

1 SAMUEL 3

1 Samuel 3:1–21 4:1a

God Speaks to Samuel

Outline of Chapter 3:

- vv. 1–9 **God Calls Samuel; Samuel Thinks that Eli Has Called Him**
- vv. 10–14 **God's First Message to Samuel**
- vv. 15–18 **Samuel Relays God's Message to Eli**
- vv. 19–4:1a **Epilogue: Samuel and His Spiritual Impact**

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines:

- v. 2 ***In Those Days vs In That Day***
- v. 2 **The Goofy Ideas of Various Commentators**
- v. 5 **Today's English Version and the New Living Translation Translate vv. 3–5**
- v. 5 **The Contemporary English Version Translation of vv. 1–5**
- v. 7 **Various Interpretations of Samuel 3:7**
- v. 7 **Today's English Version Translates vv. 6–7**
- v. 8 **How Does Eli Know that God is Calling Samuel?**
- v. 11 **What Will God do to Cause Men's Ears to Tingle?**
- v. 12 **How Does Samuel Know what the Prophet said to Eli?**
- v. 14 **Why Does God Tell Samuel about Eli?**
- v. 18 **Examples of Submission to God's Will**
- v. 19 **Old Testament Believers Whom God was With**

- v. 4:1a **Verse and Chapter Divisions in the Bible**
- v. 4:1a **Contemporary English Version of I Sam. 3:19–4:1a**

Doctrines Covered

Emendations of the Sopherim

Introduction: In 1Sam. 3, we see the beginning of Samuel's ministry, where God calls him officially, in his dreams. This is actually unexpected, and Samuel at first thinks that Eli is calling to him. Eli will tell Samuel that God is speaking to him, and for him to return to his bed and allow God to speak to him. Samuel returns to his bed and God does speak to Samuel—a very rare thing for that period of time. The first thing that God tells Samuel is that He will end the line of Eli in the priesthood (something a prophet has already told Eli in the previous chapter). The next day, Eli asks Samuel to tell him what happened and Samuel reveals what God had told him. Eli accepts God's judgment. The difference between what the prophet said to Eli in 1Sam. 2 and what God says to Samuel in 1Sam. 3 is: God told Eli what would happen to his line in chapter 2; in chapter 3, God tells Samuel that these events are imminent.

For those of you who absolutely despise the close examination of the Hebrew, much of this chapter will be smooth sailing. There are very few times, particularly in the first half, where we have to delve deeply into the Hebrew. I will delve into the Hebrew throughout, but it is fairly straightforward through most of this chapter. First of all, there will be a very simple vocabulary, as we had in the first chapter of this book; and the sentence structure, for the most

part, is going to be simple. In any case, since I have begun to separate the Hebrew exegesis from the verse analysis, this allows you to skip over the Hebrew if that does not interest you.

As you read this, bear in mind that we are in a transitional period of time. We no longer have a great military leader (like Joshua or Moses). We have had a period of time where Israel has ostensibly functioned as a theocracy (a nation ruled by God), and this rule was carried out by various judges who had limited and often simultaneous authority. Some of these judges delivered Israel during times of crisis, but most of them are given by name only (and there possibly could have been unnamed others).

At this time, we have a functioning priesthood, but even that priesthood has seen some serious problems. Many Levites, who were to have served the priesthood established by God in the line of Aaron, had been going out on their own, going into territories that God had not given them, and selling their services as *priests-for-hire*. It appears as though the Law was not followed carefully with regards to the ceremonies; and certain portions were ignored altogether (e.g., the Sabbath Years and the Year of Jubilee). God had given His Word by Moses and He had set up a priesthood to teach the gospel, but in the hands of men, all of this had been corrupted.

We will see the beginning of a prophetic era. Now, this does not mean that *prophecy* will be introduced for the first time, but that men of God will come and speak the Word of God. We often know little or nothing about them; in some cases, they simply show up and start giving the Word of God to whomever God has sent them to. In the previous chapter, an unnamed man of God came to Eli and warned him about what God would do to his family and his line. In this chapter, as well as in the previous two, we are given the entire back story of the prophet Samuel, including the first time that God speaks to him. Samuel will be one of the few men who will be a prophet of God whose background we will be entirely familiar with. We will even know the mechanics of how God spoke to him (I am assuming these mechanics continued throughout his life). Samuel is offered up by God by way of example. This does not mean that all prophets of God had the same beginning that Samuel had. God simply gives us the rise from birth to death of one prophet, and we will have to realize that each of the other prophets which we study also have their own back story, to which, generally, we are not privy. Why is this the case? As Thieme said over and over again, *it is not the man, but the message*.

My point in all of this is that, we are moving from the time of the Law and the Priesthood and adding an important factor to the revelation of God to man—the nationally-sanctioned office of the prophet. Samuel will be the first national prophet/judge/priest, and, for the first time in Israel's history since the time of Joshua, a single man will wield the power and authority of Moses or Joshua. In Peter's second recorded sermon at Pentecost, he makes mention of Samuel as being the first in a line of prophets sent by God (Acts 3:24).¹

McGee makes the same observation: *Samuel's call...initiates a drastic change in the form of government. The period of the judges is over, and no longer will God move through the priest. He is now raising up a priest-prophet. Samuel will minister for the Lord, but his office will be that of a prophet. It is he who will pour the anointing oil on both kings, Saul and David. God will never speak directly to a king, but will speak only through a prophet.*²

We begin this chapter by finding out that God's direct revelation to man was rare in the days of Eli (v. 1). In this chapter, both Eli and Samuel are sleeping, and God calls out to Samuel 3 times. Each time, Samuel says, "I'm right here." After the 3rd time, Samuel gets up and goes to Eli's room (or, over to his cot; we don't know exactly what the sleeping arrangements are). Eli tells Samuel that he has not called him, but Eli realizes that this is God calling Samuel, and he tells Samuel to tell God, "Speak, for your servant is listening." (vv. 2–9). This time, when God calls to Samuel, Samuel asks God to speak, and God tells him what will come to pass concerning Eli (vv. 10–14). The next day, Eli presses Samuel to find out what God said. Samuel is reticent, but Eli is insistent

¹ So there is no misunderstanding, Peter did not actually call Samuel the first prophet; however, he makes the statement, "...all the prophets who have spoken, from Samuel and successors onward..." Even though there are instances of men of God who speak the Word of God prior to Samuel (e.g., in 1 Sam. 2:27–36), in retrospect, Samuel would be seen as the first of a long line of prophets to be sent to Israel.

² J. Vernon McGee; *I & I1 Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 25.

(vv. 15–17). When Samuel tells Eli that God was about to cut off his line, Eli takes it well, as he has already been prepared for this (v. 18). Samuel's stature as a true prophet of God is emphasized at the end of this chapter (1Sam. 3:19–4:1a).³

Matthew Henry breaks down the chapter almost exactly as I have: *I. God's first manifestation of himself in an extraordinary manner to Samuel (1Sam. 3:1-10). II. The message he sent by him to Eli (1Sam. 3:11-14). III. The faithful delivery of that message to Eli, and his submission to the righteousness of God in it (1Sam. 3:15-18). IV. The establishment of Samuel to be a prophet in Israel (1Sam. 3:19-21).*⁴

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

God Calls Samuel; Samuel Thinks that Eli Has Called Him

Slavishly literal:

Moderately literal:

And the youth Samuel was ministering to Y^ehowah to faces of Eli and a word of Y^ehowah was rare in the days the those; none of vision was broken forth. 1Samuel 3:1

And the youth Samuel was ministering to Y^ehowah before Eli; and the word of Y^ehowah was rare in those days; [there was] no divine revelation breaking out.

The youth ministered to Jehovah before Eli; however, the word from God was rare in those days; there was no divine revelation breaking out.

First what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	Now the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Heli, and the word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no manifest vision.
Masoretic Text	And the youth Samuel was ministering to Yehowah to faces of Eli and a word of Yehowah was rare in the days the those; none of vision was broken forth.
Peshitta	And the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD, assisting Eli the priest. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision.
Septuagint	And the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Heli the priest; and the word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no distinct vision.

Significant differences: Apart from the fine few words, which I believe are a matter of interpretation, these say essentially the same things. The Peshitta and Septuagint both add *the priest* after *Eli*.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Samuel served the LORD by helping Eli the priest, who was by that time almost blind. In those days, the LORD hardly ever spoke directly to people, and he did not appear to them in dreams very often. But one night, Eli was asleep in his room,... [vv. 1–2].
<i>The Message</i>	The boy Samuel was serving GOD under Eli's direction. This was at a time when the revelation of GOD was rarely heard or seen.

³ As will be discussed fully at the end of the chapter, 1Sam. 4:1a belongs with chapter 3.

⁴ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3 introduction.

NLTLT Meanwhile, the boy Samuel was serving the LORD by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

- Complete Jewish Bible The child Sh'mu'el continued ministering to ADONAI under 'Eli's direction. Now, in those days ADONAI rarely spoke, and visions were few.
- God's Word™ The boy Samuel was serving the LORD under Eli. In those days a prophecy from the LORD was rare; visions were infrequent.
- JPS (Tanakh) Young Samuel was in the service of the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; prophecy was not widespread.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

- HCSB The boy Samuel served the LORD in Eli's presence. In those days the word of the LORD was rare and prophetic visions were not widespread.
- NASB Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent [lit., *no vision spread abroad*].
- NKJV Now the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was rare in those days; *there was no widespread revelation*.
- Young's Updated LT And the youth Samuel is serving Jehovah before Eli, and the word of Jehovah had been precious in those days—there is no vision broken forth.

What is the gist of this verse? When Samuel was serving Jehovah under the direction of Eli, the word of God was rare in those days; and no one saw any vision from God.

1Samuel 3:1a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
n ^a ar (נָעַר) [pronounced <i>NAH-gahr</i>]	<i>boy, youth, young man, personal attendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654
Sh ^o mûw'êl (שִׁמְוֵאל) [pronounced <i>sh^o-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of Eli</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
shârath (שָׂרַת) [pronounced <i>shaw-RAATH</i>]	<i>to serve, to minister</i>	Piel participle	Strong's #8334 BDB #1058
'êth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l^e</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510

1Samuel 3:1a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pânîym (פָּנִים) [pronounced paw-NEEM]	<i>face, faces, countenance; presence</i>	masculine plural construct (plural acts like English singular); with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #6440 BDB #815
Together, they mean <i>upon the face of, before, before the face of, in the presence of, in the sight of, in front of</i> . When used with God, it can take on the more figurative meaning <i>in the judgment of</i> .			
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
Both the Peshitta and the Septuagint add <i>the priest</i> at this point.			

Translation: *And the youth Samuel was ministering to Y^howah before Eli;...* After the wâw conjunction and the definite article, we have the masculine singular noun naʿar (נַעַר) [pronounced NAH-ġahr], which means *boy, youth, young man, personal attendant*. As we have seen, this word has a great variety of applications, even in these first few chapters of Samuel. It is used of Samuel when he is about 2 or 3 years of age (1 Sam. 22, 24, 25, 27); it is used of Samuel when he is slightly older and growing (1 Sam. 2:11, 18, 21, 26); and it is used of Samuel as probably a teenager or preteen in this chapter (vv. 1, 8). The same word is used of the servant to the priests (1 Sam. 2:13, 15) and of Eli's genetic sons, who were probably full-grown and probably in their 40's or older (1 Sam. 2:17). The closest word which we have to this is the word *boy*. In relationship to a father, this could be used up until a man is 40 or older. It was used in the South often for their male slaves, apart from the consideration of age; and it was used in a derogative fashion for Afro-Americans throughout the United States, although predominantly in the South.

This is followed by the proper noun, *Samuel*, which you will recall is Sh^emûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh^e-moo-ALE], which means *heard of God*. Then we have the Piel participle of shâraṯ (שָׂרָה) [pronounced shaw-RAHTH], which means *to serve, to minister*. This is followed by the untranslated sign of the direct object followed by the proper name for *God*. This gives us: *And the youth Samuel was ministering [to] God...*

For all intents and purposes, Samuel was an intern at this time. He was doing the scut work around the Tabernacle of God. We do not know exactly what this entailed, and his young age must be kept in mind. One responsibility appears to be, to open the doors of the Tabernacle in the morning (1Sam. 3:15). Furthermore, it is apparent that Samuel has ministered before God for sometime (1Sam. 2:18).

You might think that opening the doors is a pretty lame excuse for service to God. In the church that you attend, someone opens the doors, turns on the electricity, has the air conditioner going, has the floors swept and the toilet stalls replenished with toilet paper—all things which may seem to you to be pretty menial tasks. These are not unimportant tasks nor are they menial. What people do not grasp is that God gives you a ministry commensurate with your spiritual growth. Now, you might fool yourself into thinking that the large Sunday School class which you teach is meaningful—and it may be—however, there are a lot of dead and dying churches out there and association with such a church is indicative of your spiritual growth (or lack thereof). Now, by a live church, I don't mean one where everyone is jumping up and down and getting the ghost. That is a circus. I am referring to a church where the Word of God is taught carefully day in and day out. Sweeping a floor in a doctrinal church is a 1000 times more important than being a head pastor and teaching inaccurate doctrine from the pulpit; or attempting to teach anything when you do not know a damn thing.

Application: By the way, if becoming a Christian changed your mind about very few things, then you probably should not be teaching anyone anything. I remember going to the Baptist church in Berkeley and the older Sunday School teacher taught nothing but lies and half truths during his hour or so of *ministry*. He mixed in the popular social views of his day with barely the tiniest fraction of knowledge of a couple of verses in Scripture. It was pathetic, even though he probably thought he had quite a ministry going on. My point in all of this is, Samuel was growing spiritually, and as he grew, God gave him more and more responsibilities, as should be the case. We're just like children before God. You did not hand the car keys to your 6 year old son, and say, "Enjoy; take it whenever you need it." That would be foolish. God likewise does not give us the car keys and carte blanc after being saved for 6 months—especially if we have receive no spiritual growth (which comes only by the filling of the Holy Spirit and the inculcation of Bible doctrine). We may have a position in a church, but that is often meaningless—or, even worse, we pollute the church that we serve with our own human viewpoint. As your child grows in maturity, he gets greater and greater freedom with the car (which begins at the proper time). Along with this increased freedom, he takes on certain responsibilities (paying for his own insurance; shopping for groceries on the way home, picking up or taking his younger sibling to this or that thing). It is a gradual process which he confirms by showing that he is responsible enough to assume the responsibility.

We do not know how old Samuel was at this time, although the term *youth* implies that Samuel was not yet an adult (this word can be used for a *personal attendant*, however, which was the function of Samuel). Josephus, the great ancient historian, suggests that he was 12 (actually, had completed his twelfth year). Obviously, that must have been traditional thinking at that time, as there is nothing in this chapter to suggest his age. His reticence to tell Eli what God said (v. 15), would indicate possibly a young age. Our Lord began His ministry to some degree at age 12 as well (Luke 2:42). None of this is given by way of proof, although it suggests that Samuel is younger than we might think.

Then we have the lâmed preposition and the masculine plural construct of *pânîym* (פָּנִים) [pronounced *paw-NEEM*], which means *faces*. Together, they mean *in the sight of, in the presence of, before the face of*. This is followed by the proper noun *Eli*. This gives us: **And the youth Samuel was ministering [to] God in the sight of Eli.** Twice in the previous chapter Samuel, even at a very young age, is said to minister before God (1 Sam. 2:11, 18). This means that he took his responsibilities very seriously even from a young age.

Josephus tells us that Samuel's call to the prophetic office happened when he had just completed his twelfth year (compare Luke 2:42–49, which reads: **And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem. And his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey and sought him among their kinfolk and acquaintances. And not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: "Son, why have You done so to us? Listen, Your father and I have looked for You sorrowing." And he said to them: "How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?").⁵ Whether this is true or not is uncertain; however, for Josephus to make this statement indicates that the parallels between Samuel and Jesus were well-known at that time, and that Samuel was clearly recognized as a type of Christ.**

Never think that the ties between the Old and New Testaments are confined to verses quoted by Jesus or by the Apostles in this or that epistle. There are a huge number of overlaps, of types, of lessons from the Old Testament which remain for teachers in the Church Age to reveal. Let me give you an example (which I don't believe is original with me). Adam and Eve sinned against God. They realized they were naked and they put on fig leaves

Never think that the ties between the Old and New Testaments are confined to verses quoted by Jesus or by the Apostles in this or that epistle.

⁵ Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:1. Barnes only referenced Luke 2:42, but I felt that the rest was necessary as well.

in order to hide their nakedness (Gen. 3:1–7). After God pronounces judgment on Adam, on Eve and on the serpent, then God clothes Adam and Eve with an animal's skin—however, there is nothing by way of explanation, either here, or in the New Testament. Adam and Eve already had clothes; what was the deal? God taught them that Jesus Christ must die for their sins first in what He said to the serpent in Gen. 3:15 and then by sacrificing an animal without spot and without blemish before them, and covering them with the skin of the animal, so that God could not longer see their sin. The sacrifice of the innocent animal became institutionalized and that this sacrifice covered (or *atoned for*) the sins of man. In this narrative, none of this information is revealed to us; all we know is God clothes Adam and Eve in animal skins. In the following chapter, we find that Abel's sacrifice is accepted by God (the sacrifice of an innocent animal) while God had not respect for Cain's sacrifice (which was the offering of the vegetables which he slaved over). Although these events are significant in their spiritual implication, nothing is said about them either in Gen. 3–4 or later on in the New Testament. However, it is clear, from all that we know, that these events are fraught with meaning. God does not have to spell everything out for us. He has designed the pastor-teacher to do such things on our behalf and for our edification.

Allow me another tangent here: this does not mean that everyone who teaches the Bible during the Church Age has even a clue. I heard a panel discussion a week or so ago, and topic was, in part, about hell. The Christian pastor talked about how Jesus spoke of love and forgiveness and that we have, in some way or another, polluted His teachings with the concept of hell. Bullcrap! So there is no

confusion, the person to speak of hell as a place of burning and torture is Jesus—no one in Scripture makes as many references to hell as does Jesus; and no one gives a more clear picture of what hell is than Jesus.⁶ We should expect this for two reasons: (1) all judgment is given by the Father to Jesus and (2) Jesus died for our sins, to provide us deliverance from this judgment. Therefore, no one is more suited to speak of the Lake of Fire than Jesus. Judgment of this earth belongs to Him; and He has provided us a way out of this judgment.

