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## 1 Samuel 3 Common English Bible

**3** Now the boy Samuel was serving the LORD under Eli. The LORD's word was rare at that time, and visions weren't widely known. **2** One day Eli, whose eyes had grown so weak he was unable to see, was lying down in his room. **3** God's lamp hadn't gone out yet, and Samuel was lying down in the LORD's temple, where God's chest was.

**4** The LORD called to Samuel. "I'm here," he said.

**5** Samuel hurried to Eli and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

"I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go lie down." So he did.

**6** Again the LORD called Samuel, so Samuel got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

"I didn't call, my son," Eli replied. "Go and lie down."

(**7** Now Samuel didn't yet know the LORD, and the LORD's word hadn't yet been revealed to him.)

**8** A third time the LORD called Samuel. He got up, went to Eli, and said, "I'm here. You called me?"

Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy. **9** So Eli said to Samuel, "Go and lie down. If he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD. Your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down where he'd been.

**10** Then the LORD came and stood there, calling just as before, "Samuel, Samuel!"

Samuel said, "Speak. Your servant is listening."

**11** The LORD said to Samuel, "I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of all who hear it tingle! **12** On that day, I will bring to pass against Eli

everything I said about his household—every last bit of it! <sup>13</sup> I told him that I would punish his family forever because of the wrongdoing he knew about—how his sons were cursing God, but he wouldn't stop them. <sup>14</sup> Because of that I swore about Eli's household that his family's wrongdoing will never be reconciled by sacrifice or by offering."

<sup>15</sup> Samuel lay there until morning, then opened the doors of the LORD's house. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>16</sup> But Eli called Samuel, saying: "Samuel, my son!"

"I'm here," Samuel said.

<sup>17</sup> "What did he say to you?" Eli asked. "Don't hide anything from me. May God deal harshly with you and worse still if you hide from me a single word from everything he said to you." <sup>18</sup> So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him.

"He is the LORD, " Eli said. "He will do as he pleases."

<sup>19</sup> So Samuel grew up, and the LORD was with him, not allowing any of his words to fail. <sup>20</sup> All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was trustworthy as the LORD's prophet. <sup>21</sup> The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh because the LORD revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh through the LORD's own word.

We jump from wandering in the wilderness last week to the work of establishing leaders for God's people, through several books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings. This narrative arc traces the rise and fall of God's people as they struggle to establish themselves, with varying success. This week, God calls a prophet who will bring divine messages, even hard messages, to the people.

In this story, the young Samuel hears a voice calling and wrongly assumes it is his mentor, Eli. Samuel "did not yet know the Lord," but after several confused responses, Eli wisely discerns that it is God calling out to Samuel.

Let's notice a few things here that raise fruitful questions for preaching and congregational engagement with this text:

**First, we must stop talking and listen.**

Both Samuel and Eli are lying down, a posture of stillness and receptivity. Neither is talking. In this still silence, Samuel hears a voice call his name. If Samuel were in a flurry of activity or distracted by other conversations, he might have missed it entirely. Listening is a key spiritual practice that opens up space to hear God's voice.

What listening practices do we have? What pauses or openings do we create to listen for the Holy? What postures help us become receptive to God's speaking?

**Second, God calls Samuel by name.**

In fact, God says **only** Samuel's name at first. God addresses Samuel directly in his particularity, separately from messages God sends more generally to the whole people. There is an intimacy in God's speaking Samuel's name directly and persistently. It's hard for most of us to imagine, much less accept, God speaking personally to us, to our particular time and place, to our particular biography and personality. This is worth exploring.

Am I willing to let God speak personally to me, in my particularity? What does it sound like when God calls my name? How might God long for intimacy with me?

### **Third, Samuel does not recognize God's voice.**

Even when God speaks his name, Samuel does not recognize God's voice. It takes another person, his mentor, to help him recognize God's voice. This passage tells us that "the word was rare in those days" (verse 1), so we can understand Samuel not getting it. Plus, Samuel is young and may not have developed the discernment muscles that recognize the Holy. In our own development, we need others around us to affirm that indeed, yes, that is a word from God speaking into our lives. The body of Christ plays this role. We need each other to help us pay attention to and recognize when God speaks.

