

Samuel

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Read by Caleb

<https://www.gotquestions.org/life-Samuel.html>

We can imagine how daunting it must have been for the young Samuel to give an honest account of his first vision to Eli. However, it appears that, even from a young age, Samuel's absolute allegiance was to God first. There may be times when we feel intimidated by those in authority, but, as Samuel proved more than once, it is God who must remain our priority. The world may look on us cynically when we remain steadfast in our faith. However, we can be confident that God will vindicate those who have remained faithful to His Word ([Psalm 135:14](#)).

<https://overviewbible.com/facts-prophet-samuel/>

No, Eli is not my dad. (laugh) Yeah, I get that a lot. (smile) Eli is the priest. And I am his helper. I have been for about (pause, like you're counting in your head) four or five years. It's easy to lose track of when the days turn into years.

(laugh) Eli has his own sons and I have my own parents but it's mostly just me and him, doing the Lord's work here in the tabernacle. I live in a little room between the spaces with the Ark of the Covenant and Eli's bedroom. This helps me be available for anything that needs doing at night. Eli is very old and is losing his eyesight so sometimes I assist him at night in the dark when his vision is especially poor. It's okay. I don't mind. That's why I'm here. (smile)

My parents' names are Elkanah (el-KAY-nuh) and Hannah. We are from Ramah. (RAY-muh) Even though I live here, I am still able to see them once a year. They come to make a sacrifice and to bring me a new coat. My mother works on it all year and then brings it to me at the time of sacrifice. It's our way of staying connected even though we are apart. (smile) I also get to see my brothers and sisters when they come. I enjoy showing them all around and modeling the jobs I get to do and introducing them to the people I know. I miss them, of course, (sad) especially my mother, (stronger) but I know why I'm here. She was very clear.(pause) It was extremely important to her that I knew and understood what was happening. She did not want me growing up thinking I had been abandoned or unwanted. That was not the case. I repeat those words to myself when I feel lonely here.

My mother would tell me the story almost weekly, sometimes daily, when I was home. She would remember her sorrow so vividly, sometimes shedding tears when saying the words. She told me of the time when she was unable to have children, unable to contribute to the family, unable to do what she was created to do, she said. This had broken her heart and her spirit and at one

point when she was here for sacrifice, she decided to let it all out before the Lord, overcome by her grief. Eli watched as she prayed to the Lord, crying bitterly, full of deep anguish. She made this vow, "O Lord Almighty, if you will look down upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, ~~and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the Lord, his hair will never be cut.~~" (pause)

Well, Eli thought she was drunk. (laugh) I guess it's not funny-- I try *not* to laugh when mama tells it-- but it's pretty difficult not to even break a smile. To think of Eli, *my Eli*, telling mama to get rid of her wine, just makes me giggle! They worked it out though and it was Eli who encouraged her and asked God to grant her request.

And God did!

I was born (pause) and mama kept her promise even though that meant giving up the one thing she was so desperate for. She always said 'giving up' were never the right words. She preferred 'giving back' since it was God who gave me to her in the first place.

But it still wasn't exactly easy. Even though I knew the story and I knew why and I trusted mama, I still had to be dropped off and left without the only family I'd ever known. I tried to be brave, remembering that I was not abandoned or unwanted. I was here for a purpose. I was here to learn and serve.

(pause, coming back to present)

The days are easy. There is lots to do and lots to learn. Eli is great about bringing me alongside him to see and hear-- teaching me our history, the stories of old, the character of God, the rhythms of our people, and the specifics of the sacrifices and ceremonies. It is busy and though there is routine, no day is exactly the same. I enjoy the work and the company.

The nights are harder. (slowly) At night, I am by myself in the silent dark. It's easier to feel alone. I miss home and miss mama. Oftentimes, I watch the shadows from the lamp of God bounce along the top of the room, imagining stories of my family back in Ramah. (emotional) Sometimes the ache for them is so much that I get up and grab the coat mama made for me, hugging it

tight to myself, fighting to remember the stories mama has told me. I am not unwanted. I am not abandoned. I am here for a purpose. I am here to learn. I have been chosen to serve.

(pause) But the dark is still dark.