No one in Scripture makes as many references to hell as does Jesus; and no one gives a more clear picture of what hell is than Jesus

1Samuel 3:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
yâqâr (יָקָר) [pronounced <i>yaw-KAWR</i>]	<i>precious; dear; rare; heavy, weighty, honored; magnificent, splendid; quiet, meek</i>	masculine singular adjective	Strong's #3368 BDB #429

⁶ Yes, I am aware that we occasionally deal with the word Sheol, which means, simply, *place of the dead*. Jesus uses this word and it is more properly translated *place of the dead* than *hell*. However, when speaking of the judgment of the unbeliever, Jesus often speaks in terms of him burning in a place where the *worm does not die*. That is *hell* as we know it.

1Samuel 3:1b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hêm (הֵם) [pronounced haym]	<i>those these [with the definite article]</i>	masculine plural demonstrative adjective	Strong's #1992 BDB #241

These 3 words simply mean *in those days*.

Translation: ...and the word of Y^ehowah was rare in those days;... Then we have the phrase [*the*] word of Y^ehowah followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to be* followed by the masculine singular adjective yâqâr (יָקָר) [pronounced yaw-KAWR], which means *precious, rare, splendid, weighty*. This is the first occurrence of this word in Scripture, apart from Job 28:16 31:26. This is followed by *in those days*. In other words, during an era when God revealed Himself supernaturally, he revealed Himself rarely. *And the word of Y^ehowah was rare in those days*.

By way of prophetic utterances, we have the Psalm of Hannah, which is prophetic in nature—although we have no indication that she did any more than simply write it under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit—and the prophecy of the *man of God* (1 Sam. 2:27–36). Prior to that, we have Jehovah speaking to the wife of Manoah, better known as the mother of Samson (Judges 13), and soon thereafter to Manoah directly. During the early part of the time of the judges, Deborah is called a prophetess (Judges 4:4, who does actually prophesy in Judges 4:6–9). An unnamed prophet is later sent to Israel in Judges 6:8–10. In the book of the Judges, there are only five recorded revelations (Judges 2:1–3 6:11–23 7:2–11 10:11–14 13:3–21). That is a period of 400 years. In the time of Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt, a period of about 40 years, God appeared to Moses on several occasions (half of the book of Exodus and the bulk of the books of Leviticus and Numbers are direct quotations from God). God did approximately a dozen great miracles before Israel in the desert after leaving Egypt. So, when this is compared to three communications from God over a period of about 100 years—two of which do not even appear to be direct communications, and fewer than a dozen revelations or prophecies over a period of 400 years—one could accurately say that visions and prophecy from God were rare in those days. Furthermore, there is no indication that God has ever spoken directly to Eli; our only record is God speaking to him through a prophet and through Hannah.

Later in Israel's history, signs became even more rare, as one psalmist notes: *We do not see signs; there is no longer any prophet; nor is there any among us who knows how long [their enemy will dominate them]* (Psalm 74:9). Prior to the completion of the canon of Scripture, one could take the absence of signs as an inference of God's disappointment with Israel as a whole. The same psalmist begins that psalm with: *O God, why have You rejected us forever? Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture* [i.e., the Jews] (Psalm 74:1). The same psalmist continues in v. 9: *We see no miraculous signs. There is no longer any prophet, Neither is there among us anyone who knows how long*.

When it comes to miracles and divine communication, people have very mixed up views of Scripture and of past times. People view Bible times (whatever the hell that is) as times of a tremendous number of non-stop miracles, when, in fact, there were relatively few miracles in the Old Testament.

Prior to the dispersion, when Israel was under great judgment, the prophet Jeremiah wrote: [Her gates have sunk into the ground. He has destroyed and broken her bars. Her king and her princes are among the nations. The law is no more and her prophets find no vision from Jehovah](#) (Lam. 2:9). Prior to the fall of the northern kingdom (which was 722 B.C.), the prophet Amos spoke God's words, saying: ["Behold, days are coming," declares Jehovah God, "When I will send a famine on the land. Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for the hearing of the words of Jehovah."](#) (Amos 8:11). Simply put, when under discipline, Israel heard very little directly from God, apart from promises of judgement.

When it comes to miracles and divine communication, people have very mixed up views of Scripture and of past times. People view *Bible times* (whatever the hell that is) as times of a tremendous number of non-stop miracles, when, in fact, there were relatively few miracles in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was not a carnival of miracles. It is not even clear whether the acts of Moses are miracles. There were certainly incredible events; but we don't know if these things actually defied the laws of physics and the laws of nature. We discussed this in greater detail in the book of Exodus. Furthermore, it requires greater planning than we can even imagine for these things to occur as freaks of nature as opposed to miracles of nature. The tremendous number of frogs and locusts, for instance, may have been natural but freak occurrences in nature which God had designed to occur in eternity past. All that was required was for the volition of Moses and pharaoh to act as they did for the events to come to pass as if they were directed by the hand of Moses. However, these events were set to take place back in eternity past. It is not that a miracle is difficult for God to do; miracles are the easiest things in the world to do for God—what is incredible is that God can line up natural events to take place, and the end result is a huge number of quail to fly low and drop at the feet of the Israelites; or for the sea to open up for the children of Israel to walk across. God can certainly bring these things to pass as miracles without breaking a sweat; however, it is more phenomenal for God to bring these things to pass as a series of incredible events which He has planned from eternity past, to conform to the freewill of man

1Samuel 3:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, at, by, near, on, with, before, upon, against, by means of, among, within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yâmîym (יָמִים) [pronounced yaw-MEEM]	<i>days, a set of days; time of life, lifetime; a specific time period, a year</i>	masculine plural noun with the definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hêm (הֵם) [pronounced haym]	<i>those these [with the definite article]</i>	masculine plural demonstrative adjective	Strong's #1992 BDB #241
These 3 words simply mean <i>in those days</i> .			
This previous phrase might be understood to belong with that which comes before and that which comes after.			
ʾêyn (אֵין) [pronounced ān]	<i>nothing, not, [is] not; not present, not ready; expresses non-existence, absence or non-possession; there is no [none, no one, not]</i>	particle of negation; substantive of negation	Strong's #369 BDB #34
châzôwn (חֹזֶן) [pronounced khaw-ZOHN]	<i>vision, a prophetic vision, a divine revelation; an oracle</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2377 BDB #302

1 Samuel 3:1c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
pârats (פָּרַט) [pronounced paw-RATS]	<i>to be broken, to be scattered (or, dispersed); to be spread abroad, to spread out, to be spread out</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #6555 BDB #829

Translation: ...[in these days] [there was] no divine revelation breaking out. Then we have the negative construct ʾayin (אֵין) [pronounced AH-yin], which means *naught, nothing*; or it can be used as a particle of negation; *no, not*. It can mean *in the condition of being not = without*. Just as *to him* is often rendered *he has*; we often supply a verb for this substantive and render it *there is no*. This is followed by the masculine singular noun *vision, prophetic vision, divine revelation*, also a new word for us. Then we have the Niphal participle *to break through, to break over the limits, to break out, to scatter, to disperse*. This is a pent up quantity of water which has suddenly and forcefully burst forth out of its dam. With the negative, it is just the opposite. **There was no divine revelation breaking out.** So that this is not misinterpreted, what we have is a pent up quantity of revelation, but it did not break out and burst forth from behind the dam.

Now, the first time that I read this, I got the impression that perhaps God spoke to His people a lot, but not at this time; as if there were a number of times when God spoke and it was not recorded. However, that is not necessarily the case, but a mistaken inference gotten from some translations. We are in the time period of the judges—actually, at the end of that time period. God spoke directly to several judges and saviors (like Gideon, for example, when Gideon was making his breakfast cereal). In our study of the Book of Judges, it was clear that God's Word was rare in that time period. This is said, because God will speak to Samuel, and Samuel will not know that it is God. In fact, this is apparently the first time that God ever speaks to Samuel.

Israel, once known for bearing the truth, will become a vacuum with regards to God's truth: "**Behold, days are coming,**" declares Jehovah Elohim, "**When I will send a famine on the land, but not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but rather for hearing the words of Jehovah. And people will stagger from sea to sea, and from north even to east; they will go to and fro to seek the word of Jehovah, but they will not find it.**" (Amos 8:11–12; see also Prov. 29:18 Lam. 2:9 Ezek. 7:26). When individuals reject the truth, their souls become vacuums which suck in every kind of false doctrine. I have observed this with a number of personal acquaintances. The more that they reject God's Word, the more they believe in things which are absolutely false and evil. I have one personal acquaintance who, through her own personal experiences, understands the importance of family—she understands the importance of a mother and father raising a child. She has observed, over several decades, how our family structure has disintegrated, how day care has become a predominant way of raising young children, and how children have become more and more degenerate with each generation. Yet, this same person will oppose all legislation which she perceives as a part of the conservative agenda, even if this legislation favors traditional marriage and family over nontraditional marriages and nontraditional families (e.g., homosexual coupling). Her reasoning is, if it is touted by the conservative right, then it must be wrong. Since she has rejected God's Word, all that remains is that which is false. I have a large number of friends and acquaintances who behave exactly the same way—they reject God's Word, and their soul literally sucks in viewpoint which is completely false.

We should never take the teaching of the Word of God for granted. I have been blessed from early on in my Christian life to be able to hear God's Word taught each and every day for over 25 years. At the point at which I chose to study on my own (I still listen to the teaching of God's Word), I had heard over 8000 hours of Bible teaching prior to the time that I chose to exegete a few books, and these hours were a great blessing to me. There is no way that I could have gotten to the point that I am at without this teaching. At the time that I write, availability of good Bible teaching in the US is phenomenal. There are nearly a dozen outstanding teachers who have tapes and CD's available at no charge. Many of them allow you to download their teaching from the internet. The believer today has no excuse whatsoever for a lack of spiritual growth.

Why are there times when Bible teaching is readily available and why are there times when it is rare? The key is our volition; our free will. God can choose to reveal the gospel to every single man, woman and child, or not; that is up to Him. God has chosen not to. If a person has no interest in a relationship with God at God consciousness, then God is not required to present the gospel to that person. There is no issue here at all. Similarly, if a believer has no interest in the Word of God, then God has no reason to provide good Bible teaching for that person. There is no issue here, as the volition of that person has already made the decision. Sometimes for a child's birthday, you might offer him a choice between which restaurant they would like to go to; or you might offer him a choice between which meal he would like you to make for him. It is possible that you might leave off Sushi or Indian food from the list of options, if you already know that your child has no interest in these foods. Similarly, God, who knows us intimately, does not give every person the option of the gospel; and He does not give every believer the option of good, solid Bible teaching. The biggest surprise to me as a believer was to see how many believers really had little or no interest in the teaching of the Word of God. That totally surprised me and it took me a long time to get over it. "These are believers," I would say to myself; "They go to church regularly, their faith seems sincere, and they study the Bible. Why would they have no real interest in good verse by verse teaching of the Word of God?" It took me a long time to accept that some people only hear what they want to hear. Some people believe in Jesus Christ and yet keep the opinions that they had already acquired. These negative believers often want to have a say in it, and give their opinion about what this or that passage means. Christians who are often not even dry behind the ears, want input when it comes to the explanation of this or that passage—which is a sign of tremendous arrogance and total lack of teachability.

One of the greatest sins that you can have is arrogance. Sometimes, the believer wants to carry over from his unbelieving days to his post-salvation experience are the norms and standards which he had as an unbeliever. They want to be able to be able to justify everything that they have previously said and thought as unbelievers. Now, some people are brought up in such a way that, much of what they learned as an unbeliever (e.g., the laws of divine establishment) are a part of accurate Christian doctrine. However, there might be a great deal of what they believe in from their life as an unbeliever (social activism, for instance) which have no place in the Christian life. Pretty much every new believer will have to shed some of his thoughts, ideals and notions which he held as an unbeliever. If you are too arrogant to let go of these past norms and standards, you are unteachable; therefore, God is not required to provide accurate teaching for you. I came out of a relatively large city of 1 million people. I attended a number of churches there where the teaching of God's Word was extremely weak and often nonexistent. In retrospect, I can easily recognize just how negative to good teaching this area is. One small community which I lived in subsequent to that time is a community of a few thousand people; however, there are more individuals interested in good sound Bible teaching from that community than in the city which I came from. For that reason, the smaller community has a number of options when it comes to good Bible teaching; the larger city has very few local options for good Bible teaching.

And so he was the day the that and Eli was lying down in his place and his [two] eyes had begun dimming—he was not able to see.

I Samuel
3:2

And it was in that day that Eli was lying down in his place and his eyes had begun to dim [so that] he was unable to see.

At that time, Eli was lying down in his place. His eyes had developed cataracts and he could barely see.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so he was the day the that and Eli was lying down in his place and his [two] eyes had begun dimming—he was not able to see.

Septuagint

And it came to pass at that time that Heli was sleeping in his place; and his eyes began to fail, and could not see.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Samuel served the LORD by helping Eli the priest, who was by that time almost blind. In those days, the LORD hardly ever spoke directly to people, and he did not appear to them in dreams very often. But one night, Eli was asleep in his room,...

[vv. 1–2].

The Message One night Eli was sound asleep (his eyesight was very bad--he could hardly see).

NJB One day, it happened that Eli was lying down in his room. His eyes were beginning to grow dim; he could no longer see.

TEV One night Eli, who was now almost blind, was sleeping in his own room;...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

HCSB One day Eli, whose eyesight was failing, was lying in his room.

JPS (Tanakh) One day, Eli was asleep in his usual place; his eyes had begun to fail and he could barely see.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Albert Barnes (revised) 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.

NASB And it happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim *and* he could not see well).

Young's Updated LT And it came to pass, at that time, that Eli is lying down in his place, and his eyes have begun to be dim—he is not able to see.

What is the gist of this verse? Eli was an old man, and losing his vision. At this time, he is laying down.

1Samuel 3:2a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יוֹם) [pronounced <i>yohm</i>]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced <i>hoo</i>]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214

The bēyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean *in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day*.

Translation: *And it was in that day...* We begin with the wâw consecutive and the Qal imperfect of *to be*, giving us *and it was*, or *and so it came to pass*. Then we have a phrase similar to the previous verse, so I will compare them here, as both are found throughout Scripture:

<i>In Those Days vs In That Day</i>		
The Transliteration	bayyâmîym hâhêm	bayyôm hahû`
The Hebrew	בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם	בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא
The Pronunciation	bay-yaw-MEEM haw-HAYM	bah-YOHM hah-HOO
The Literal Rendering	in the days the them (or, <i>these</i>)	in the day the that
What it is	We have <i>in days</i> adjoined to the masculine plural demonstrative adjective (which would, in other circumstances, be rendered <i>they, them</i>)	We have <i>in a day</i> followed by the 3 rd person singular pronoun, which is also used as an emphatic (<i>that, those</i>)
The Meaning	This phrase refers to an unspecified period of time whose duration is implied by the context	This phrase refers to a particular point in time.
The Colloquial Rendering	<i>in those days</i>	<i>in that day, at that time, one day</i>
Strong's and BDB Numbers	Strong's #1992 BDB #241 (<i>these</i>) Strong's #3117 BDB #398 (<i>days</i>)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214 Strong's #3117 BDB #398 (<i>day</i>)
Found in	I Sam. 3:1	I Sam. 3:2
Particular Application	In v. 1, a particularly long period of time had passed where God provided very little by way of divine revelation.	In v. 2, we are speaking of a particular night when Eli is sleeping and God speaks to Samuel.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

So what we are dealing with here is a specific point in time.

1Samuel 3:2b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿĒlîy (אֱלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH^{AV}</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
b ^e (ב) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

1 Samuel 3:2b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mâqôwm (מָקוֹם) [pronounced <i>maw-KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated</i> ; for a soldier, it may mean where he is <i>stationed</i> ; for people in general, it would be their <i>place of abode</i> (which could be their house or their town)	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: ...that Eli was lying down in his place... The circumstances are described beginning with the wâw conjunction and the proper noun *Eli* followed by Qal active participle *shâkab* (שָׁכַב) [pronounced *shaw-KAH^{BV}*], which means *to lie down*. This is followed by the bēyth preposition and the masculine singular noun *mâqôwm* (מָ) [pronounced *maw-KOHM*], which means *place, place of abode*. The masculine singular suffix is affixed to *mâqôwm*. *And so it was in that day that Eli was lying in his place...* Eli is an old man and he takes a lot of naps. This was, however, apparently at night.

The Tabernacle of God has apparently been in Shiloh for some time; my guess would be maybe a century or three (it appears to have been there early during the period of the judges (Joshua 18:1, 31 19:51)).⁷ What has probably happened is, outbuildings have been added—shelters for the High Priest and for others who are at the Tabernacle daily. This would be in line with the Tabernacle being called a Temple in 1 Sam. 1:9 and 3:3 (the word *Temple* indicates a more permanent structure, as opposed to the tent which moved with Israel in the desert wilderness).

1 Samuel 3:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ə (or v ^ə) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced <i>ĠAH-yin</i>]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744

In all actuality, this is written as a singular, but read as a dual.⁸ The actual difference with respect to the consonants is very little. *His eye* is עַיִן and *his [two] eyes* is עַיִנֵי. As you can see, a slip of the pen or a poor manuscript could account for the missing yodh (י).

châlal (חָלַל) [pronounced <i>khaw-LAHL</i>]	<i>to begin; also to loose, to set free; to break; to profane</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #2490 BDB #320
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The verb here, in the Qal stem, means *to pollute, to defile, to profane, to sully, to contaminate*. The Hiphil meaning is entirely different; in the Hiphil, *châlal* means *to loose, to set free; to break; to profane; to begin* (derived from its meaning *to open*).

This verb is a homonym which also means *to mollify, to appease, to entreat the favor of; to be sick, to be diseased, to be pained; to pollute, to defile, to profane, to sully, to contaminate*. Most of these 4 sets of meaning can be determined by context and by the stem of the verb.