How do we recognize God's voice when we hear it? Who in our lives helps us recognize holy invitations or nudges? What role does the community play in this discernment?

### **Fourth, God is persistent.**

We see God return over and over until Samuel does get it. God does not try once and give up, but persists through four attempts! This means divine revelation does not depend on our spiritual quickness or skill but rather on God's faithfulness. If we don't get it (as indeed the gospels portray Jesus' disciples not getting it most of the time), God will not give up. God will try again, perhaps at another time or in another place or even through a different method. God persists.

Remember a time when you sensed God speaking into your life. Did you get it the first time, or did God have to persist? What were some of the attempts God made through others or through life experiences? How has your church experienced the persistence of God?

### **Last, we may not like what we hear.**

There's no denying that the message given to Samuel for Eli is hard. What are we to make of God's punishment of Eli and his house? On the one hand, it seems Eli and his descendants will experience the natural consequences of their choices. On the other hand, the notion of permanent punishment is shocking. Yet, neither Samuel nor Eli seems shocked or upset.

How do we receive what God says to us? What discernment might come from listening to God as we determine its meaning for our lives?

As you shape your sermon, look for one or two of these points from 1 Samuel 3 that speak to where your community is right now. Don't try to cover them all. Which might open the narrative door for your community to step in and explore this week?

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## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Beckoning God,

In the stillness of the night you called Samuel into your service. Call us into service with a voice we are able to hear, and give us hearts to come when we are called. Amen.

## **HYMNS**

[Here I am, Lord](#) ELW 574

[I will call upon the Lord](#) (trad.)

[Come, thou fount of every blessing](#) ELW 807, H82 686, UMH 400, NCH 459

## **CHORAL**

Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts, *Henry Purcell*

# 1 SAMUEL 3:1-21

## INITIAL THOUGHTS

- “Here I am Lord” based on this text and Isaiah 6
- Read it all!
  - This is about both the beginning and ending of a call
  - v.1-10 are about responding to being called
  - v.11-20 are about trusting in God

## BIBLE STUDY

- The Word of the Lord was rare and visions were not widespread...sound familiar
  - Eli’s sons were taking the best parts of the sacrificed meat without waiting for the fat to burn off. Oh and they were having sex with women who want to pray.
  - “The vision of the Lord was not spread about” - indication that Eli’s leadership was failing, his vision both physically and spiritually is failing
- The lamp of God had not yet gone out (Alter, *Hebrew Bible*)
  - A lamp which would have been kept burning through the night (like the eternal flame in some churches), while this could indicate that it was almost dawn, it could also indicate that while God’s presence was hard to see, God was still at work in the Israelites and the world.
- Call
  - Samuel hears the call but does not understand what it is or who it is from
  - Intergenerational- both Eli and Samuel are needed for God’s call to be heard and responded to. Samuel hears it, but Eli understands it
  - Eli’s eyesight might be failing, but his faithful is not - like many of our seniors who continue to live faithful lives
  - Eli calls Samuel my son - a sign of his inheritance of Eli’s minister (especially considering the failure of Eli’s own sons)
- Response

- You servant is listening the response to God's call is not grand speeches or marches- it begins with listening
- God is going to make "both ears...tingle" - what does this mean? Two Tingling Ears - Donna Schaper, *Feasting on the Word: Year B, Vol. 1*
  - Ear of Fear: Cancer, war, death, car accident, financial ruin
  - Ear of Hope: Children are safe, hungry are fed, earth is restored, loved ones are well
- Justice - A word of fearful judgment or of forgiving reprieve?
  - Robert Alter, *Hebrew Bible* - God's message to Samuel "not only indicates the overthrow of the priestly authority from the house of Eli and the implicit move to a different sort of authority...but also [foretells] the rather dour and dire role Samuel will play as leader."
  - Eli seems almost relieved to hear this message - perhaps the guilt and waiting for God's judgement was gnawing at him. Also perhaps we was ready to be done (think Simeon from Luke 2) - perhaps he was ready to know that his priestly and prophetic work was being carried on by another
  - What is Eli's sin? Being passive - not speaking out against his sons' abuse of power
    - "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." Edmund Burke
  - Call is not all about privilege, but about being faithful: speaking truth to power
    - Samuel must first speak God's justice against Eli, his mentor/father-figure
    - MLK Jr. speaking out against racism, but also against the Vietnam War
    - Bonhoeffer - hung
    - Oscar Romero - shot while serving Communion
- Ageism
  - There are several ageist traps in this passage
    - 1 - Eli is old and needs to get out of the way for Samuel
    - 2 - Samuel is too young to understand that God is talking to him