The silence is still silent.

(pause)

Eventually, I fall asleep, dreaming of brothers and sisters and mama and...

(pause)

"Samuel! Samuel!"

(pause) "What? What is it?"

Who was that? Was it Eli? Did he need help with something? I throw on my coat and rush to his room.

"Yes? Here I am. What do you need?"

My voice awakens Eli and he turns over, confused.

"I didn't call you. Go on back to bed."

So I do-- Back to my dark room, the shadows still dancing on the walls. I take off my coat, deciding to keep it with me, always feeling closer to mama when I have it near. I lay back down, closing my eyes, willing myself to sleep.

What was that about? Did I dream that voice? It seemed so real. Ah, well... let it go, need to sleep... (pause)

"Samuel! Samuel!"

I hop up, put on my coat again, and run to Eli's side.

"Here I am. What do you need?"

Again, it seemed like I was the one who woke him up. But it was certainly his voice I am hearing, right?

"I didn't call you, my son. Go back to bed."

This time I didn't even take my coat off, pull up my blankets, or even attempt to sleep. What was happening? (pause) It didn't take long to happen again.

"Samuel! Samuel!"

Almost before the voice finishes calling me, I am at Eli's side.

(out of breath) "Here I am, what do you need?"

This time Eli sits up, wiping the sleep from his blind eyes, reaching for me. He grabs for me and I give him my hands.

(slow, tired) "Samuel, son. Go and lie down again and if someone calls again, say, 'Yes, Lord, your servant is listening.'"

He gives my hands a squeeze and reaches up to touch my cheek. I presume he's smiling but it's too dark to tell. It seems he knows something I do not. That's not uncommon... but this time it feels different.

When I arrive back in my room, I slip my coat off and put my sandals away. I get into bed and wait, knowing sleep will not be a part of my night. I repeat what Eli has told me to say so I do not forget.

"Samuel! Samuel!"

(quiet voice, getting louder as you go) "Yes, your servant is listening."

Even though I knew it was coming, the voice still startled me, giving me skin bumps and a shiver. I remember the line and then remember the most important part. I need to actually listen!

"I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel. I am going to carry out all my threats against Eli and his family. I have warned him continually that judgment is coming for his family, because his sons are blaspheming God and he hasn't disciplined them. So I have vowed that the sins of Eli and his sons will never be forgiven by sacrifices or offerings."

(pause) I didn't say anything and the voice didn't come back.

(pause) I just laid there and thought about what was told to me.

(pause) And then I thought about what I had to do with what was told to me.

(long pause)

Eventually, the shadows disappeared and the sun began to rise. For the fourth time this night, I got up and put on sandals and the coat my mother made for me. It was time to open the doors of the Tabernacle.

This was usually one of my favorite parts of my day. To see the sun peeking up over the horizon meant the night was done and the light was here. It meant I no longer had to be in a dark room all alone. But today, all the sunrise did was remind me of burning fire and judgment and discipline.

I'm scared to see Eli. One look at me, even with his poor eyesight, and he will know.

He calls for me and I arrive in his room much more slowly than I did last night. (pause) I was right. He knew immediately. One look at my tired eyes and he sensed the magnitude of what I had to tell him. But he was very firm. I must tell him. I must not leave anything out.

So I do. It's difficult but I want to obey both the Lord and Eli.

I try to memorize what he says in response, feeling the holiness of this moment.

"It is the Lord's will. Let him do what he thinks best."

(pause)

I don't think the nights will be so lonely anymore. Just as my mother's coat has covered me, I now have the Lord's presence with me. I frequently hear the voice in the night and have grown accustomed to responding with, "Yes, your servant is listening." I don't yet know what my life will turn out like or honestly, why it was me who was chosen to carry God's words in my mouth. If I look at me, I see a normal, young lad with too long of hair and depending on the time of year, too small of coat. (smile)

But somehow within me, God has placed a resolve to follow Him no matter what and no matter how difficult it gets.

I will tell the truth, His truth.

I will forge ahead on the path set before me; His path.

I will lead willingly and with great courage, both His.

I will serve my God and King forever, no matter what, even if it's hard.

"Yes, Lord, your servant is listening..."