⁷ It is possible that the Ark and the Tabernacle were in Bethel for awhile as well. Judges 20:26–28.

⁸ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 291.

1Samuel 3:2c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kêhâh (כְּהָה) [pronounced kay-HAWH]	<i>faint, darkened, dimmed; lightened</i>	feminine plural adjective	Strong's #3544 BDB #462
<p>The sets of meanings may seem antithetical, but when a person gets cataracts, their eyes have white portions where the cataracts are; however, this makes that person's vision <i>blurry, indistinct, and darkened</i>. It is translated by some <i>lighten</i> and by others <i>become dark</i>. The key to this word is its corresponding verb, kâhâh (כְּהָה) [pronounced kaw-HAWH], which means <i>to be feeble, to fail in strength, to be cast down in mind, to become dim, to become darkened</i>. This word is used for eyes which are growing old and having a difficult time seeing; for the person whose vision is becoming feeble or dim, it becomes more difficult to distinguish precise objects, shapes and colors; everything appears to be blending together.</p>			
lô' (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
yâkôl (יָכֹל) [pronounced yaw-COAL]	<i>to be able, can, to have the ability, to have the power to; to be able to bear; to be able to bring oneself [to do anything]; to be lawful, to be permitted; to be powerful, to prevail</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3201 BDB #407
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to see, to look, to look at, to view, to behold; to perceive, to understand, to learn, to know</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7200 BDB #906

Translation: ...and his eyes had begun to dim [so that] he was unable to see. We have in this portion of v. 2 the feminine plural adjective kêhâh (כְּהָה) [pronounced kay-HAWH], which is translated by some *lighten* and by others *become dark*. The key to this word is the corresponding verb, kâhâh (כְּהָה) [pronounced kaw-HAWH] which is used of the eyes which are growing old and having a difficult time seeing. It means that the eyes are becoming *faint, darkened, dimmed*. One can see the white of the lens sac from the outside (they become lightened), which makes everything blurring and hard to see from Eli's point of view (they become darkened).

Commentators seem to go out of their way to read oddball stuff into simple passages.

The Goofy Ideas of Various Commentators

There were a lot of weird views on Eli's problems with his vision. Matthew Henry suggested that it was sort of a punishment; Eli was short-sighted with his sons, so God made him physically short-sighted.⁹ Eli is 98 years old. People have physical infirmities. There is no reason to make anything else of this (Eccles. 12:3 would be in agreement with this).

Henry also suggested that Eli was spending too much time in his chamber, allowing his sons to do too much evil. We already know about the sons and we already know that Eli was too easy on them and we already know that God judged him for it (1Sam. 2:27–36). There is no need to read stuff like this into this passage.

⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:2.

The Goofy Ideas of Various Commentators

Kimchi and others say that Eli's spiritual understanding (i.e., the eyes of his soul) is darkened.¹⁰ First of all, that is not what this says; and secondly, it is Eli and not Samuel who realizes that it is God who is calling Samuel. This is simple narrative. There is enough going on in Scripture without us having to make up weird crap about it.

I appreciate having commentators that I can learn from, but some of them get too, hmm, dreamy in their estimations. They read far too much into text which is clearly simple narrative.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

This portion of v. 2 reads: [...and his eyes began becoming dimmed, and he was unable to see](#). His vision difficulties will be mentioned again in 1 Sam. 4:15. One very common consequence of old age which was prevalent in the ancient world, for those who lived any amount of time, was that of sight loss, probably due to cataracts. Today, we have cataract surgery.

The reason that Eli's visual impairment is mentioned is that he sometimes required additional care. Even with the light of the lamp of God (v. 3), it was still too dark for him to see. Samuel is laying down within hearing distance of Eli, in case he needs any kind of special assistance. This is why, when God calls Samuel, that Samuel will think that Eli has called him.

[And a lamp of Elohim had not yet gone out and Samuel was lying down in a Temple of Y^ehowah where \[was\] an Ark of Elohim.](#)

1 Samuel
3:3

[The lamp of Elohim had not yet gone out and Samuel was laying down in the Temple of Y^ehowah where the Ark of Elohim \[was\].](#)

[The Lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was laying down in the Temple of God wherein was the Ark of God.](#)

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And a lamp of God had not yet gone out and Samuel was lying down in a Temple of Yehowah where [was] an Ark of God.
Peshitta	And the lamp of the LORD was not yet put out, and Samuel was lying down to sleep in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was.
Septuagint	And the lamp of God [was burning] before it was trimmed and Samuel slept in the temple, where the ark of God [was].

Significant differences: The beginning of this verse appears to be more of an explanation than a translation of the Hebrew. The remainder is the same.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	...and Samuel was sleeping on a mat near the sacred chest in the LORD's house. They had not been asleep very long...
<i>The Message</i>	It was well before dawn; the sanctuary lamp was still burning. Samuel was still in bed in the Temple of GOD, where the Chest of God rested.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

¹⁰ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:2.

HCSB	Before the lamp of God had gone out, Samuel was lying down in the tabernacle of the LORD where the ark of God was located.
JPS (Tanakh)	The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the temple of the where the Ark of God was.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

Albert Barnes (revised)	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;...
HNV	...and the lamp of God hadn't yet gone out, and Shemu'el had laid down [to sleep], in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was;...
NASB	...and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the where the ark of God was,...
Young's Updated LT	And the lamp of God is not yet extinguished, and Samuel is lying down in the temple of Jehovah, where the ark of God is,...

What is the gist of this verse? The lamp of God is still burning faintly, and Samuel is lying down, mostly asleep in the Tabernacle of God, wherein was the Ark of God.

1Samuel 3:3a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nêr (נֵר) [pronounced <i>nair</i>]	<i>lamp</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5216 BDB #632
This is also spelled nîyr (נִיַר) [pronounced <i>near</i>]; nêyr (נֵיַר) [pronounced <i>nair</i>]; nir (נִר) [pronounced <i>nir</i>]; and nêrâh (נֵרָה) [pronounced <i>nay-RAW</i>].			
Ēlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
ṭerem (טֶרֶם) [pronounced <i>TĒH-rem</i>]	<i>before that, previously; before the beginning, not yet</i>	an adverb of time, sometimes used in the negative sense	Strong's #2962 (and #2958) BDB #382
kâkâh (כָּכָה) [pronounced <i>kaw-KAW</i>]	<i>to be quenched (extinguished, put out); to go out; to cover over, to hide [the primary meanings]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3518 BDB #459

Translation: *The lamp of Elohim had not yet gone out...* On my first read of this verse, I took it metaphorically to refer back to Eli, and that the lamp of God had not yet gone out in him, meaning that he was old, his eyes were growing dim, but God's spark of life was still within him. Separating this half of this verse from the previous is fairly arbitrary. What we probably have here is a double meaning—this refers both back to Eli, in a metaphorical sense, but also and most definitely to the literal lamp of God. *Lamps*, in Old Testament times, were nothing more than glorified candles. Most of them had enough oil in them to burn throughout the entire night; however, the wick would have to be trimmed and adjusted several times in the evening, explaining the proverb of the virtuous woman in Prov. 31:18. Anyway, interestingly enough, we have this phrase, *the lamp of God*, only here in this passage. There is some disagreement as to which lamp this was. In the Tent of God, was a lampstand of pure gold which God gave instructions concerning back in Ex. 25:31–40. The Hebrew word for this golden lampstand is m^enôwrâh (מְנוֹרָה) [pronounced *m^e-noh-RAW*], which means *lampstand*. The word is transliterated *menorah*, and it is a lampstand

with seven branches, which most of us have seen (and this is not the word found in our passage). The construction of gold speaks of our Lord's Deity; seven is the number of perfection. The *lamp* aspect of it represents Christ as the Light of the World. Today, the Jews have this candelabra which is their menorah; however, these were oil lamps (Ex. 35:14). Actually, to us, it would look like a mix between the two. Just like a candle, there were wicks for each stem and these wicks burned, and the oil below provided the fuel. Now, there was also a lamp which was to be kept burning continuously from evening to morning (Ex. 27:20–21 Lev. 24:2–4). Our basic question is, whether or not these two lamps were the same. In Ex. 25:31–40, where the pattern for the lampstand is given, we find the word *m^ēnōwrâh* used almost exclusively. The term *nêr* (the word we find in our passage) is found twice, in the plural, in Ex. 25:37, referring to the *lamps* at the end of each branch of the menorah. Both the table and the menorah were placed outside the Holy of Holies, the menorah toward the south and the table toward the north (Ex. 26:35). Apart from any mention of this elaborate lampstand is the light for the Tent of God, which is first mentioned in Ex. 27:20–21. In this passage, we find the word *nêr*, but not the word *m^ēnōwrâh*. We do find the words together in the same passage in Lev. 24:2–4. In vv. 2–3, the sons of Israel are to bring clear olive oil for the burning of the lamp continually; in v. 4, it speaks of Aaron keeping the golden lampstand in order, and it is unclear whether we are speaking of the same thing or whether, being that we are speaking of keeping a lamp burning in vv. 2–3, that v. 4 simply continues in the same vein about a related object in the Tent of God. Here is how the passage reads from Young in an updated rendering of Young's translation: *And Jehovah spoke unto Moses, saying, "Command the sons of Israel and they will bring to you pure olive oil, beaten, for the lamp, to cause a light to go up continually; at the outside of the veil of the testimony in the Tent of Meeting will Aaron arrange is from evening till morning before Jehovah continually—a statute age during to your generations; by the pure candlestick he will arrange the lights before Jehovah continually."* (Lev. 24:1–4). My thinking is that, from a symbolic standpoint, we would expect the continually burning lamp and the golden lampstand to be one and the same; which is also the simplest solution. Furthermore, calling the lamp which was to be kept lit throughout the night the *Lamp of God* further indicates that this was the golden lampstand.¹¹ There is no description of an additional lamp or light source discussed in the Law. Gill simplifies this considerably, saying that the *Lamp of God* is just the singular standing in for the plural¹² (which is known as a metonymy).

Furthermore, once Shiloh has been destroyed (which will occur during the first third of this book), neither of these words will be used again until 1Kings 7:49 (except that *nêr* will be used in a symbolic sense in 2Sam. 21:17). However, a reasonable case could be made for the idea that there was a lamp for light separate from the golden lampstand. In our passage, we essentially have the lamp burning all evening while Samuel and Eli were sleeping, and the wording of this passage indicates that it is almost morning and the lamp is almost ready to go out. This would also be the time when Samuel would experience the most dreaming.

Now, although I did make light of the mess that some exegetes made of Eli's sight going, we do have a poetic parallel here within this narrative. Before the sun of Eli set, the dawn of Samuel arose; as Eli's vision grows dim, Samuel begins his ministry as a seer; as Eli's candle is about to go out, Samuel's is being lit. There is no harm in recognizing the literary technique here, the passing of the torch, as it were.

1Samuel 3:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^ê (or v ^ê) (ו) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

¹¹ Allow me this tangent: you recall that there are these *scholars* who believe that much of Scripture was written long after we traditionally hold. They also believed that this 7-lamp candelabra was an invention of 5th century B.C. priests. However, this type of lamp was not found in the Tent of God alone, but was used by many ancients as far back as Middle Bronze Age (they have been discovered in tombs and in house ruins in Iron I and Iron II sites in Palestine and from Middle Bronze sites in Syria. *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*; Merrill Tenney, ed., Zondervan Publishing House, ©1976; Vol. 3, p. 866.

¹² Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:3.

1Samuel 3:3b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Sh ^e mûw ^{èl} (שִׁמְוֵאל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw-KAH ^{bV}]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
hêychâl (הֵיחָל) [pronounced hay-SHAWL]	<i>a large, magnificent building; a palace, a palace of [Jehovah]; a temple, a portion of the Temple</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1964 BDB #228
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...and Samuel was laying down in the Temple of Y^ehowah... In this phrase, we have the masculine singular construct of hêychâl (הֵיחָל) [pronounced hay-KHAWL], which means *palace, temple*; which is affixed to the name *Jehovah*. When we first came across this word back in I Sam. 1:9, I was somewhat nonplused. You see, the Temple has not yet been built. It will be built by Solomon roughly a century hence. Therefore, this is not the Temple that we associate with Israel. As I have mentioned earlier, there are several outbuildings which have been added around the premises of the Tabernacle, making it more of a permanent structure (although the Tabernacle itself could be easily picked up and moved). For this reason, the entire complex may have reasonably been called a Temple. Now, had this book been written a hundred or more years later, an author at that time would never call the Tabernacle a *Temple*, simply because there was no way to confuse the Tabernacle of God with the Temple. The Temple of Solomon was so much more. Any author from the era of Solomon (or later) would have properly referred back to this temporary tent as a *Tabernacle*, and little thought would have been given to the outbuildings. What I am telling you is, this is internal evidence that this history was written very near to the time when it took place. Given that this book is called the *Book of Samuel*, we may reasonably assume that Samuel wrote the early portion of this book.

I do not buy into the JEPD theory, which is that contiguous portions of Scripture in the same books were written at radically different times by up to 3 or 4 primary authors and then later pieced together. This theory teaches that in the Law, whenever we find the name of God, *Jehovah*, used, that portion was written by the *Jehovist*; and whenever we find *Elohim* as the primary name of God, then this portion of the Law was written by the *Elohimist*. This is also known as the JEDP hypothesis, Documentary hypothesis, or as the Wellhausen theory. Their explanation would be that a person from the time of Solomon or later, only familiar with the Temple of God, would have written these lines. I don't wish to go into any more detail about this bogus theory than that (it was covered in much more detail in the introduction to Exodus), except to say that it is a completely bogus theory designed to cast doubt on the Word of God.¹³ What we have come across in this portion of Scripture is a whole host of non-standard practices which God seemed to tolerate (the practices of the sons of Eli were not tolerated, however). And we would expect there to be a great many non-standard practices which came out of the time period of the

¹³ Josh McDowell wonderfully deals with this theory in *A Ready Defense*; Here's Life Publishers; ©1990 and in *More Evidence that Demands a Verdict*; ©1975 by Campus Crusade for Christ.

judges, which was one of Israel's most degenerate times. Here, apparently some time during the time of the judges, the Israelites began calling the *Tent of God* the *Temple of Jehovah*. It was still just a tent, although it was set up semi-permanently, and apparently it had become a small complex of tents or outbuildings (as we have noted, there were sleeping quarters for Eli and Samuel; and there were doors—v. 15).

One of the assertions of Documentary Hypothesis is, many of these books of Scripture were put together by a priestly class who wanted their jobs justified and delineated. Again, this is hogwash. What we find, particularly in the book of Samuel, are non-standard practices as well as even disuse of some Tabernacle furniture (e.g., the Ark, which will be stored for nearly a century). The author of Samuel does not periodically stop and say, "And this was a bad thing." What I am trying to say is, it would make no sense for a priesthood to approve of the book of Samuel because it does not properly delineate the practices of the priesthood (we have even more problems with this in the book of the Judges). In fact, the priesthood, particularly during the time of Jesus Christ, had become particularly corrupt and no longer resembled what God designed. We should expect this—we should expect attacks on the Word of God by theologians who believe in the JEPD theory and we should expect for the rituals of God to be confused, supplanted or perverted.

I recently read about the author-theologian Robert Funk, who died. He was a *scholar* who doubted the miracles of Jesus, and went in search of the *real Jesus*. What Funk really wanted to do was to pervert Who and What Jesus is. He began with the presuppositions that Jesus is not God and Jesus could not perform miracles and that Jesus is this great religious philosopher Whose mission was to get us to behave like nice people. In order to do this, Funk and his followers had to conclude that 80% of the historical narratives about Jesus were inaccurate.¹⁴ Do you grasp what he and his followers asserted? Their opinion of Who Jesus is and what He did is more correct than the opinions of those who actually saw Jesus daily. The opinions of Funk and company, from two millennia later, were arrogantly seen by themselves as more accurate than the opinions of those who witnessed the miracles of Jesus and saw what He actually did and said. Furthermore, in order to get the Jesus they want, they had to throw out 80% of that which is recorded about Jesus. Funk is quoted as saying, *I do not want my faith to be in Jesus, but faith in the really real...in some version of whatever it was that Jesus believed* (emphasis mine).¹⁵ This is Satan's attack—Satan is going to discredit truth in any way that he can. Salvation is through faith **in Jesus Christ**; therefore, Satan will do everything possible to keep us from believing in Jesus Christ.

Let's see if I can draw an analogy: you are on a jury, and you have heard 2 credible eyewitnesses and 2 others who are credible who provide testimony of events based upon historical records and other eyewitness testimony under the principle of excited utterance. However, you have your own theory of what happened, so, you simply throw out 80% of credible eyewitness testimony in order for your theory to seem true. Do I want such a jury to judge me? Absolutely not! However, this is the approach of Funk and his followers—discard what you disagree with (which is the vast majority of eyewitness accounts), and insert your own beliefs. The primary difference between Funk and most people is, Funk is much more knowledgeable on this topic; however, negative volition is negative volition—it can withstand an overwhelming amount of evidence to the contrary.

Negative volition exists in men of all IQ's. Some very simplistic types might continue saying, "I never seen God, so God don't exist." However, when you are of a more intellectual bend, but you do not want to believe in Jesus Christ, then you have to sound intelligent about it. I am sure that Robert Funk's ideas sound extremely well-thought out and intellectual—however, at the heart, you have 80% of eyewitness testimony being arbitrarily tossed out in favor of one's personal philosophy. Let me add, not only was there eyewitness testimony as to the person and miracles of our Lord Jesus Christ, but these men were willing to die for what they saw. This is more than a martyr, who dies for what he believes; they were willing to give their lives for something they *knew* was true or false. Logically, if someone knows something is false, they are a lot less likely to die for it. Furthermore, we already have recorded evidence that the Apostles of Jesus Christ were cowards (except for John and sometimes Peter). This is what makes their testimony so strong. Furthermore, it is testimony which was not contested in the first century. We do not have any books or pamphlets from the first century entitled, "These Apostle of Jesus—They are Full of

¹⁴ *Los Angeles Times*; September 7, 2005; p. B10; Robert Funk, 79; *Scholar Questioned Miracles of Jesus*.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Crap!” The miracles of Jesus and the miracles of the Apostles in the first century are *never* contested by contemporary writings (i.e., first century writings), This is despite the fact that Christians were held in very low esteem for the most part during the first century. Therefore, if these miracles could be contested, we should expect to find evidence of that. Therefore we have two strong reasons to believe what the Apostles wrote, as opposed to the philosophy of Robert Funk, who asks us to ignore 80% of Apostolic testimony.