- While there are elements of truth, it would not serve the pastor to propagate any sort of ageism - rather than dividing this story can instead be used as a intergenerational bridge - bringing together old and young, those with experience and those with vision, those who have learned from their mistakes and those who are doomed to repeat them

## **THOUGHTS AND QUESTIONS**

- This is a great story of intergenerational cooperation and faithfulness - how are we modeling this in the church? How are we encouraging our older members to help our younger members hear where God is calling them?
- Listen- we need to teach ourselves and the church to listen to what God is saying to them. Spiritual direction is more about listening than responding.
  - How can we share the advice of Eli, “Speak for your servant is listening?”
  - What are we doing to encourage people to hear the call of God in their lives? Is the word and vision of God rare today as it was then? How can we re-train our ears and eyes to hear and see God?
- Absolution is not simply a let bygones be bygones/forgive and forget ordeal. Eli receives absolution, but there are consequences to his actions and the actions of his sons.



# God Calls Samuel

## *Called by God*

### **The Point**

God blesses and equips us to do great things.

### **Key Verse**

“Speak, for your servant is listening.”

- 1 Samuel 3:10b

### **Summary**

The Lord calls Samuel, a young boy, into service as a prophet. For his first act of prophesy, he must tell his mentor that the Lord would deliver punishment for his family’s sins. Samuel obeys and is rewarded by the Lord.

### **Accompanying Text**

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

- John 20:21-23

## Contexts

### **Linguistics**

- There are several rare and complex words used in this text, and attention to detail actually reveals more mystery than clarity. Graeme Auld points out several linguistic details worth noting:
  - ♦ The preposition in verse 1 is unclear and could mean that Samuel served Yahweh “before Eli,” rather than “under Eli,” bringing question of whether Samuel’s service was to Yahweh first, or if it was better than Eli’s service.<sup>1</sup>
  - ♦ This book includes almost all of the terms that the Bible uses for “prophecy,” lending great weight to the words of Samuel and the actions that followed from them.<sup>2</sup>
  - ♦ With reference to verse 1, “And does the unique verbal form, used to describe what vision was not, mean ‘diffused’ or ‘broken through’? It is unclear whether vision had not yet become common, or if it had not even begun.”<sup>3</sup>

### **Geography/Setting**

- The Ark of the Lord was kept at this time in the sanctuary at Shiloh, and Samuel was in Eli’s service at this sanctuary. Shiloh is in the hill country of Ephraim, northwest of the Dead Sea.<sup>4</sup>

### **History**

- This book is part of a larger work called the Deuteronomistic History that tells the story of the Israelites from their entry into the Promised Land in the Book of Joshua through their exile in Babylon at the end of 2 Kings.<sup>5</sup> The Books of Samuel describe the transition from a tribal to a monarchical society, primarily through the narratives surrounding the rise and reign of David. Samuel is the prophet who anointed David.<sup>6</sup>

### Culture/Religion

- God had not spoken in a vision in Shiloh for a very long time, and God's voice was not immediately recognized. This story is another example showing that God speaks directly when people are ready to hear and highlights the role of the prophets, who are generally sent to confirm what the people have already been told.<sup>7</sup>

### Literature/Genre

- While this book is to be considered within its historical context, it is written as a “work of literary art.”<sup>8</sup> The narratives are artful and crafted with descriptive and stylistic care.
- This passage is part of the first of three narrative arcs in the Books of Samuel. Chapters 1–3 depict the “Rise of Samuel,” which makes clear the idea that the monarchy arose only due to the work of Yahweh. Samuel's birth from a formerly childless woman shows the power of God to create something from nothing, and Samuel's ministry leads directly to the anointing of David.<sup>9</sup>
- Walter Brueggemann points out that the genre of the entire Deuteronomistic History is that of an “extended narrative” that tells the story of “*land entry* (in the Book of Joshua) to *land loss* (in the Books of Kings).”<sup>10</sup> The narrative genre is clearer in Samuel than in Judges and Kings, and it includes more artistry and less theology.<sup>11</sup>

