in all your conduct, and earnestly pray to God to second your godly discipline with the power and grace of his Spirit."

**1Samuel 3:19** ¶ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

**1Samuel 3:20** And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

**1Samuel 3:21** And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Samuel continued to grow both physically and spiritually. It is noted that none of his words fell to the ground. That means that everything that Samuel declared as the word of the LORD proved true. It became widely known throughout Israel that Samuel had been chosen as a prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear to Samuel from time to time in Shiloh.

I just noted that the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel "by the word of the LORD." I can't help but wonder if that is a reference to the preincarnate Jesus.

*John 1:1 & 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...."*