I have discussed these issues with others and one of the arguments which I have come across is, *the Apostles took these theological positions because it gave them approbation, power and authority*. Again, the Apostles were not brave men. 9 of them deserted Jesus as soon as Jesus had been arrested; Peter later deserted Jesus when his life was in danger. These Apostles did have some authority over a small group of people; however, they faced great persecution, a totally disrupted personal life, and eventual death (or, in the case of John, banishment). It was not like they would come into town and a great parade would meet them. It was far more likely that men with stones would be standing there to meet them. Often, they had to slip in and out of cities surreptitiously so that they would not be imprisoned. Any Apostle could have become much more popular with Jews and with Romans had they rejected Jesus, their Savior.

1Samuel 3:3c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
shâm (שָׁם) [pronounced shawm]	<i>there; at that time, then; therein, in that thing</i>	adverb	Strong's #8033 BDB #1027
ʾăsher + shâm can be rendered <i>where, in what place, to what place</i> when found together.			
ʾărôn (אָרוֹן) [pronounced uh-ROHN]	<i>ark, chest; Ark</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #727 BDB #75
ʾĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43

Translation: [...where the Ark of Elohim \[was\]](#). The ark was an acacia wood chest measuring 45"x24"x24" which was overlaid with gold. The wood represented the humanity of Jesus Christ. The wood was overlaid with gold both inside and out, and there was a gold molding made for it; the gold representing the deity of Jesus Christ. There were rings attached to the sides so that poles might be fitted through so that the ark could be carried without touching it. Man was not allowed to approach and touch the holiness of God. On top of this chest was a mercy seat, 45"x24", made out of pure gold, representing the mercy and love of God as manifested on the cross. Then were hammered out two cherubim who were attached to the mercy seat (or, possibly just standing upon the mercy seat), facing one another, covering the mercy seat with their wings. This represents the angelic conflict. I hesitate to say whether we are speaking of a fallen angel and an elect angel, or whether we are speaking of two elect angels, but I would lean toward the former, simply because both groups of angels observe us (the argument that these are both elect angels would be based upon the fact that they are both upon the mercy seat).

The mercy seat is hidden from public view, inside the Holy of Holies, as the exact nature of the cross was not known until the crucifixion. Similarly, the pattern of the furniture of the Tent (or Tabernacle of God) was also in the form of a cross, although, that could not be seen either, unless the Tabernacle was removed and the furniture left in place (see the **Placement of the Tabernacle Furniture**, which was covered in Ex. 30:18). You see, some of the furniture was inside the Tabernacle (e.g., the lampstand); the Ark was inside the Holy of Holies which was inside the Tabernacle; and some furniture was outside the Tabernacle (e.g., the brazen altar). So, even though this was all set up as God required it to be set up, no one could really perceive the shape of the furniture, as some was inside the Tabernacle and the Ark even further obscured from view.

God was known at that time to be merciful and forgiving, but at the same time just. His means to forgive us and yet remain just was never fully revealed in the Old Testament (I'll elaborate in a moment). After the crucifixion and the resurrection, the meaning of the cross has become clear to us who are saved by God—and that, primarily because Paul explained it in great detail. Don't misunderstand me: Paul did not add his own twist or explanation to the cross—Paul fully explained it, and his explanation makes all of the pieces of the puzzle fit together. However, in any case, those in the Old Testament did not have as perspicuous a view of the gospel as we have in this dispensation.

Allow me this digression, as I know some may have perked up in disagreement. I know that it is popular for some to say that the gospel is as perspicuous in the Old Testament as it is in the New, but that really isn't true (don't worry, I will qualify this). That Jesus would come and die for our sins on the cross was certainly presented in shadow form again and again in Scripture, but there is no indication that any man at any time completely understood the whole realm of soteriology prior to the cross, despite the fact that Isaiah described the suffering of the cross and its meaning in more detail in Isa. 53 than we find even in the New Testament. However, any man could still place his faith in Jehovah Elohim of Israel and be saved. An Old Testament believer may not have grasped all of the theological fine points (very few do today, even though it is fully revealed), but they were still saved. We are saved based upon what Jesus did for us on the cross; our participation is faith in Him, which is something that any person can exercise—faith is non-meritorious. Men and women of all dispensations are saved in exactly the same way—through faith in Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel, Jesus Christ. The amount of information that we have varies—however, given God's perfect justice and righteousness, we can be assured that anyone who desires to know God at God consciousness will be given the gospel—and this can occur during any dispensation, under any set of circumstances. What I understand about salvation right at this time is vastly different than what I understood when I first believed in Jesus Christ. What Jews and non-Jews understood during the dispensation of Israel is going to be different than what I understand, based upon the **Doctrine of Progression of Reveal Truth** (which simply means, as time goes on, God revealed more and more of Himself, culminating in the epistles of the New Testament). However, the means is exactly the same: *non-meritorious faith in Jesus Christ*.

Furthermore, Old Testament writers rarely even used the verbiage which we do (*saved; having eternal life*); and most often when they did, it referred to being delivered rather than to being *saved*. That Jesus would come in the flesh and, in the right time, die on our behalf, paying for our sins is not something that a theologian would have understood in the Age of Israel. And though this was clearly taught in shadow form in the Old Testament, no one from Old Testament could have elucidated that as I just have. Our salvation is not based upon have a complete, firm and clear theological grasp of salvation (such a requirement would exclude 90% of all believers from heaven). Our salvation is based upon our faith in Jesus, Who did all of the work and accomplished our salvation for us. Our understanding of His work in New Testament times might be limited; and those who were saved prior to the incarnation had a very limited grasp of salvation. There is a reason for this—there is a reason that man could be saved in the Old Testament by faith, yet not fully grasp that God would come in the flesh personally and pay for our sins. The reason for this, surprisingly enough, is not found in print anywhere, to the best of my knowledge.

If Satan could undo or reverse just one event of history, what would it be? The cross, of course. It is the cross which broke Satan's back.

In order to explain *why*, let's approach this Socratically: if Satan could undo or reverse just one event of history, what would it be? The cross, of course. It is the cross which broke Satan's back. If Jesus did not die for our sins, then **we are, of all men, the most miserable** (1Cor. 15:19). But Satan not only did not realize that the cross would involve the payment of sins by our Lord on our behalf, so Satan himself participated in the entire event, from inspiring such evil in both the Romans and the Jews, to entering Judas in order to distinguish Jesus from His disciples (Satan did

not want to leave anything to chance). No man knows the Scriptures better than Satan and no one is as adept at distorting salvation as is Satan. So, God had to reveal salvation in the Old Testament, both as a sign and as redemption information. So, how does God reveal the cross in the Old Testament without completely revealing the cross? He does so by analogy; He does so by shadow teaching. Man had enough information to place his faith in Jehovah Elohim of Israel, but no one had enough information to clearly determine the exact events which were to take place at the end of our Lord's earthly existence. After the fact, the sacrifices and the shadow teaching are quite perspicuous; but, up until the land was darkened with the thick darkness while God the Father judged God the Son for our sins—up until that time—no one clearly understood the entire gospel message (it was left to Paul and Peter and the author of the book of Hebrews to explain the events of the cross much later). In other words, God revealed His plan of salvation to the extent that man could believe and be saved in the Old Testament, but God did not make enough information available to Satan, the greatest theological genius and Biblical scholar of all created beings, so that Satan, rather than impeding the plan of God, helped to advance God's plan, much to his own personal dismay. Not only is their great irony in the events which led up to the cross, but it is one of many illustrations where God takes events and circumstances which seem horrible, and He mixes these events so that they result in that which is good (Rom. 8:28).

The Ark of God was kept in the Holy of Holies, a portion of the Tent of God which was hidden to the outside world. Only the High Priest, one day a year, on the Day of Atonement, ever set foot in this room to sprinkle blood on the mercy seat of God. Inside this ark (ark means *chest*), was the Book of the Law, Aaron's rod that budded (representing resurrection) and a pot of manna, which represented God's provision. All of this was contained within the chest or Ark of God and that was kept from public view 99% of the time (the Ark was moved from time to time and twice went with Israel into battle). Anyway, I hope that you can see that the Ark of God was fraught with meaning. And note very carefully how closely related is the Ark of God (which represents our Lord) to the Word of God; to the provision of God (realize that our day-to-day provision is insignificant compared to His provision for us on the cross); and to the resurrection. The Ark of God is hidden, and yet, simultaneously, fraught with great meaning.

And so calls Y^ehowah unto Samuel and so he said, "Behold me!" I Samuel 3:4 **Then Y^ehowah called out to Samuel, and he answered, "Observe [it is] I!"**

Then Jehovah called out to Samuel, and Samuel answered, "Here I am."

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so calls Y^ehowah unto Samuel and so he said, "Behold me!"
Septuagint And the Lord called, "Samuel, Samuel;" and he said, "Behold me."

Significant differences: We find Samuel's name twice in the LXX without a preposition. The Latin and Syriac are in agreement with the MT (which is usually the case, as they are from the same family of manuscripts).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV ...when the LORD called out Samuel's name. "Here I am!" Samuel answered.
The Message Then GOD called out, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel answered, "Yes? I'm here."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) The LORD called out to Samuel, and he answered, "I'm coming."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB
Young's Updated LT

...that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am."
...and Jehovah called to Samuel, and he said, 'Here I am.'

What is the gist of this verse? God calls out to Samuel and Samuel answers, "Here I am."

1Samuel 3:4a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
This is a homonym; the other qârâ' means to encounter, to befall, to meet, to assemble.			
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
'el (אֵל) [pronounced e]	unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means heard of El; it is transliterated Samuel	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: Then Y^ehowah called out to Samuel,... We know from the beginning what Samuel does not know—we know that God is calling out to Samuel.

1Samuel 3:4b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
'amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

Translation: ...and he answered, "Observe [it is]!" In the Hebrew, there is a preposition and the proper noun Samuel; in the Greek and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, there is no preposition, and the content of what God said is given: And the Lord called, "Samuel, Samuel." And he said... In the Greek (and this cannot be a determining factor, as the Greek is a translation from the Hebrew), the content of what is said is ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ. In the Greek, ἰδοὺ is

transliterated *idou* and pronounced *ih-DOO*, and it means *behold, lo*. It is the correct Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *hinnêh* (הִנֵּה) [pronounced *hin-NAY*], which also means *lo, behold*. To give a modern translation to either word is difficult—we might settle for something like *listen, listen up, observe, focus on this, get this, look, look here*. Now, I had hoped, with the Greek, I could focus in better on this verse, but, although it is somewhat different (and the Dead Sea Scrolls are in agreement with this change), it is still not clear who says the next line.

Most believe that it is Samuel who answers in a word, without using a verb. He begins with the interjection *hên* (הֵן) [pronounced *hayn*], which means *lo!, behold, observe, look, look here, get this, listen, listen up*. Affixed to this interjection is the 3rd person masculine singular suffix. “Behold me!” Or “Observe Me.” Today, Samuel might say, “I’m right here” or “Here I am.”

God primarily, in Scripture, reaches out to man (Gen. 22:1 Ex. 3:4 Psalm 99:6 Acts 9:4). However, Samuel did not realize that it was God Who called out to him. He assumed that it had been Eli who spoke, as word from God was rare in those days. God spoke to Eli concerning Eli’s sons, and this was through a prophet. However, other than that, we do not have a lot of communication directly from God (in fact, we have none in the first couple chapters of this book).

Now, there are two ways to look at this verse, which I did not realize until I got part way through this book. The common way to interpret this is first, God calls to Samuel, and he sits straight up in his bed and says, “Here I am.” Then he realizes that Eli must have called him, so he runs to Eli’s room and repeats, “Here I am.” (this is v. 5). The second way to look at this is, God calls out to Samuel (“Samuel, Samuel”) and then God adds to this “Behold, [it is] I!” Samuel sits straight up in his bed, thinks that Eli has called him, and runs to Eli’s room. Although, like most translators, I lean toward the first interpretation, I am not comfortable without presenting another slightly differing view of these events.

In the first interpretation, where it is Samuel who answers, “Behold, [it is] I!”; he then repeats this again in v. 5. God initially calls him, and Samuel sits straight up and says, “Behold, [it is] I!”; then he gets up and runs into the next room (or wherever Eli is) and says a second time, “Behold, [it is] I.” The first time Samuel speaks, it is coming out of a state of sleep; the second, he is semi-awake and in the sleeping quarters of Eli’s room. God didn’t call Samuel from the other room; so, it is natural, when coming out of a sleep, for Samuel to answer from where he is sleeping. As we will later note in v. 10, all signs point to God speaking to Samuel in a dream.

Preview of coming attractions: What we will have is, God will call Samuel three times. Each of these three times, Samuel will think that Eli is calling to him and he reports to Eli. Because visions and revelations directly from God were rare, Samuel was not expecting God to call him. In fact, at this point in time, Samuel expects God to call him personally like I expect Moses and Elijah to knock on my front door. The third time this occurs, Eli figures out that God is calling Samuel and tells Samuel so (v. 8).

And so he ran unto Eli and so he said, “Behold me, for you called to me.” And so he said, “I called not. Return; lay down.” And so he went and so he lay down.

I Samuel
3:5

So he ran to Eli and said, “Observe, [it is] I; for you called to me.”

But he [Eli] answered, “I did not call out; return [and] lay down.” So he went and he laid down.

So Samuel ran to Eli, saying, “Here I am, for you called out to me.”

But Eli replied, “I didn’t call out; go back to bed.” So Samuel returned to his bed and laid down.

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so he ran unto Eli and so he said, "Behold me, for you called to me." And so he said, "I called not. Return; lay down." And so he went and so he lay down.
Septuagint	And he ran to Heli, and said, "I, for you called me;" and he said, "I did not call you; return, go to sleep;" and he returned and went to sleep.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. What do you want?" "I didn't call you," Eli answered. "Go back to bed." Samuel went back.
<i>The Message</i>	Then he ran to Eli saying, "I heard you call. Here I am." Eli said, "I didn't call you. Go back to bed." And so he did.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	He ran to Eli and said, "here I am; you called me." But he replied, "I didn't call you; go back to sleep." So he went back and lay down.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	And he runs and went unto Eli, and said, 'Here <i>am</i> I, for you have called for me;' and he said, 'I called not, turn back, lie down;' and he went and lay down.

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel goes in to Eli, who he thinks called him, and reports for duty. Eli tells Samuel that he had not been summoned and suggests that he go back to bed.

1Samuel 3:5a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
rûts (רוץ) [pronounced <i>roots</i>]	<i>to run, to hasten to; to move quickly [and with purpose]; to rush upon [in a hostile manner]</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7323 BDB #930
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e</i>]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlîy (עֲלֵי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: So he ran to Eli... Samuel is startled out of his sleep, and he believes Eli, who is a very old man, has called out to him. Therefore, he runs to where Eli is sleeping.

1Samuel 3:5b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...and said, "Observe, [it is] I; for you called to me." Obviously, Samuel was awakened from a deep sleep by the voice of God. However, since God rarely spoke to man during that time, Samuel assumed that it was Eli who had called. Eli was like a father to him and Eli was apparently very old and not in the best of health; therefore, when Eli called out to Samuel, Samuel came running—only, it wasn't Eli who called Samuel.

1Samuel 3:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לֹא or לֹא־) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894

1Samuel 3:5c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
shûwb (שׁוּב) [pronounced shoo ^b V]	<i>to return, to turn, to turn back, to reminisce, to restore something, to bring back something, to revive, to recover something, to make restitution</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7725 BDB #996
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw-KAH ^B V]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

Translation: But he [Eli] answered, “I did not call out; return [and] lay down.” Eli was fast asleep himself when suddenly, Samuel enters into his space saying, “Here I am.” Eli says what anyone would say at this hour of the night, “Get back to bed and go to sleep; it’s the middle of the night.” Eli probably gives this very little thought, and he and Samuel both nod off after this.

1Samuel 3:5d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw-KAH ^B V]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

Translation: So he went and he laid down. Then we have, *and so he went and so he lay down*, giving us: ...and he answered, “I called not; return [and] lay down.” So he went and he lay down.

One of the translations which I initially despised was *Today's English Version*, sold as the *Good News Bible*. My problem, quite frankly, was that it was overly-simplified. However, today's American youth, their education (or lack thereof) is so pronounced today, that such a translation is even more important today than it was when first published (circa 1976). They tend to simplify the vocabulary and combine verses. The *New Living Translation* was also a version which I had prepared myself to dislike; however, it has a nice, easy flow to it, and is a wonderful starting point (neither translation should be used to make dramatic theological points, however). I also added *God's Word™*, as it is one of the more accurate of the modern English versions.

Today's English Version and the New Living Translation Translate vv. 3–5

NASB	TEV	God's Word™	NLT
...and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the where the ark of God was, that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down.	Samuel was sleeping in the sanctuary, where the sacred Covenant Box was. Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning, the LORD called Samuel. He answered, "Yes, sir!" and ran to Eli and said, "You called me, and here I am." But Eli answered, "I didn't call you; go back to bed." So Samuel went back to bed.	The lamp in God's temple hadn't gone out yet, and Samuel was asleep in the temple of the LORD where the ark of God was kept. Then the LORD called Samuel. "Here I am," Samuel responded. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. You called me." "I didn't call [you]," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So Samuel went back and lay down.	The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle near the Ark of God. Suddenly, the LORD called out, "Samuel! Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?" He jumped up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. What do you need?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go on back to bed." So he did.

You will note that the translation appears to have almost all of the information which is found in the NASB; however, it is more up to date and it flows quite well.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

Obviously, this little disturbance woke Eli up. Samuel came running into his room, calling out to him, and Eli immediately wakes up. What likely happened was, Samuel came running into Eli's room saying, "Here I am." Then he observe Eli waking up, and he adds, "Because you called out to me." Samuel's voice would be half questioning, because he is observing Eli wake up. Eli, half awake, replies, "I didn't call out to you. Go back to bed!" So Samuel goes back to bed.