### Authorial Intention/Occasion

- The exact authorship of the two Books of Samuel is debated. It is attributed to Samuel himself, but since his death is recorded within its contents, it is believed that the prophets Gad and Nathan completed the work.<sup>12</sup> These narratives use the stories of the past to teach readers about obedience and to remind them of the covenant made between Yahweh and the Israelites. The fundamental theological message is that God controls the history and future of God's people.<sup>13</sup>

### Audience

- The audience is the Israelites themselves, who needed to be reminded of their own history and to be shown the patterns of covenant, prophecy, and fulfillment that have always been part of their relationship with God.

### Common Misunderstandings

- While this book leads to the crowning of David as king, Samuel is the true hero. He is the prophet and the foundation without whom there would be no King David.<sup>14</sup>

### More Information

- Samuel was dedicated to the Lord as a Nazarite (just like Samson). For more information about references describing Nazarites: [https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud\\_0002\\_0015\\_0\\_14638.html](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0015_0_14638.html).

## Connections

### Narrative Lectionary Connections

- **Last Week (Exodus 16:1-18)** – Last week’s passage finds the Israelites still wandering in the desert, and the story shows God’s provision during their desperation. This week, we begin a new unit, and fast forward through quite a bit of time. Moses died, and the Israelites entered the Promised Land under Joshua. They entered an era of tribal society, governed by judges, during which they clamored for a king. 1 Samuel begins to reveal the story of God’s honoring that desire, but only in God’s time and in God’s way.
- **Next Week (1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 51:10-14)** – Today’s passage represents Samuel’s narrative. Next week, we will skip forward and move into the rise of the monarchy and eventually the rise of David as the king ordained by God. By skipping these chapters, we are led to draw a more clear connection between Samuel and David.
- **Other Year 4 Connections** – Another example of a prophecy that the people did not want to hear is found in Amos 1 and 5 (11/9/25).

### Other Bible Connections

- The lamp of the Lord referred to in 3:2 is also referenced in Exodus 25:31-40; 27:20-21; Leviticus 24:2.

### Thematic Connections

- **Called by God, Blessed to Serve** – Samuel’s call to serve is the crux of this passage. His call was unexpected and a little confusing, but he was obedient to God’s will. Even though what he was called to do was difficult, Samuel recognized the blessing in his responsibility.
- **Called by God** – It had been a long time since God had directly called upon someone, but the time was right for the people to hear the message, and Samuel was the right person to deliver that message.

### Liturgical/Seasonal Connections

- The Book of 1 Samuel begins with a description of a sacrifice made at a festival in Shiloh. It is likely that this refers to the Festival of Tabernacles/Booths (Sukkoth). This is a major festival that is still celebrated by Jewish people today to remember their deliverance and celebrate the harvest. This comes at a time of the year in which we can all honor and celebrate the harvest and change of seasons.

### Hymns/Music

- Some hymns that work with the theme of obedience and calling are: “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky,” “Lord, Speak to Me that I May Speak,” “Be Thou My Vision,” “O Jesus, I Have Promised,” and “Arise, Your Light Has Come!”
- Some praise songs with discipleship and following one’s calling as the theme: “I Will Follow” by Chris Tomlin, “We Will Follow” by Brian Spahr, and “Lord, Send Me” by Don Moen.
- “Hey, Hey, Samuel” by Jonathan Rundman is specifically about Samuel and his call.

### Media Connections

- Animated Stories from the Bible includes a video called “The Story of Samuel.” [http://www.nestlearning.com/the-story-of-samuel-video-on-interactive-dvd\\_p42885.aspx](http://www.nestlearning.com/the-story-of-samuel-video-on-interactive-dvd_p42885.aspx).
- “God’s Calling Plan,” an article about the concept of a call from God. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2003/10/gods-calling-plan/>.
- Another article about finding one’s call: “God’s Call” <http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2204/gods-call>.