One of the things that many of the modern English translations do is to combine verses. Since there is nothing sacred about the separation of one verse from another, there is nothing wrong with this. Let's illustrate with the often imaginative CEV as compared with the more literal NASB:

The Contemporary English Version Translation of vv. 1–5

NASB	CEV
Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD before Eli. And word from the LORD was rare in those days, visions were infrequent [lit., <i>no vision spread abroad</i>]. And it happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to grow dim <i>and</i> he could not see well) and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the where the ark of God was, that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "Here I am." Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, lie down again." So he went and lay down.	Samuel served the LORD by helping Eli the Priest, who was by that time almost blind. In those days, the LORD hardly ever spoke directly to people, and he did not appear to them in dreams very often. But one night, Eli was asleep in his room, and Samuel was sleeping on a mat near the sacred chest in the LORD's house. They had not been asleep very long when the LORD called out Samuel's name. "Here I am!" Samuel answered. Then he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am. What do you want?" "I didn't call you," Eli answered. "Go back to bed." Samuel went back.

As you will notice, the CEV combines verses, reverses verses, and the result is very readable. The primary problem is their creativity in their translation.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

And so added Y^howah a calling again, “Samuel.” And so arose Samuel and so he went unto Eli and so he said, “Behold me, for you called to me.” And so he said, “I did not call, my son; return, lay down.”

1 Samuel
3:6

Then Y^howah augmented a calling again: “Samuel.” So Samuel got up and he went to Eli and he said, “Look, [it is] I, for you called to me.”

But he said, “I did not call [you], my son; return [and] lie down.”

Then Jehovah called again to Samuel, saying, “Samuel, Samuel.” Samuel sat straight up and went to Eli’s room saying, “I heard you call me. Here I am.”

But Eli replied, “I did not call for you, my son. Go back to bed.”

This will be fairly repetitive:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so added Yehowah a calling again, “Samuel.” And so arose Samuel and so he went unto Eli and so he said, “Behold me, for you called to me.” And so he said, “I did not call, my son; return, lay down.”

Septuagint

And the Lord called again, “Samuel, Samuel.” And he went to Heli the second time, and said, “Behold, [it is] me, for you called me.” And he said, “I called you not; return, go to sleep.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message

GOD called again, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, "I heard you call. Here I am." Again Eli said, "Son, I didn't call you. Go back to bed."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

Again the LORD called, “Samuel!” Samuel rose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” But he replied, “I didn’t call, my son; go back to sleep.”—

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

And the LORD called yet again. “Samuel!” So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he answered [lit., *said*], “I did not call, my son, lie down again.”

Young's Updated LT

And Jehovah added to call again Samuel, and Samuel arose and went unto Eli, and said, ‘Here *am* I, for you have called for me;’ and he said, ‘I have not called, my son, turn back, lie down.’

What is the gist of this verse? Jehovah called Samuel once again, and Samuel went to Eli once more to render assistance. Since Eli did not call him, Eli sent him back to bed.

1Samuel 3:6a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (יָצַח) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yhoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
'ôwd (עוֹד) [pronounced gôhd]	<i>still, yet, again, besides, in addition to, even yet</i>	adverb	Strong's #5750 BDB #728
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: Then Y^ehowah augmented a calling again: “Samuel.” The words are fairly repetitive from the previous verse. This time, He calls Samuel’s name (in the Greek, God calls his name out twice). Literally: **Then Y^ehowah augmented a calling again, “Samuel!”** This is one of the ways that God employed to speak to his people was as they sleep. Now, God speaks to us through His Word.

1Samuel 3:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קָוַם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229

1Samuel 3:6b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿel (לָא) [pronounced eɪ]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: *So Samuel got up and he went to Eli...* Samuel assumed that Eli had called him, so he got up and went to Eli. Realize that Samuel is asleep when this happens, so, even though he has just gone in to Eli maybe 15–30 minutes ago, this is his first reaction—he is called, and he immediately gets up and goes in to Eli. There is one change this time. Before, Samuel ran to Eli's side. This time, he walks.

1Samuel 3:6c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʿamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (תִּיַה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: *...and he said, "Look, [it is] I, for you called to me."* Likely, enough time has passed where they both fell asleep again; Samuel is awakened by God's call, assumes that it is Eli again (since word from Jehovah was rare in those days), and goes into Eli's room, saying, "Here I am, for you called me [this time]."

1Samuel 3:6d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
lô' (לוֹ' or לֹא) [pronounced low]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	1 st person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced shaw- KAH ^{BV}]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

Translation: But he said, "I did not call [you], my son; return, lie down." Eli repeats verbatim what he had said in the previous verse, except that he adds in the words *my son*, giving us: **And so he said, "I did not call, my son; return [and] lie down."** Now, the first time this occurred, Eli probably went right back to sleep. For Samuel, he probably dropped off to sleep after a bit, and then God called out to him again. After this second time, it is more difficult for Eli to fall back to sleep and he thinks about what is happening.

And Samuel had not yet known Y^{ehovah} and [it] wasn't revealed unto him a Word of Y^{ehovah}.

1 Samuel
3:7

And Samuel had not yet known Y^{ehovah} and the Word of Y^{ehovah} was not yet revealed to him.

You see, Samuel had not yet known Jehovah nor had the Word of Jehovah come to him before.

This verse explains why Samuel just didn't flat out know Who was calling him in the first place. What is interesting in today's holy roller world is that men, women and children who are very unfamiliar with God will speak in tongues and *recognize immediately* that this is from God (it's not). However, here we have a man whose spiritual life will put ours to shame, and the first three times he hears God call to him, he thinks that it is Eli. If anything, that should strike you as being rather peculiar—that is, if we are to go by the experience of the charismatic, then Samuel should have simply known that it was God. After all, God was speaking to him and Samuel was in or near the Temple of God. The charismatics know immediately that their experience is of God; wouldn't it make sense that a man who hears God's actual voice would have a similar reaction? On the other hand, if we question the validity of the experience of the charismatic, then Samuel not recognizing God's voice makes much more sense.

Now, do you understand why we also study the Old Testament? It puts things into perspective. We don't get so weird about everything if we examine what is happening with the Old Testament saints, or if we examine how God acted during those times. Some believers go to a church which is, for all intents and purposes, a 3-ring circus. We do not find that in the Old or the New Testaments. Some people go to churches where miracles occur, supposedly, every few minutes—we do not find that in the Old or New Testaments. When you examine the

behavior of those in a church, or typical church activity, and you do not find clear parallels to what has happened previously, then you might want to rethink your membership (or attendance) there.

Now, let's take a look at the other translations:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And Samuel had not yet known Yehowah and [it] wasn't revealed unto him a Word of Yehowah.
 Septuagint And [this was] before Samuel knew the Lord, and [before] the word of the Lord was revealed to him.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV The LORD had not spoken to Samuel before, and Samuel did not recognize the voice.
The Message (This all happened before Samuel knew GOD for himself. It was before the revelation of GOD had been given to him personally.)
 NLT Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ Samuel had no experience with the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.
 HCSB Now Samuel had not yet experienced the LORD, because the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.
 JPS (Tanakh) Now Samuel had not yet experience the LORD; the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.—.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him.
Young's Updated LT And Samuel had not yet known Jehovah, and the word of Jehovah is not yet revealed unto him.

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel has not yet known Jehovah, which could either mean he is still an unbeliever or he has not interacted personally with Jesus Christ. We are told that the word of Jehovah had not yet been revealed to him.

1Samuel 3:7a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Sh ^e mûw ^{êl} (שמׁוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

1Samuel 3:7a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ṭerem (טֶרֶם) [pronounced <i>TEH-rem</i>]	<i>not yet; before that, previously; before the beginning</i>	an adverb of time, sometimes used in the negative sense	Strong's #2962 (and #2958) BDB #382
yâda' (יָדָע) [pronounced <i>yaw-DAHĠ</i>]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	3 rd person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *And Samuel had not yet known Y^ehowah...* We begin with the wâw conjunction (most of what we have had has been a series of wâw consecutive's); the proper noun *Samuel*, and the negative adverb of time, ṭerem (טֶרֶם) [pronounced *TEH-rem*], which means *not yet, before that*. This is followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to know*, followed by the direct object indicator and the proper noun *Y^ehowah*. *And Samuel had not yet known Y^ehowah*.

Interpretation of this verse is a bit more difficult than the translation. Generally speaking, when one *knows* Jehovah, that is a reference to salvation. Recall what we exegeted as recently as I Sam. 2:12: *Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know Jehovah*. In their case, it is generally agreed upon that they were flat out unbelievers, albeit grown men in the priesthood. It is possible that Samuel had not yet believed in Jehovah Elohim for his salvation. It is also possible that Samuel believed in God, but had not yet experienced God directly (I say this with some hesitation, because some will therefore assume that (1) they must have some gooshy feeling inside to indicate that they have been saved; or, (2) they must actually hear God speak to them audibly in order for their salvation to be valid. You do not have to choose between strong but transient feelings or severe psychosis in order to have a relationship with God. We are told that it is simply faith alone in Christ alone; in the Old Testament, man was saved in the same way—he simply believed in Jehovah, the God of Israel. At this point in Samuel's life, it is not clear as to whether he had believed or had simply not had any direct contact with God (which is not a requirement for salvation or for spiritual growth during any dispensation). And before you take one side or the other, recall that Samuel could still be very young at this time—he could still be around 12 years old. Personally, my leaning here, particularly because of the verbiage, is that Samuel had not yet believed in Jehovah Elohim and that he was still very young—12 sounds quite reasonable. What is happening is, Jehovah is calling to Samuel, and Samuel will believe when Jehovah calls to him. However, we will not see Samuel's faith in Jehovah emphasized in words. That is, nowhere in this chapter will we later read, *Samuel believed in Jehovah Elohim and it was accounted to him as righteousness* (as we read in Gen. 15:6 about Abraham). However, when God does call out to Samuel, Samuel will answer Him and have faith that He is the God of this Tent which he serves. His faith will not be outright stated, but it will certainly be implied. The other view is, Samuel was a believer in Jehovah God, but this is the first time that God speaks to him. This is also a moderately valid interpretation.

You do not have to choose between strong but transient feelings or severe psychosis in order to have a relationship with God.

1Samuel 3:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced weh]	and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ṭerem (טָרַם) [pronounced TĒH-rem]	not yet; before that, previously; before the beginning	an adverb of time, sometimes used in the negative sense	Strong's #2962 (and #2958) BDB #382
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced gaw-LAWH]	to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal imperfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l ^e)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as Jehovah, Yahweh, Y ^e howah	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...and the Word of Y^ehowah was net yet revealed to him. In this line, we have the negative adverb of time and Niphal imperfect of *to reveal, to publish*. Then we have *unto him a Word of Y^ehowah*, giving us: **and the Word of Y^ehowah was not yet revealed to him**. This is less difficult than the first line. This line simply means that God had not spoken directly to Samuel before; that is, Samuel had not received any direct instructive guidance from God. I believe that it is also reasonable to assume that Samuel had not yet known God in salvation, if Samuel is, in fact, 12 years old (or younger). In other words, I interpret this as being two separate, but related statements. The other interpretation is that this second statement explains the meaning of the first. That is, what the Bible means when it says that Samuel did not know God is that God's Word had not yet been revealed to him. I take this as the meaning, that Samuel had not yet believed in Jehovah **nor** had God communicated with Samuel, which would have included the gospel. Now, you may object saying, *how can Samuel function in the Tabernacle under the tutelage of Eli and not be a believer?* The answer is simple: look at Eli's two sons—they had not believed in Jesus Christ, the God of Israel, and they were grown men. They had also offered up sacrifices, worked in the Tabernacle, and had the guidance of their father, Eli.

Our verse reads: **And Samuel had not yet known Y^ehowah and the Word of Y^ehowah was net yet revealed to him**. Exegetes interpret this in several ways.

Various Interpretations of Samuel 3:7	
Exegete	Interpretation/Criticism
Clarke	<i>He had not been accustomed to receive any revelation from him. He knew and worshipped the God of Israel; but he did not know him as communicating especial revelation of His will.</i> ¹⁶

¹⁶ Adam Clarke, *Commentary on the Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:7.

Various Interpretations of Samuel 3:7	
Exegete	Interpretation/Criticism
Gill (on 7a)	<i>He knew that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the true God; he had spiritual knowledge of him, and knew somewhat of his word and worship, ways and ordinances, in which he had been instructed by Eli; wherefore, though the Targum is, "Samuel had not yet learned to know doctrine from the Lord;" it can only be understood, that he had not learnt it perfectly; somewhat he knew of it, but in an imperfect manner, being a child: but the sense of the word is, that as yet he was ignorant that God had used to speak with ordinary and familiar voice to men, as Maimonides says; he perhaps had never heard of any such thing, and much less was experimentally acquainted with it, that God ever did speak after such a manner to men, and could not distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of Eli.¹⁷ For every believer, even in this dispensation, we do not learn all there is to know about God. I've been studying for 30 years and there is a great deal which I do not know.</i>
Gill (on 7b)	<i>...neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him; what of the written word that was in being he had, and read, as the law of Moses; but the meaning is, that no word of prophecy of the Lord was revealed unto him, as the Targum; he never had prophesied as yet, and knew not the form and manner of prophecy, as the above writer observes, or what methods God took to reveal himself, his mind and will, to men, at least not this by an audible voice.¹⁸</i>
Henry (on 7a)	<i>Samuel did not yet know the Lord. He knew the written word, and was acquainted with the mind of God in that, but he did not yet apprehend the way in which God reveals himself to his servants the prophets, especially by a still small voice; this was altogether new and strange to him. Perhaps he would have been sooner aware of a divine revelation had it come in a dream or a vision; but this was a way he had not only not known himself, but not heard of.¹⁹ There was no still, small voice—God's voice was so clear and unmistakable that Samuel got up and went in to see what Eli wanted, thinking Eli had called him.</i>
Henry (on 7b)	<i>Thus did Samuel (so the margin reads it) before he knew the Lord, and before the word of the Lord was revealed unto him; thus he blundered one time after another, but afterwards he understood his duty better.²⁰</i>
Kukis	<i>He did not know Jehovah, means that he had not yet believed in Jehovah Elohim. Bear mind that, when Samuel heard Jehovah's voice, he thought that is was Eli (My sheep hear my voice, and I know them: and they follow me—John 10:27). ...nor had the Word of God been revealed to him, means that God had not spoken to Samuel directly. One may further understand that Samuel lacked spiritual information from any source, as he had not believed yet. There is nothing wrong with simply taking the literal meaning of narrative.</i>

¹⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:7. The quote of Maimonides is from Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 44.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:1–10.

²⁰ Ibid.

Various Interpretations of Samuel 3:7

Exegete	Interpretation/Criticism
Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge (on 7a)	<i>Now Samuel...: Or, Thus did Samuel before he knew the Lord, and before the word of the Lord was revealed unto him.²¹ ...did not yet know the LORD: Samuel was not destitute of the knowledge of God, in that sense which implies the total absence of true piety, as Eli's sons were; for he knew and worshipped the God of Israel, but he did not know him as communicating special revelations of his will to him, in the manner in which he made it known to the prophets.²²</i>
Wesley	<i>Did not know - He was not acquainted with God in that extraordinary or prophetic way. And this ignorance of Samuel's served God's design, that his simplicity might give Eli the better assurance of the truth of God's call, and message to Samuel.²³</i>

The more that I read the comments and explanations of other scholars, the more I am convinced that I am correct here and that this group of men are all wrong.

Of course, the argument would be, *Samuel was in the Tabernacle of God—how could he not be saved?* People are raised in Christian homes all of the time and do not believe in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, Eli's batting average, when it came to leading his sons to the Lord, was 0 for 2. With Samuel, he would now be 1 for 3 (and this is with God speaking directly to Samuel as well). Samuel is observing a great deal as a young man, including Eli's sons feasting on bbq from people who come to the Tabernacle. Do not assume that because he is in a *holy* environment, that Samuel was saved at a very young age. Furthermore, even though age 12 is bandied about here, we really do not know what age Samuel is at this point in time. He might be 8 and he might be 18.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

With this discussion comes naturally the age of accountability. At what age is a man accountable for his acceptance or rejection of our Lord? God did have particular ages which had to be reached in order to enter into various services. A man had to be age 20 to go to war in the book of Numbers; a Levite began his service at age 25; a priest could not begin his service until age 30.²⁴ However, the age of accountability is only implied in Scripture. After the death of the very young child of David and Bathsheba, David made the comment, "[I will go to him, but he will not return to me.](#)" (2Sam. 12:23b). Therefore, there is an age at which a child is not held accountable for believing in Jehovah Elohim for his salvation. Now when it comes to salvation, we find children as young as age 5 being saved; similarly, we have those on the brink of death who finally believe. Personally, I believe that once a person dies after a certain age (say, somewhere between ages 10 to 20), if they die apart from believing in Christ, then they have died in their sins. Now, I base this upon God's omniscience and omnipotence and His perfect justice. Somewhere between age 4 or 5 and age 20, a person becomes accountable to God for his spiritual decisions—particularly, his decision to believe or not to believe in Jesus. The exact age would depend upon his particular environment and the thought given to spiritual things. Past this age, once they die without believing in Christ, then they have died in their sins, and they will spend eternity apart from God. Some deem this to be too much and are uncomfortable with the concept of hell. Realize that if a person spends each and every minute of his 20 years on this earth (or 30 or 40 or 80 years) choosing to be separate from God as God truly is, then why on

²¹ *Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge*; by Canne, Browne, Blayney, Scott, and others about 1880, with introduction by R. A. Torrey; courtesy of E-sword, 1Sam. 3:7.

²² Ibid.

²³ John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes on the Whole Bible*; courtesy of e-sword, 1Sam. 3:7.

²⁴ McGee points all of these ages out J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 26.

earth do you think they would *want* to spend eternity with Him? That makes no sense that a person would want to spend eternity with God when, on earth, he did not want to spend even 1 minute with God.

The next related concern is, *what if Charlie Brown had lived just five more years and believed then? People do believe at age 40 or 50 or 80.* And this is absolutely true. People don't all come to Christ in their teens. Some come to our Lord at a very advanced age. Here is where God's justice, omnipotence and omniscience kicks in. God wants all to be saved; if a person needed just five more years on this earth in order to believe, God's perfect justice would require God to make certain that this man lives for five more years. His omniscience, which beholds all things that are, have been and also beholds all that could be; He knows what is in the heart of man and He knows of every situation where just five more years on this earth would make the difference between salvation or an eternity of separation from Him. God's omnipotence would see to it that that person would receive five more years of life. God is able to do that. Given the fact that God is perfect justice, without even thinking too deeply about this, tells us that He will give every positive man, woman and child the opportunity to be saved and that no one will die prematurely (after the age of accountability but before they are able to believe). But what of those who never hear the gospel? God is not required to give the gospel to a person who is going to react negatively toward it. God knows that Charlie Brown won't believe in Him; therefore, God's justice does not require Him to present the gospel to Charlie Brown.

McGee gives this illustration: *When Hermann Goering was placed in prison at the time of his trial, and later when he was to be executed, the prison chaplain had a long interview with him. The chaplain emphasized the necessity of preparing himself to meet God. In the course of the conversation, Goering ridiculed certain Bible truths and refused to accept the fact that Christ died for sinners. His was a conscious denial of the power of the blood. "Death is death," was the substance of his last words. As the chaplain reminded him of the hope of his little daughter meeting him in heaven, he replied, "She believes in her manner, I in mine." The chaplain was very discouraged when he left. Less than an hour later he heard that Hermann Goering had committed suicide. God called this man and he refused the call.*²⁵

As Prov. 29:1 reads: **A man who hardens [his] neck after much reproof will suddenly be broken beyond remedy.** God, in His justice, will call all who will be saved; and He will call to many who will not be saved. And there are some whom God will speak to who will rebel, resist and deny until they have seared their own conscience with a hot iron. Men like Cain, Balaam, the Pharaoh of Egypt, Korah, and Ahab were all offered salvation several times and they all rejected God and His gracious provision. Paul spoke to some of the most powerful men of the Roman empire, and yet they rejected what God had done for them. **But some days later, Felix²⁶ arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ Jesus. And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, "Go away for the present and when I find time, I will summon you."** (Acts 24:24–25). Paul also gave the gospel to King Agrippa,²⁷ who replied, **"In a short time, you will persuade me to become a Christian."** (Acts 26:28b). In other words, throughout Scripture, we have many case histories of those who were given the opportunity to believe, but chose not to. This is God's justice and His graciousness.²⁸

Today's English version sometimes combines verses, which is not out of line. We think very little of transposing words in a translation (in the Hebrew, the verb generally precedes the subject of the verb, which is the opposite of the English). Since the verse distinction is not a part of original Scripture, there is no reason for us to assume that there is something inspired about the separation of verses.

²⁵ J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 27.

²⁶ The governor of Judæa (actually, his position and the time that he held office is much more complicated than that).

²⁷ This would be Herod Agrippa II, who was the Tetrarch of Chalcis and of the northern territory.

²⁸ Much of this was paraphrased from J. Vernon McGee; *I & II Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; pp. 27–28.

Today's English Version Translates vv. 6–7

NASB

TEV

And the LORD called yet again. "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he answered [lit., *said*], "I did not call, my son, lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, nor had the word of the LORD yet been revealed to him.

The LORD called Samuel again. The boy did not know that it was the LORD, because the LORD had never spoken to him before. So he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am." But Eli answered, "My son, I didn't call you; go back to bed."

You will note that the translation appears to have almost all of the information which is found in the NASB; however, it is simply and more up to date and it flows quite well.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

And so added Y^ehowah a calling of Samuel in the third and so he arose and so he went unto Eli and so he said, "Behold me, for you called to me." And so perceived Eli that Y^ehowah was calling to the youth.

1 Samuel
3:8

Then Y^ehowah called Samuel again—the third time—and he rose up and went to Eli and said, "Listen, [it is] I, for you called to me." Then Eli realized that Y^ehowah was calling to the youth.

Then Jehovah again called to Samuel yet a third time, so Samuel got up, went to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me?" Then Eli realized that Jehovah was calling for the youth.

Others have translated this third calling to Samuel as:

Here is how others have translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so added Y^ehowah a calling of Samuel in the third and so he arose and so he went unto Eli and so he said, "Behold me, for you called to me." And so perceived Eli that Y^ehowah was calling to the youth.

Septuagint And the Lord called Samuel again for the third time; and he arose and went to Heli and said, "Behold, I *am here*, for you called me." And Heli perceived that the Lord called the child.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV When the LORD called out his name for the third time, Samuel went to Eli again and said, "Here I am. What do you want?" Eli finally realized that it was the LORD who was speaking to Samuel.

The Message GOD called again, "Samuel!"--the third time! Yet again Samuel got up and went to Eli, "Yes? I heard you call me. Here I am." That's when it dawned on Eli that GOD was calling the boy.

TEV The LORD called Samuel a third time; he got up, went to Eli, and said, "You called me, and here I am." Then Eli realized that it was the LORD who was calling the boy,...

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

The LORD called Samuel again, a third time, and he rose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am; you called me.” Then Eli understood that the LORD was calling the boy.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

LTHB

And Jehovah again called Samuel the third time. And he rose up and went to Eli and said, Behold me, for you have called me. And Eli understood that Jehovah was calling the boy..

NASB

So the LORD called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli discerned that the LORD was called the boy.

Young's Updated LT

And Jehovah added to call Samuel the third time, and he rose and went to Eli, and said, ‘Here *am* I, for you have called for me;’ and Eli understood that Jehovah is calling to the youth.

What is the gist of this verse? God calls to Samuel a third time, and Samuel again thinks that it is Eli and goes to him. Eli then realizes that God is speaking to Samuel.

1Samuel 3:8a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (וַיַּצֵּף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	Qal infinitive construct	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שִׁמְוֵאל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
sh ^e lishîym (שְׁלִישִׁים) [pronounced <i>sh^eli-SHEEM</i>]	<i>third, a third part, a third time; chambers [of the third story]</i>	masculine/feminine adjective/ordinal numeral with the definite article	Strong's #7992 BDB #1026

Translation: Then Y^ehowah called Samuel again—the third time—... After the wâw consecutive, we have the difficult verb to translate, the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of yâçaph (וַיַּצֵּף) [pronounced yaw-SAHPPH], which means *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. It is easier to render this as the adverb *again*. We also have the bêt preposition and the feminine numeral sh^elishîym (שְׁלִישִׁים) [pronounced *sh^eli-SHEEM*], which means *third*. There are several forms of this ordinal; this is the feminine plural. You will note that most

translators simply went with *the third time*, rather than the more literal *in the third*. This gives us: [Then Jehovah called Samuel again the third time...](#) Samuel apparently still does not catch on; i.e., he does not realize that Jehovah is calling him.

1 Samuel 3:8b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to stand, to rise up, to get up; to establish, to establish a vow, to cause a vow to stand, to confirm or to fulfill a vow</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced haw-LAHK ^e]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlîy (עֲלֵי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: [...and he rose up and went to Eli...](#) Samuel was a young man with some personal integrity. Instead of just rolling over in bed, assuming that this is a dream, his first thought is to Eli. Recall that Eli is very old at this point, and Samuel is concerned and is willing to respond for any call or any need that Eli has. So, even though this is the 3rd time Samuel believes Eli is calling him, he still gets up and he still goes to aid Eli.

1 Samuel 3:8c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 st person singular suffix; pausal form	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471

1Samuel 3:8c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 1 st person singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510

Translation: ...and said, "Listen, [it is] I, for you called to me." Then we have *and so he said*, "Behold, me; for you called to me;" which gives us: ...so he arose and he went to Eli and he said, "Behold, me, for you called to me." There is no telling what Samuel thought—whether Eli was calling out in his sleep or what—but his loyalty was such that he continued to respond to what he believed to be Eli's calling.

1Samuel 3:8d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bîyn (בין) [pronounced bean]	<i>to discern, to perceive, to consider, to understand, to reconsider, to think something over carefully</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #995 BDB #106
ʿĒlîy (עֲלֵי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
kîy (כי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
lâmed (ל) (pronounced ʿ)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâ'ar (נָעַר) [pronounced NAH-ğahr]	<i>boy, youth, young man, personal attendant</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #5288 & #5289 BDB #654

Translation: Then Eli realized that Y^ehowah was calling to the youth. The final line begins with the wâw consecutive followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect *to discern, to perceive, to consider, to understand, to reconsider, to think something over carefully*. *Eli* is the subject of the verb. Then we have the conjunction *that* followed by *Y^ehowah was calling to the youth*. The final word is the masculine singular noun *boy*,

youth, young man, personal attendant. This gives us: *...then Eli discerned that Jehovah was calling to [or, for] the youth*. There were problems with Eli's service to God; however, he was not completely washed up, nor had God completely put him aside. It is Eli here who recognizes that God is called Samuel, that this is not some vivid dream that Samuel is experiencing. If it were up to Samuel, he would have gotten up out of bed another twenty times before realizing that God had called him.

An interesting question is, *how does Eli know that God is calling out to Samuel?* After all, we have no indication that God has ever called Eli. There is nothing in Scripture to suggest that there had ever been direct contact between God and Eli—so how did Eli know?

How Does Eli Know that God is Calling to Samuel?

1. There was no one else in their living quarters; there was no reason to think someone else had called Samuel.
2. Eli himself had not called Samuel.
3. Most importantly, Samuel had been set apart for service to God. Samuel was not simply some Joe Schmo hanging around the Tabernacle. Samuel had been dedicated to God.
4. It was clear that Samuel's mother was not some flipped-out religious woman who dedicated him to service to God; this is clear by her psalm which she spoke to Eli.
5. Furthermore, Eli was old, he had served his time, and his sons were not going to take over his position—a prophet had clearly told him that.
6. For Eli, all of the pieces of the puzzle fit. Since the line of the priesthood would not be continued in his sons and since he was going to die, it only made sense for Samuel to take over at this point. A divine calling, although quite extraordinary, was not out of the question, given what was already recorded in the Scripture which they had (the books of the Law, Job, Joshua and probably Judges and Ruth).

Bear in mind that, this is an era when God did reveal Himself to some men directly.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

One of the things which believers today seem to have no appreciation for is the interaction and interdependence of the gifts of believers. A local church is too often perceived as an organization run by a handful of people for the benefit of a large number of people. This is an inaccurate understanding of a local church. Obviously in any local church, if they are functioning correctly, there will be a reasonable number of young believers whose contribution to their community will be minimal. However, many of the mature and growing believers will play very active rolls in the believer community. That does not mean that everyone will have some assigned job around the church, but that the function of the church will be dependent upon the majority of the believers in attendance rather than upon a small minority. Some will certainly function in the capacity of administrative positions, but there should be a variety of gifts operating in a variety of ways. Some are going to be obvious—there are going to be those who hold their local church up in prayer. Their job is every bit as important as the job of the pastor teacher. It does not mean that, because they are less visible and that because anyone can pray, that their function in the church is unimportant. Their function is extremely important. Let me give you the football example that Thieme often gave: a quarterback can be the fastest man, with great hand-eye coordination, a great arm and have a great eye—however, if you surround him with a bunch of lame blockers, his career will be over in the first or second down. No quarterback can function without good linemen. If you remove even one offensive lineman, that quarterback is going to be sacked behind the line of scrimmage time and time again. Those who give are equally

important. And it is not the amount that counts, but it is giving willingly, cheerfully, as God has provided. You might make minimum wage and you are able to give a quarter or a dollar bill every Sunday and that is the extent of your ability to give. That is just as important as the business executive who gives tens of thousands of dollars each year. You may work minimum wage jobs your entire life and you might be able to just give that dollar each week. That's fine! It is a part of your ministry and it is every bit as important that you give that dollar as it is for the pastor to prepare and then deliver his sermon. It is a team effort. Where churches often fall down on the job is the pastor is saddled with everything (which can be as much the pastor's fault as anyone else's). Your pastor does not need to marry nor does he need to bury. He does not even need to lead in Communion. Obviously, this is dependent upon the size of a church, but there might be up to a half

You may work minimum wage jobs your entire life and you might be able to just give that dollar each week. That's fine! It is a part of your ministry and it is every bit as important that you give that dollar as it is for the pastor to prepare and then deliver his sermon.

dozen men who handle these sorts of chores either pro bono or for a reasonable stipend. And those who perform such services do not have to have gone to some Bible college or have even a degree from a secular college. And most importantly, all of these things which are done are every bit as important as what the pastor does. A church properly operates when all men and women are operating in the Spirit and exercising their spiritual gifts. A car might be able to function with a few problems (say, the muffler falls off). However, even when the most insignificant little hose comes loose, a car might stop right in its tracks. The function of a car depends upon the proper and coordinate function of hundreds upon hundreds of parts. So it is with a church.

And let me add one more thing: you might be the person who prays on behalf of your church and no one knows you by name; you might be the person who faithfully gives \$1.00 each and every week and that is what God has given you to give; you might visit the sick or those in prison; and you might be the pastor. Your rewards in heaven could all be, theoretically, equivalent. Who has the showiest job, or who most people look up to in the church—this has nothing to do with eternal rewards. God has given you a gift or gifts and your function in the Spirit operating these gifts from a position of spiritual maturity. And no matter where you are in relationship to your local church, your eternal remuneration can be as great or greater than anyone else in your church. It is not the particular gift which determines reward, but your spiritual growth and the operation of said gift.

Now, you may have read the foregoing and wondered, *where did all that come from?* Simple—God is calling Samuel, and Samuel does not know what is going on. He requires Eli to tell him what is happening. Eli's function, although it is not as showy as Samuel's, is absolutely necessary to Samuel's future ministry. Similarly, the function of each person in a local church along with the exercising of their spiritual gift is a necessary part to the whole. If you go under the hood of a car and remove the tiniest miscellaneous part, that car might not even start. It may not ever run without that minor part. If you took a football team and removed one player—even if he is the worst player of the team playing the least important position on that team—that team would no longer win a single game, if he ceases to function in his position. Samuel needed Eli—first to guide him and orient him to the ministry—and here most importantly to let him know that God was calling him.

And so was saying Eli to Samuel, "Go, lie down and he has been if He calls unto you and so you have said, 'Speak, Y^ehowah; for is listening Your servant.'" And so went Samuel and so he lay down in his place.

I Samuel
3:9

So Eli said to Samuel, "Go [and] lie down and if it is [that] He calls to you, then you will say, 'Speak, Y^ehowah, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and he laid down in his place.

Therefore, Eli told Samuel, "Go and lay down, and if He calls to you, then you will answer, 'Speak, Jehovah, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel returned and laid down in his place.

Let's see how others handled this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so was saying Eli to Samuel, “Go, lie down and he has been if He calls unto you and so you have said, ‘Speak, Y^ehowah; for is listening Your servant.’ ” And so went Samuel and so he lay down in his place.

Septuagint And he said, “Return, child, go to sleep; and it will come to pass if He calls you, that you will say, ‘Speak, for Your servant hears;’ ” and Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Significant differences: Although there are differences, they are not significant.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV So he said, “Go back and lie down! If someone speaks to you again, answer, ‘I’m listening, LORD. What do you want me to do?’ ”

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) And Eli said to Samuel, “Go lie down. If you are called again, say, “Speak, LORD, for Your servant is listening.” And Samuel went to his place and lay down.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And Eli said to Samuel, “Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, ‘Speak, LORD, for Thy servant is listening.’ ” So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Young’s Updated LT And Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go, lie down, and it has been, if He calls unto you, that you have said, Speak, Jehovah, for Your servant is hearing;’ and Samuel went and lay down in his place.

What is the gist of this verse? Eli encourages Samuel to return to his room (or his cot) and to respond to Jehovah when He calls again. Samuel obeys Eli.

1Samuel 3:9a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong’s Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, and then, then, and	wâw consecutive	No Strong’s # BDB #253
ʿāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong’s #559 BDB #55
ʿĒlîy (עֵלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong’s #5941 BDB #750
lâmed (ל) (pronounced l̄)	to, for, towards, in regards to	directional/relational preposition	No Strong’s # BDB #510
Sh ^e mûw`êl (שָׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong’s #8050 BDB #1028

1Samuel 3:9a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>go, come, depart, walk; advance</i>	2 nd person masculine plural, Qal imperative	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH^{BV}</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal imperative	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011

Translation: *So Eli said to Samuel, “Go [and] lie down... We begin with *And so Eli was saying to Samuel*, followed by two imperatives: *go, come, depart, walk; and lie down*. It is typical in the Hebrew to string imperatives together without a connective between them.*

Interestingly enough, we do not have all of what Eli said to Samuel—i.e., notice that Eli does not tell Samuel, “I perceive that Jehovah Elohim is calling you.” However, at this point, that would certainly be the first thing that Eli would have said.

1Samuel 3:9b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced <i>haw-YAW</i>]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e]</i>	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: *...and if it is [that] He calls to you,... What Eli suggests is stated in such a way to make it sound as though it is an accomplished fact. Eli expects God to called Samuel again. The use of the perfect tense twice (in vv. 9b and 9c) means that Eli is not thinking *maybe God will call Samuel again and maybe He'll do so later or, maybe He won't call at all*. Insofar as Eli is concerned, if it was God calling Samuel in the first place, which he*

perceives is the case, then God will keep calling him until He gets a response. The *if* is used here more for sentence structure rather than any implied uncertainty.

Why would Eli be certain? Eli knows Samuel and knows his personal integrity and apparently has picked up on his positive volition. Eli also knows enough about God to know that God is not going to simply leave a message on an answering machine. God's isn't going to become weary of dialing Samuel's number. *How should I put this?* God is not going to call upon Samuel in the first place unless He expects Samuel to listen to Him.

1Samuel 3:9c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
`amar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
dâbar (דִּבֶּר) [pronounced daw ^p -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced kee]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâma` (שָׁמַע) [pronounced shaw-MAHÇ]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
`ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced Ê ^B -ved]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

Translation: ...then you will say, 'Speak, Y^ehowah, for your servant is listening.' " Then we have the wâw consecutive, which acts as a *then* to the preceding *if*. What remains gives us: "...then you have said, 'Speak, Y^ehowah, for your servant is listening.' " Samuel is to be receptive and he is to respond to God. Essentially, Eli is telling Samuel, "Don't run back in here and report to me; since God is calling you, listen to Him."