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- <sup>1</sup> Graeme Auld, “1 and 2 Samuel,” in *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, eds. James D. G. Dunn and John W. Rogerson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 216.
- <sup>2</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>3</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>4</sup> Shimon Bar-Efrat, “1 Samuel” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 561-564.
- <sup>5</sup> Jo Ann Hackett, “1 and 2 Samuel” in *Women’s Bible Commentary*, 3rd Ed., eds. Carol A. Newsom, Sharon H. Ringe, and Jacqueline E. Lapsley (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 150.
- <sup>6</sup> Walter Brueggemann and Tod Linafelt, *An Introduction to the Old Testament: The Canon and Christian Imagination*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), 163.
- <sup>7</sup> Gbile Akanni and Nupanga Weanzana, “1 and 2 Samuel” in *Africa Bible Commentary*, ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 336.
- <sup>8</sup> Bar-Efrat, 559
- <sup>9</sup> Brueggemann, 132-133.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 131.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>12</sup> Bar-Efrat, 560.
- <sup>13</sup> Akanni and Weanzana, 325.
- <sup>14</sup> Auld, 213.



# God Calls Samuel

## *Called by God*

### About the Story

Just like many superhero movies, the Book of 1 Samuel begins with the title character's origin story. Elkanah and Hannah did not have any children. Hannah went to the holy site at Shiloh, and, in tears, asked God for a son, promising that if she were to bear a child, she would dedicate him to the Lord. This led to a confrontation with Eli, the high priest, who initially thought she was drunk. However, when Hannah explained herself and her request to the Lord, Eli blessed Hannah and told her that the Lord had heard her request. It was not long after that Hannah became pregnant, and when her son was born, she named him Samuel and fulfilled her promise to God by sending Samuel to live with Eli.

### The Point:

**God blesses and equips us to do great things.**

Samuel was just a young boy when God called him to be a prophet. God often calls the person we would least expect, but God always equips the person with the skills to follow God's calling. God calls us to do great things, too, and provides us with the talents and skills we need to accomplish God's mission in the world.

Eli, on the other hand, had two sons. His sons would often misbehave and steal the temple meat that was meant to be reserved as a sacrifice for God. Eli turned a blind eye to his sons' actions—it was only when the worshippers at this holy site notice the behavior that Eli was forced to act. Eli rebuked his sons' behavior, but it was too late. An unnamed man from God told Eli that he and his descendants were to be cursed for disobeying God's commandments.

It is here that our story begins. Samuel, now a young boy, wakes up to a voice in the night calling his name. He thinks it is Eli at first, so he asks Eli why he summoned him. Eli says that he did not summon Samuel and sends him back to bed. This exchange happens a few times before Eli realizes that it is God calling Samuel by name, so he tells Samuel to go back to bed, but this time, when God calls his name, Samuel should respond, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel does as he is told, and God tells Samuel of Eli's fate. The passage ends by telling us that Samuel will go on to become a great prophet.

As we learn about Samuel's origin story, we can reflect on how God calls us to do God's mission in the world. Our call story might not be as flashy as Samuel's, full of visions, voices, and miracles. Even so, we can learn from Samuel's example to respond to God's call by saying "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."

Last Week/Next Week

Last week, we learned that God provided bread from heaven to the Israelites in the wilderness. Today we learn about God calling Samuel to be a prophet, providing him with a mysterious vision. Next week, we will learn about God calling David to be king of Israel.

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together with this or another prayer:

God of love, you call each of us to be your servant. Open our ears so that we may hear your call, and open our hearts that we may serve one another with love. Give us courage to respond to your call like Samuel: “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” We pray all of this through the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Into the Story

Think of a time when you felt God was speaking to you. Perhaps God spoke to you through another person, or, maybe God spoke to you through Scripture or a song. Perhaps it was a strong feeling or intuition. What did God say and how did you respond? Go around the group and share your reflections.