1Samuel 3:9d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
hâlak ^e (הָלַךְ) [pronounced <i>haw-LAHK^e</i>]	<i>to go, to come, to depart, to walk; to advance</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1980 (and #3212) BDB #229
Sh ^e mûw`êl (שִׁמְעוֹן) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo- ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of Eli</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
wa (or va) (וּ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw- KAH^{SV}</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
mâqôwm (מָקוֹמָם) [pronounced <i>maw- KOHM</i>]	<i>place, situated; for a soldier, it may mean where he is stationed; for people in general, it would be their place of abode (which could be their house or their town)</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4725 BDB #879

Translation: [So Samuel went and he laid down in his place.](#) It appears as though God encounters Samuel in his dreams. Otherwise, he might have stood in his place or knelt in prayer in his place. He returned to his bed expecting that God would repeat His calling. Certainly, one could argue that Samuel was completely awake the fourth time that God calls him, but I don't believe that to be the thrust of this passage.

There are at least two authors (McGee and someone else whom I can't locate now), mention that God called Samuel twice for salvation and twice for service. I don't think so. God calls Samuel three times, and three times Samuel goes to Eli, thinking that Eli called. When God calls a fourth time, Samuel has believed and Samuel answers His call.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

God's First Message to Samuel

<p>And so comes Y^ehowah and so He takes a stand and so he calls as time in time, “Samuel, Samuel.”²⁹ And so says Samuel, “Speak, for is listening Your servant.”</p>	<p>1 Samuel 3:10</p>	<p>Then Y^ehowah came and took a stand and called as in previous times: “Samuel Samuel.” And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”</p>
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Then Jehovah came to stood by Samuel [in his dream] and called as He had previously. Samuel replied, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”

Before we exegete this verse, what you may want to think about is, *how exactly is God speaking to Samuel? Is God speaking to Samuel through a dream, a vision, or directly, person to person, while Samuel is awake?* There are two reasons why we assume that God is speaking to Samuel through a dream: (1) Notice the time that this is occurring—it is the middle of the night and God speaks to Samuel four times that night. The fact that Samuel wakes up and goes to Eli’s sleeping quarters to respond, is simply a testimony to how real this was for Samuel. He responds as though this occurred while he was awake. (2) Recall what God said to Miriam and to Aaron when they were out of line in their criticism of Moses: “Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, Jehovah, will make Myself known to him in a vision. I will speak with him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses. He is faithful in all My household. With him, I speak mouth to mouth, even openly, and not in dark sayings. And he beholds the form of Jehovah.” (Num. 12:6–8a). (3) Now, the repetition of *Behold, [it is] I* should make sense (vv. 4 and 5). No doubt you have had a dream which has caused you to answer out loud, prior to or simultaneously with waking up. This is what Samuel did. God called him, he answered; and, when he immediately awoke, he thought that it had to have been Eli who called him, so he went into Eli’s room and repeated, “Behold, [it is] I.” This is exactly the behavior one would expect from a man spoken to in a dream.

Now, let’s see how others translated this verse:

Ancient texts:

<p>Masoretic Text</p>	<p>And so comes Y^ehowah and so He takes a stand and so he calls as time in time, “Samuel, Samuel.” And so says Samuel, “Speak, for is listening Your servant.”</p>
<p>Septuagint</p>	<p>And the Lord came and stood, and he called him as before; and Samuel said, Speak, for Your servant hears.”</p>

Significant differences: If you will recall, back in v. 4, we found *Samuel, Samuel* in the LXX, but not in the MT. Now, this is switched. Even this difference is not significant.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

<p>CEV</p>	<p>The LORD then stood beside Samuel and called out as he had done before, “Samuel! Samuel!” “I’m listening,” Samuel answered. “What do you want me to do?”</p>
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Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

<p><i>God’s Word</i>TM</p>	<p>The LORD came and stood there. He called as he had called the other times: “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel replied, “Speak. I’m listening.”</p>
<p>JPS (Tanakh)</p>	<p>The LORD came and stood there, and He called as before: “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel answered, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”</p>

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

²⁹ The phrase *Samuel, Samuel* is not found in v. 10 in the Dead Sea Scrolls nor in the Greek Septuagint. The phrase *as before* makes the inclusion of those words redundant. It is like saying the same thing twice twice.

NASB	Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for Thy servant is listening.”
NRSV	Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant is listening.”
Young's Updated LT	And Jehovah comes, and stations Himself, and calls as time by time, ‘Samuel, Samuel;’ and Samuel says, ‘Speak, for Your servant is hearing.’

What is the gist of this verse? When Jehovah speaks to Samuel again, Samuel says, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

1Samuel 3:10a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
bôw' (בּוֹא) [pronounced boh]	<i>to come in, to come, to go in, to go, to enter</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #935 BDB #97
YHWH (יְהוָה) [pronunciation is possibly yoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *Then Y^ehowah came...* We begin with, literally, *And so came Yehowah*. Recall that God is a spirit, and, prior to the incarnation, He manifested Himself in many ways to man (as a burning bush, as an Angel of Jehovah). Since God is omnipresent, He cannot confine himself to one point in time. However, what He can do is to manifest Himself to one like Samuel. So this is almost like an anthropomorphism. For this communication to take place, we need to see that God is right there with Samuel. His presence is made known to Samuel in a dream, as we have discussed; but his presence here is as a person coming and standing next to Samuel's bed. Perhaps that explanation seems too convoluted to you.

1Samuel 3:10b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâtsab (יָצַב) [pronounced yaw-TSAHB ^v]	<i>to set oneself [in a place], to take a stand</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #3320 BDB #426

Translation: *...and took a stand...* Then we have another wâw consecutive and the Hithpael imperfect of *to set oneself [in a place], to take a stand*. The Hithpael is the reflexive of the intensive stem, the Piel. God is omnipresent—He does not need to go anywhere in order to be there. This is language of accommodation. God did not physically leave the throne room of heaven, catch a chartered starship for earth, land outside and walk in and stand next to Samuel. What He has done is simply made His presence known to Samuel—which God will do by speaking to Samuel. There is no still, small voice here, but an actual presence which will be clear to Samuel. Although I would suspect that God's presence was known in a dream previously, this appears to be more than that. What is not clear in any of these cases is whether or not Samuel saw anything. God's voice was heard and apparently His presence was known, but nothing is said about what Samuel saw, if anything.

1Samuel 3:10c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced kaw-RAW]	to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
kaph or k ^e (כ) [pronounced k ^e]	as, like, according to; about, approximately	preposition of comparison or approximation	No Strong's # BDB #453
pa'am (פַּאִם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
b ^e (ב) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
pa'am (פַּאִם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]	beat, foot, anvil, occurrence, time, steps; the connotation is the passage of time	feminine singular noun	Strong's #6471 BDB #821
The phrase, <i>as time in time</i> or <i>as time against time</i> or <i>as time with time</i> means <i>as usual, as formerly, as in times past, as at other times, previously, as in previous times, customarily</i> . We find this same phrase in Judges 20:30.			
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: ...and called as in previous times: "Samuel Samuel." We then have a third wâw consecutive and a third main verb, the Qal imperfect of *to call*. Then Y^ehowah came and takes a stand and calls... It is hard to phrase it as we find it in the Hebrew, as all of these are imperfect verbs (incomplete or continuous action). We would expect a simple perfect (completed) tense with each of those verbs.

We have an interesting construction of two prepositions and the repeated use of pa'am (פַּאִם) [pronounced PAH-gahm]; together, these words mean *as usual, as formerly, as in times past, as at other times, previously, as in previous times*. God comes to Samuel in the same way as He had three times previous times and calls to Samuel in the same way. In the Hebrew, God says, "Samuel, Samuel."

One of the things which has interested me is the comparison of the various English translations. The translation which seems to make the most use of the Dead Sea Scrolls is the NRSV. Many, many times, when the Greek and the Dead Sea Scrolls are in agreement, but differ from the Massoretic text,³⁰ the NRSV will go along with the text

³⁰ The traditional Hebrew text. Our oldest manuscripts only go back to the 9th or 10th century A.D.

of the Greek and the Dead Sea Scrolls, and footnote this. In fact, the NRSV does this more often than any other translation that I am aware of. Unfortunately, there are a significant number of times that the NRSV follows the Massoretic text, even when the Greek and the DSS's are in agreement, yet have a different reading than the Massoretic text. One would expect a footnote in this case as well, but you won't find one in the NRSV. In other words, even though the NRSV makes probably the most changes in its translation based upon the most recent manuscript discoveries, it does not make these changes consistently nor does it footnote a passage where it follows the Massoretic text rather than the DSS's. This is a minor example: If you will notice back in v. 4, in the NASB, we do not have what Jehovah said to Samuel; in the NRSV, we have exactly what Jehovah said ("*Samuel, Samuel.*"). This is because the Greek and the Dead Sea Scrolls have this quotation and the Massoretic text does not. In the NRSV, this change from the Massoretic text is footnoted. However, in the verse before us, we have what Jehovah says to Samuel in the Massoretic text, but not in the DSS's and not in the Septuagint. So the NRSV decides to follow the Massoretic text this time (showing a lack of consistency) and they do not footnote the fact that it reads differently elsewhere (which is information that some exegetes and Bible students would like to have). Now, in this passage, the difference is rather innocuous, I realize.³¹ We could transpose these verse, follow the Massoretic text one time and the Dead Sea Scrolls the next, and the average reader would remain unaffected. However, to me, when the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Greek Septuagint agree with one another and disagree with the Massoretic text, then that difference should be noted.³² Don't misunderstand me—I am not ragging on the NRSV, because they note these changes much more often than any other translation—however, it would be nice to see some consistency and a few more footnotes. In fact, any translation which would consistently list significant (and even trivial) differences would be a welcome translation to the myriad of translations that we have (speaking of which, the New King James Version is very good about listing alternative readings).

1Samuel 3:10d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Sh ^e mûw`êl (שִׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^p-VAHR</i>]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperative	Strong's #1696 BDB #180

³¹ What appears to be the case to me is that a copyist might have left out *Samuel, Samuel* from v. 4, suddenly noticed it several verses later, and, because of exhaustion, just placed it into v. 10. Because of the similarity of the verses, the copyist could have simply copied the wrong verse the first time, and then chose, rather than to start over, to simply copy the contents of v. 4 into v. 10 (this would not have been the standard reaction of a copyist, but it is a reasonable explanation of what a very exhausted and less dedicated copyist might do; or one who was working under intense duress). In any case, the overall meaning is not affected.

³² There are too many differences between the Massoretic text and the Greek text to note all of those, however.

1 Samuel 3:10d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâma' (שָׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
'ebed (עֶבֶד) [pronounced <i>Ē-ved</i>]	<i>slave, servant</i>	masculine singular noun with a 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5650 BDB #713

Translation: *And Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”* Meanwhile, back at the ranch... We then have: *And so said Samuel* followed by the Piel imperative of *to speak* (which is what Eli told him to say), followed by, *for listening [or, hearing] [is] Your servant.*” This gives us, following what was probably the original text: *And so came Y^ehowah and He takes a stand and he calls as previously. So Samuel replies, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”* Now, let me give you another reason I left out “*Samuel, Samuel;*” the repetition of pa’am makes the actual quote redundant. You either say that God spoke to Samuel as he had previously, or you give the content of what God said; in the Hebrew, you would not need to do both. For instance, the phrase *new innovation* is only used by someone who does not know what the word *innovation* means.³³

Eli realized that God was calling out to Samuel. In those days, that was the only explanation which made sense. Eli knew enough about God and knew enough about Samuel and his dedication, and their position in God’s spiritual realm, as to realize that God was now calling Samuel. Again, it might be debated as to whether Samuel was a believer or not. Personally, given the fact that Samuel did not know Who had called out to him and given the content of v. 7 (*Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, nor had the Word of Jehovah been yet revealed to him*), I would think that Samuel, at that point in time, is still an unbeliever. On the other hand, in this verse, Samuel is clearly a believer. Essentially, we are seeing Samuel’s salvation experience here. That being said, do not expect your salvation to be quite this eventful. God certainly calls us all individually, but not in an audible voice. Recall that this is a time of Israel’s history prior to the completed canon of Scripture.

Several people take issue with what Samuel actually says. Eli told him to say, “*Speak, Jehovah, for Your servant is listening;*” and Samuel said, “*Speak, for Your servant is listening.*” I don’t know that it is that significant. Perhaps Samuel said *Jehovah*, but that was left out (I doubt that); or that Samuel was in a state of shock, and was, for all intents and purposes, unable to say *Jehovah*; or simply just didn’t say God’s name. Some of the commentators got weird and said that Samuel supposed *maybe this is a demon or a man*. You see, it does not matter that God has spoken to him thrice already; it does not matter that Eli told Samuel that this is God and here is how he should respond. Hearing this audible voice would shake anyone up. That Samuel was able to say anything at all is impressive enough. The idea that this might be someone other than God probably did not occur to Samuel—Eli has already told him that it is God Who is calling him—there is no expression of doubt by Samuel anywhere in this chapter. Therefore, we should not read so much into this verse.

And so said Y^ehowah unto Samuel, “Behold, I am doing a word in Israel which all hearing him will tingle his two ears.

I Samuel
3:11

Then Y^ehowah said to Samuel, “Listen, I am doing a thing in Israel which all [who] hear it, both their ears will tingle.

³³ In fact, the phrase *innovative innovation* makes more sense than *new innovation*.

Then Jehovah said to Samuel, “Listen carefully: I am going to do something in Israel so that the ears of everyone who hears about it will tingle.

The fact that God speaks directly to Samuel is important. The last time that God possibly spoke directly to anyone would have been about a century previous when He spoke to the wife of Manoah and then to Manoah (the parents of Samson). In fact, it is debatable whether God did speak to them directly or through a man of God.³⁴ My point is that, what is occurring here is quite rare, even in pre-canon periods. If you attend a church where God audibly speaks to your pastor on a regular basis, you are not going to a very blessed church, but to a church headed by a psycho, a demon-possess man or a liar.

What few believers seem to appreciate is the completed canon of Scripture. Many treat the Bible as a peripheral object, like the offering plate or the singing of a hymn. Others use the Bible in order to *prove* what it is that they believe. Most of the time, these are convictions which they held as unbelievers, and now they have found a few Scriptures which seem to support their previous notions. What you need to understand is, the Bible is God speaking to you—the Bible is God coming to you and telling you *everything* that you need to know for your life. The Bible is God calling out to you, just as God called to Samuel in this passage. The idea that you should ever use the Bible simply to support this or that notion is reprehensible. On the other hand, the Bible is not designed for you to simply open it and read and to gain much from that experience. How could you even decide where to begin? This is why God designed the gift of pastor teacher, a much abused gift today. The pastor-teacher is to guide us through Scripture, as we are both empowered by God the Holy Spirit.

Let's return to this passage and see what others have done first:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so said Y ^e howah unto Samuel, “Behold, I am doing a word in Israel which all hearing him will tingle his two ears.
Septuagint	And the Lord said to Samuel, Behold, I execute my words in Israel; whoever hears them, both his ears will tingle.

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	The LORD said: Samuel, I am going to do something in Israel that will shock everyone who hears about it!
NLT	Then the LORD said to Samuel, “I am about to do a shocking thing in Israel.”
TEV	The LORD said to him, “Some day I am going to do something to the people of Israel that is so terrible that everyone who hears about it will be stunned.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	The LORD said to Samuel: “I am going to do in Israel such a thing that both ears of anyone who hears about it will tingle.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	And the LORD said to Samuel, “Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle.
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³⁴ At least debatable perhaps to others. God spoke directly to Manoah, and probably to his wife, as He spoke to her first.

Young's Updated LT

And Jehovah said unto Samuel, 'Lo, I am doing a thing in Israel, at which the two ears of every one hearing it do tingle.

What is the gist of this verse? God tells Samuel that He is going to do something in Israel which will cause everyone to take notice.

1Samuel 3:11a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʾel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e</i>]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
Sh ^e mûw'êl (שְׁמוֹעַ אֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced <i>hin-NAY</i>]	<i>lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out</i>	interjection, demonstrative particle	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243
ʾânôkîy (אֲנֹכִי) [pronounced <i>awn-oh-KEE</i>]	<i>I, me</i>	1 st person singular personal pronoun (sometimes a verb is implied)	Strong's #595 BDB #59
ʾâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced <i>gaw-SAWH</i>]	<i>doing, making, constructing, fashioning, forming, preparing</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Yis ^e râ'êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-raw-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
dâbâr (דָּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: Then Y^ehowah said to Samuel, "Listen, I am doing a thing in Israel... Here is what we should expect. The author of this portion of Samuel is quite simplistic. He uses the same words over and over again; the Hebrew

construction is simple and a breeze to exegete. The meaning is clearly presented. When we have a direct quotation from God, we should expect the Hebrew to become more complex. We begin simply in the narrative with, literally, *And so said Y^ehovah unto Samuel...* Then we have the content of what God said to Samuel. We begin with the interjection *lo, behold*, or more freely, *observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this*. It often introduces to the person being spoken to something which directly affects him. Samuel has used this word three times now when he ran into Eli's room and said, "Behold me!" One of the things which is consistent with God's speaking to man is that He often plays with the language in which He speaks. Samuel has said *hinnêh* three times to Eli, so God now says it to him. As you will notice, the JPS rendering leaves this word out altogether, as we do not have a good, one-word rendering for *hinnêh* in the English.