Learning the Story

*The Lord calls Samuel, a young boy, into service as a prophet. For his first act of prophesy, he must tell his mentor, Eli, that the Lord would deliver punishment for Eli's family's sins. Samuel obeys and is rewarded by the Lord.*

**Read 1 Samuel 3:1-9 – Voices in the Night**

- ❓ How does Eli advise Samuel to respond to God's call?
- ❓ How would you feel if you heard a voice calling out to you in the middle of the night? How would you react?
- ❓ We read that Samuel “did not yet know the LORD.” What do you think that means?

**Read 1 Samuel 3:10-14 – Samuel's Vision**

- ❓ What is different between the first few times Samuel heard his name and the final time, both in Samuel's response and in the description of how God called Samuel?
- ❓ Do you think God's punishment of Eli is fair, considering the fact that it was Eli's sons who were directly responsible for blaspheming God?
- ❓ Have you ever had to be the bearer of bad news? How did it feel?

Bible Connections

- ✚ Isaiah is called to be a prophet of God (Isaiah 6:6-10).
- ✚ An angel calls Mary for a very special task (Luke 1:26-38).
- ✚ Jesus gives his disciples the gift of the Holy Spirit (John 20:21-23).

**Read 1 Samuel 3:15-21 – Eli’s Response**

- ❓ Why do you think Samuel was afraid to tell his vision to Eli?
- ❓ How did Eli respond to Samuel’s vision?
- ❓ What, if anything, can we learn from Eli’s response to Samuel’s vision?

**Living the Story: Service**

God calls us, just as God called Samuel. How is God calling us to serve the world? Split into three groups. Each group will be assigned one of the following three categories: Church, Local Community, and World.

For five to seven minutes, each group will brainstorm specific needs in each category (for instance, in the Local Community group, one might write “people experiencing homelessness” if one lives in a large urban area). Then, for another five to seven minutes, each group will brainstorm tangible ways that they can help, even if it is a small solution to a big problem (for instance, in the World group, one might identify climate change as a problem and write “buy recycling bins for the church” as a solution—buying recycling bins will not fix the problem, but it is a small way to help).

After the groups have finished brainstorming their ideas, come together as a large group and share what each group came up with. If you have time, try to figure out as a large group one or two solutions from each category that you can get started on right away, and figure out a plan on how to do it!

**Closing Prayer**

The song “Here I Am, Lord” by Dan Schutte is a popular song that ties in very well with today’s theme. Do an Internet search for the song lyrics (maybe your church’s hymnal or song collection even has this song in it!) If your group knows the song, sing or read it as a closing prayer. You can also easily find video online if your group wishes to hear it.

**Supplies****Living the Story**

- ✝ Paper
- ✝ Pens or pencils

**Closing Prayer**

- ✝ Optional: Internet-connected device, hymnal or songbook

**Bible Nuts & Bolts: Ancient History**

Ancient history is a genre in the Bible that provides a history of the Israelite people. Both 1 and 2 Samuel are considered to be a part of this genre.

The emphasis in ancient history is not as much on “did this really happen?” like how we view the purpose of history. Instead, ancient history in the Bible is better understood as theological interpretation of historical events. In other words, the focus is on interpreting historical events through the lens of God’s relationship with God’s people. When reading stories like this one, a good question to have in mind is, “What is this story telling me about how God and the people interact?”



## At Home

- ✝ Spend sometime this week trying to implement in both your church and home some of the solutions for the problems the groups identified in the Living the Story activity.
- ✝ Spend five to ten minutes in quiet meditation every night before you go to bed.
- ✝ End your personal prayers every day this week by saying, “Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.” Reflect on what saying that phrase makes you feel.

## Daily Readings

### **Sunday—Read 1 Samuel 3:1-21**

A voice calls to Samuel in the night, calling him to a very important task. Reflect on what God is calling you to do.

### **Monday—Read 1 Samuel 7:3-17**

God thwarts the plans of would-be conquerors, rescuing God’s people. Samuel raises a “stone of help” to commemorate God helping God’s people. What or who has been a source of help in your life—a friend, a Bible passage, a song? Say a prayer of thanksgiving for God’s work through that source.

### **Tuesday—Read 1 Samuel 8:1-22**

The people of Israel demand a king to rule them, ignoring that God is already their king. Think of someone you know who is having a hard time and give them a surprise note or phone call letting them know you are praying for them.

### **Wednesday—Read 1 Samuel 10:17-27**

Saul is declared to be king of Israel. Have you ever had disagreement with someone over how to proceed with a special task? Reflect on what you learned from that experience.

### **Thursday—Read 1 Samuel 12:1-25**

Now that Israel has a king to lead them, Samuel feels he is not needed by the people and says goodbye. Think of someone going through a time of transition in their life and pray for them by name.

### **Friday—Read 1 Samuel 13:1-15**

Saul is not king for long before he starts making mistakes and bad decisions! Being a leader is tough—pray for someone who is in a leadership role—it could be your pastor, an elected official, or even your boss—and ask that God continues to strengthen and guide them.

### **Saturday—Read 1 Samuel 15:1-35**

Saul messed up one too many times, and so his reign as king is coming to an end. Rejection is tough. Think of a time you have been rejected for something. Reflect on the good news that God loves you, no matter what!

## DEVOTIONS

Think about devotions as a continuation of our community's worship. The following basic pattern could be one way of forming your household's devotions. Adapt as necessary!

### GATHERING

✚ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time."

#### ✚ Prayer of the Week

God, even though you make yourself clear, sometimes we just do not or cannot follow your directions. Bless us this week to have ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts that are willing to act. Amen

### CARING CONVERSATION

Take a moment to check in with each other or to use the questions below.

- ❓ **Highs & Lows:** What is something that made you happy today? What is something that made you sad or angry?
- ❓ **Thinking about This Week's Story:** Throughout his lifetime, Samuel represents an honest, obedient leader. When have you led today? When have you followed?
- ❓ **Getting Ready for Next Week's Story:** Psalm 51 says that David asks God to give him a clean heart. What is a mistake or bad choice you made today? What was a good choice?

### DAILY BIBLE READING

Read aloud from the DAILY BIBLE READING from the front. What do you want to remember from this reading?

### PRAY TOGETHER

✚ God of love and light, help us to hear your voice and to trust you with all our might. Let us remember that your ways are not our ways and that we should lean not on our own understanding. Amen.

### CLOSING

✚ If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotion time.

#### ✚ Rituals & Traditions: A Blessing to Share

Sit in silence with your eyes closed for a few moments. Each person take a deep breath and one by one, say out loud, "Be still and know that the Lord is God."

The "Four Key Faith Practices"—Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals & Traditions—are a framework developed by the Rev. Dr. David Anderson of Milestones Ministry and used by permission from Vibrant Faith Ministries, Bloomington, MN ([www.vibrantfaith.org](http://www.vibrantfaith.org)). For more information about the Four Keys, go to <http://milestonesministry.org/>.

OCTOBER 12, 2025

1 Samuel 3:1-21



# Sharing GOD'S STORY @ home

### SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK

"Speak, for your servant is listening."

—1 Samuel 3:10

### MEALTIME PRAYER

God of all things, we thank you for being our creator, one who calls us by name. Let us hear your loving Word, and share it with all we meet. Amen.

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Filling in the gaps. A thought to consider as you read: **You will read passages this week that ask for obedience. Think of ways you could become more open to God's word.**

Sunday	1 Samuel 3:1-21	God Calls Samuel
Monday	1 Samuel 7: 3-17	Samuel's Role in Israel
Tuesday	1 Samuel 8: 1-22	Israel Demands a King
Wednesday	1 Samuel 10:17-27	Saul Is Named King of Israel
Thursday	1 Samuel 12: 1-25	Samuel's Farewell
Friday	1 Samuel 13:1-15	Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice
Saturday	1 Samuel 15:1-35	Saul Is Rejected as King
Sunday	1 Samuel 16:1-13	God Chooses David
	Psalms 51:10-14	

If your household includes younger children, use a child-friendly Bible. You might find that the children's Bible you are using may not include the very story assigned for the DAILY BIBLE READINGS. **Read to your kids anyway. Just pick a story!**

### SERVICE CHALLENGE

SERVICE is how we enact God's great love for the entire world.

God called Samuel to speak God's word to the people. Who can you call this week to show your care and support?