Then we have the 1st person personal pronoun followed by the Qal active participle of *doing, making, fashioning, constructing, forming*. Then we have the masculine singular noun *word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter*. It is something which proceeds from the mouth and the context determines its exact parameters. Then we have *in Israel*, which gives us: [And Jehovah said to Samuel, "Listen, I am doing \(some\)thing in Israel...](#)

1Samuel 3:11b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
shâmaʿ (שָׁמַע) [pronounced <i>shaw-MAHG</i>]	<i>to listen [intently], to hear, to listen and obey, [or, and act upon, give heed to, take note of], to hearken to, to be attentive to, to listen and be cognizant of</i>	Qal active participle with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #8085 BDB #1033
tzâlal (צָלַל) [pronounced <i>tzaw-LAHL</i>]	<i>to buzz, to tingle, to quiver</i>	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6750 BDB #852
sh ^e nayim (שְׁנַיִם) [pronounced <i>sh^eNAH-yim</i>]	<i>two of, a pair of, a duo of</i>	masculine plural numeral	Strong's #8147 BDB #1040
ʾôzen (אָזֵן) [pronounced <i>OH-zen</i>]	<i>ears</i>	feminine dual noun	Strong's #241 BDB #23

Translation: [...which all \[who\] hear it, both their ears will tingle](#). Then God tells Samuel the affect of what he says on those who hear it. We begin with the relative pronoun, the masculine singular construct of *all* (or, *everyone*) followed by the Qal active participle of *to hear, to listen* (again, God takes the words used by Samuel). Affixed to *hearing* is the masculine singular suffix, which refers to the *thing* which God will do in Israel.

The main verb comes next, which is the 3rd person feminine plural, Qal imperfect of *tzâlal* (צָלַל) [pronounced *tzaw-LAHL*] and it is an onomatopoeic word which means *to buzz, to tingle, to quiver*. The subject of the verb follows. We begin with the numeral feminine³⁵ plural construct of *two, two of, a pair of, a duo of*. This is followed by *his ears*, giving us: [Then Y^ehovah said to Samuel, "Listen, I am doing a thing in Israel which all \[who\] hear it, both his ears](#)

³⁵ Owen places this word in the *masculine* gender; however, its form in the Hebrew is feminine. The two words mean the same thing and are given the same Strong's number.

will tingle.” This is a bit awkward in the English, although it may be perfectly accurate Hebrew. We might smooth the quotation to: “Listen [carefully]: I am going to do something in Israel so that both ears of anyone hearing this will tingle.” We find another reference to one’s ears tingling in 2Kings 21:11–12, where the words of the prophets during the time of the evil Judæan king Manasseh would cause the ears of those who heard these words to tingle. To us, it sounds rather innocuous, but to the Jews, it was extremely serious. If you recall the feeling you had when you heard that the second plane hit the World Trade Center, this would be akin to their ears tingling. Without hearing even the details, there was a feeling of shock, sadness and dread. This is what is being conveyed. Notice the TEV rendering: *...everyone who hears about it will be stunned*. The idiom in the Hebrew loses its impact and cries out to be re-translated. There is a similar passage in Jer. 19:3, and both of these passages point to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. One of the tragic events which is coming is the destruction of Shiloh, where the Tent of God was established. Jeremiah several times compares the coming destruction of Jerusalem to what happened at Shiloh (Jer. 7:12, 14 26:6, 9). A passage which may convey the feeling in language that we are more familiar with is Job 15:21: “Sounds of terror are in his ears. While at peace, the destroyer comes upon him.”

Some very significant acts will take place in the near future, all of which have spiritual implications. Therefore, let us ask...

What Will God do to Cause Men’s Ears to Tingle?

1. God will fulfill His judgment against the house of Eli. 1Sam. 3:13, which alludes back to the prophet speaking with Eli in 1Sam. 2:27–36.
2. God will break the strength of Eli’s house. Eli is descended from Aaron through one of his sons, Ithamar. God would change the line of priests over to Eleazar (another of Aaron’s sons). We discussed this in great detail in 1Sam. 2:30.
3. Although the line of Eli would continue, there will be a dual priesthood in the time of David and early in the reign of Solomon, who will officially recognize the line of Eleazar.
4. During all of this time, those priests in Eli’s line would not grow to be old men, as Eli is (he will die at age 98).
5. God will allow the Philistines a great victory over Israel.
6. In this victory, the Philistines will kill Eli’s two sons and capture the Ark of God (which will be taken into battle for good luck).
7. Eli will hear of this and fall over dead.
8. The wife of Phinehas, Eli’s son who dies in battle, will give birth on that day to a son she names Icabod, which means *the glory has departed from Israel*. Interestingly enough, she names her son Icabod not because of the death of Eli or Phinehas, but because the Ark of God is taken in battle.
9. The Ark of God would eventually be returned to Israel by the Philistines. Wherever the Ark is taken in Philistia, death and disease are rampant.
10. Some Israelites will treat the Ark as an object of curiosity and thousands of Israelites will die from looking into the Ark.
11. The Ark is not returned to the Tabernacle of God, but taken to Kiriath jearim instead, and stored. This suggests to us that Shiloh, the city of the Tabernacle, was destroyed during this time period (we find out later that Shiloh was destroyed, but this is something that we do not have an historical account of—this will be examined in 1Sam. 7:1–2, which I include as a part of 1Sam. 6).
12. Only the things to do with Eli are actually prophesied here and at the end of 1Sam. 2; however, the events which will follow, those prophesied and those not prophesied, would be topics of discussion for centuries to come.

It is interesting that God chose not to prophesy some of the events which would follow. It is possible that God did prophesy these things through Samuel (but those words were not recorded). Whereas, it is very likely that every single word that God spoke to Moses is recorded by Moses, it appears as though very few things which God said to Samuel are recorded.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

You will note the difference in tenses. We might think of God *about to do* this particular act. However, insofar as God is concerned, this is an ongoing act which has already begun (imperfect tense). That which God does, does not suddenly come about. Many of the things which He does are put into motion years and years before they come to pass. Kings Saul and David and even Solomon will all play a part in the bringing about of God's Word. Now, God, through His prophet, has already given us what will be fulfilled; in the next few verses, God will state that which He promised, He will do.

Let's go out on a tangent here. There are some who value the words of God when spoken directly from Him more than that which is found elsewhere in Scripture. In fact, several of you probably own a *red-lettered* edition of your translation, which means that the words of Jesus are in red letters. What He said is no more important than what is found elsewhere in Scripture, despite the fact that He is the Lord of Glory, the Son of God, and equal to God. We have two sets of revelations,

one in the previous chapter from a man of God and the one we are studying, which is directly from God to Samuel. They are both equally inspired and they are both equally the Word of God. In fact, the message from the man of God is even more detailed and informative, whereas this message essentially confirms the first message. The Bible is quite similar; there are passages which are quotations of Jesus, and there are other passages which are delineations of doctrine in a letter by Paul. They both hold the same weight. What Paul wrote and what Jesus said are both recorded in the Word of God as truth. Truth is truth. Despite the difference in source, the truth of the Word of God stands despite who said or wrote it. What Paul said is as much truth and is equally inspired as what Jesus said. In fact, what Paul wrote was more applicable to us, as he wrote to the Church, of which we are a part, in the dispensation of the Church. Jesus spoke either to His disciples or to groups of people while in the Age of Israel, which was a different dispensation altogether.

If you are a new believer, I can understand how this is difficult to hear; or you are not certain if you believe it or not. However, if you have been saved for some time now, and if you have been growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, then this should make perfect sense to you.

In the day the that, I will [cause to] fulfill unto Eli all which I have spoken unto his house, beginning and end.

I Samuel
3:12

In that day, I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoke concerning his house, [from] beginning to end.

In that day, all that I have spoken against the house of Eli will be fulfilled, from beginning to end.

This verse directly references that which was spoken by the man of God to Eli in I Sam. 2:27–36. Again, the Hebrew becomes increasingly more complex than we have found previously in the narrative. Here's how others have rendered this verse:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate

In that day I will raise up against Heli all the things I have spoken concerning his house: I will begin, and I will make an end.

Masoretic Text

In the day the that, I will [cause to] fulfill unto Eli all which I have spoken unto his house, beginning and end.

Peshitta

In that day, I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.

Septuagint

In that day, I will raise up against Heli all things that I have said against his house. I will begin, and I will make an end.

What Paul said is as much truth and is equally inspired as what Jesus said.

Significant differences: The apparent differences are simply a matter of rendering the Hebrew into the Greek, Latin or Syriac. When we come to those differences in the Hebrew exegesis, this will be apparent.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I will punish Eli and his family, just as I promised.
 The Message The time has come for me to bring down on Eli's family everything I warned him of, every last word of it.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ On that day I am going to do to Eli and his family everything I said from beginning to end.
 JPS (Tanakh) In that day I will fulfill against Eli all that I spoke concerning his house, from beginning to end.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

KJV (Scofield) 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.
 NASB "In that day I will carry out against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.
 NRSV On that day, I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end.
 Young's Literal Translation In that day I establish unto Eli, all that I have spoken unto his house, beginning and completing.

What is the gist of this verse? God tells Samuel that He will bring all things which He has predicted against Eli's house.

1Samuel 3:12a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
yôwm (יּוֹם) [pronounced yohm]	<i>day; time; today (with a definite article)</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #3117 BDB #398
hûw' (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>that</i>	masculine singular, demonstrative pronoun (with a definite article)	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
The bēyth preposition, yôwm and hûw (with definite articles) mean <i>in that day, on that day, in [on] the same day.</i>			
qûwm (קוּם) [pronounced koom]	<i>to cause to raise up, to cause to stand, to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand; to uphold, to perform [a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise]</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #6965 BDB #877

1Samuel 3:12a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿel (אל) [pronounced e]l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlîy (עֲלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
ʿêth (את) [pronounced ayth]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kol (כֹּל) [pronounced ko]l]; also kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced koh]	<i>all, all things, the whole, totality, the entirety, everything</i>	masculine singular noun without the definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
The sign of the direct object indicates to me that <i>all things</i> is a reasonable rendering.			
ʿăsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
I could not find any indication that these three words together mean anything other than <i>all that, all thing which [that]</i> .			
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^p -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	1 st person singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
ʿel (אל) [pronounced e]l]	<i>unto; into, among, in; toward, to; against; concerning, regarding; besides, together with; as to, in respect to; because of; according to</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108

Translation: *In that day, I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoke concerning his house, ...* We begin, literally, with *in the day the that*, followed by the 1st person singular, Hiphil imperfect of *to establish, to fulfill, to cause to stand, to perform* a testimony, a vow, a commandment, a promise (Gen. 6:18 17:7 26:3 Num. 30:14). Although the preposition is generally rendered *unto*, we can get away with the rendering *against* in this context. The entire prophecy against Eli has already been given in the previous chapter by the man of God. In this chapter, God merely confirms what the prophet already said.

I need to point out that Samuel may not know what this judgment is. A prophet has already come to Eli and has pronounced judgment against him and his seed; however, there is no reason to assume that Eli shared this information in detail with Samuel. Samuel is not exactly his confidant, but his charge (recall that Samuel is quite young at this time—perhaps as young as 8 years old). Parents continually deal with financial problems and a variety of difficulties; they do not gather their children together and share with them every single financial difficulty which comes their way. In most cases, such behavior would be psychotic. Samuel is anywhere from 8 to 18 and he is being groomed to take over Eli's duties—something which, if it has not yet been stated, is certainly implicit in his training. However, there is no reason to think that, after the prophet speaks with Eli, that Eli then gets Samuel, sits him down, and tells him all of the details of the judgment against him. First of all, it is embarrassing; and secondly, the prophet does not indicate that Eli needs to share this information with Samuel.

That brings up a question then: *how do we know the content of this judgment against Eli* (1Sam. 2:27–36)? Too often, the reader forgets that Scripture is not generally from the standpoint of 3rd person omniscient; but often from the view of 3rd person limited omniscience. That is, the writer (which, in this case, is probably Samuel) does not know about the feelings and thoughts of others, or of conversations that he has not personally observed, unless these things are revealed to him. The easy out often given by commentators is, God told him about it, so that he could write it. This is offered to explain the narrative about Moses' death at the end of Deuteronomy and Joshua's death at the end of the book of Joshua.³⁶

How Does Samuel Know what the Prophet said to Eli?

1. The prophet came and told Eli of the judgment which was to befall him and his progeny.
2. Eli was stunned at first; however, he probably expected something along this line, given the unchecked behavior of his sons. Given a couple of days, Eli will adjust to having been judged.
3. Since Samuel is probably between 8 and 18, there is no reason to think that Eli sat Samuel down and told him in detail of the judgment spoken against him.
4. Eli might have sat Samuel down and made it clear that he would, at some point, be in charge of the Tabernacle of God. However, given Samuel's young age, there is no reason to assume that Eli gave him the details of the judgment against him (against Eli).
5. Perhaps as long as 1–10 years later, God speaks to Samuel in a dream (our context). God tells Samuel that He would carry out His judgment against Eli and his house.
6. Note what God will say next: **“For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew about, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not cause them to cease their evil activities.”** (1Sam. 3:13). This suggests that Eli knows about this judgment but that Samuel does not.
7. After some prodding, Samuel will tell Eli what God said (1Sam. 3:17).
8. This is going to lead to some natural conversation. Samuel probably did not prod Eli to know what judgment has been spoken against him; however, Eli probably volunteered the information. “I already know about the judgment against me. You may recall me telling you about the prophet who spoke to me—well, this is what he said...” and then Eli would give Samuel his complete recollection of what the prophet said to him.
9. This approach is even more natural than God telling Samuel each and every detail of His judgment against Eli. What we have in 1Sam. 3:12–14 is an overall view of God's judgment against Eli. It is unlikely that God went into much more detail than that.

You see, there is no reason to insert some crazy phenomenon where there is none. The way that Samuel came to know the content of the prophet's message to Eli could be completely natural, and yet preserve a true human dynamic between Eli and Samuel.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

³⁶ Since the book of Genesis establishes a tradition of specific believers adding to what has already been written, there is no reason to assume anything more supernatural than, Joshua tacked on the ending to the book of Deuteronomy and someone else, Phinehas perhaps (not Eli's son), added the final few verses to the book of Joshua.

1Samuel 3:12b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
châlal (לָלַח) [pronounced <i>khaw-LAHL</i>]	<i>to begin</i>	Hiphil infinitive absolute	Strong's #2490 BDB #320
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kâlâh (הִלָּח) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to complete, to finish; to prepare; to come to an end; to consume, to waste, to destroy, to annihilate; to make pine away</i>	Piel infinitive absolute	Strong's #3615 BDB #477

The **infinitive absolute** has four uses: ❶ when found alone, it sometimes acts as an English gerund, so that we may add *ing* to the end of the verb; ❷ When found directly before its verbal cognate, it serves to intensify or strengthen the action or the meaning of the verb which follows; ❸ When it follows its cognate verb, it emphasizes the duration or the continuation of the verbal idea; and, ❹ it is sometimes used as a substitute for a finite verb form.³⁷

An infinitive absolute is a verb which can act like noun, a verb or an adverb. Generally it takes the place of a noun and serves to intensify meanings. When used as a complement of affirmation, it may be rendered *surely, indeed, definitely*; and when it is a complement of improbability and condition, we render it *at all, freely, indeed*. The infinitive absolute can also serve as an adverbial complement; or, as a verb, it can replace finite verbs, imperatives, participles, and the infinitive constructs.³⁸

This explains why many English translations render these two verbs as nouns and why the Latin and Greek render them as verbs.

Translation: *..[from] beginning to end*. Then we have the Hiphil infinitive absolute of châlal (לָלַח) [pronounced *khaw-LAHL*], which is one of the hardest working verbs in the Hebrew language (it has four different sets of meanings). Here, it means, *to begin*. Then we have the wâw conjunction followed by the Piel infinitive absolute of *to complete, to finish, to accomplish, to be fulfilled*. This means *a beginning and a completion*, or, as we might phrase it, *from beginning to end*. This indicates that there are several parts of this prophecy to be fulfilled. **"In that day, I will fulfill against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house [from] beginning to end."** The prophecy given by the man of God in 1 Sam. 2 begins (in time) with the simultaneous death of Eli's two sons, followed by the almost complete destruction of Eli's house; only one will remain to witness this great destruction. God here promises to perform what He has promised from beginning to end. In the next couple verses, God will fill in a few details as to what this judgment against Eli will entail.

The gist is, all God is telling Samuel at this point is about Eli and what He has already told Eli. Gill writes: *...when I begin, I will also make an end: not immediately, and at once, but by degrees; he began in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, and went on in the slaughter of Abimelech, and the eighty five priests at Nob, in the times of Saul, and finished in the thrusting out of Abiathar from the priesthood, in the times of Solomon, whereby that family was brought to disgrace and poverty.*³⁹

³⁷ *Biblical Hebrew*; Page Kelley; William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., ©1992, pp. 184–185.

³⁸ Taken from *The Complete Word Study Old Testament*; Dr. S. Zodhiates; ©1994 AMG Publishers; p. 2277.

³⁹ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:12.

And I have made known to him that am judging I his house from perpetuity in iniquity which He knew, for were cursing to themselves his sons and he did not dim in them.

1 Samuel
3:13

And I have made known to him that I am judging his house from everlasting to everlasting by means of [or, on account of] the iniquity which he was aware, for his sons were cursing God and he did not dim [or, chastise, admonish?] them.

And I have made known to Eli that I have judged his house from eternity past by means of and on account of the iniquity that he was fully aware of, for his sons cursed God and he did not dissuade them.

The Hebrew continues to become more complex, which is what we would expect. First the translations:

Ancient texts:

Latin Vulgate	For I have foretold unto him, that I will judge his house for ever, for iniquity, because he knew that his sons did wickedly, and did not chastise them.
Masoretic Text	And I have made known to him that am judging I his house from perpetuity in iniquity which He knew, for were cursing to themselves his sons and he did not dim in them.
Peshitta	And I will show him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew when his sons reviled the people and he did not rebuke them.
Septuagint	And I have told him that I will be avenged on his house perpetually for the iniquities of his sons, because his sons spoke evil against God, and he did not admonish them.

Significant differences: Although the Latin, Greek and Syriac all appear to be in agreement here, there Hebrew text is quite difficult at this point—particularly the final verb.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV	He knew that his sons refused to respect me, and he let them get away with it, even though I said I would punish his family forever.
NLT	I have warned him continually that judgment is coming for his family, because his sons are blaspheming God [As in Greek version; Hebrew reads <i>his sons have made themselves contemptible</i>] and he hasn't disciplined them.
REB	You are to [You are to: <i>probable reading; Hebrew I shall</i>] tell him that my judgement on his house will stand for ever because he knew of his sons' blasphemies against God and did not restrain them. It is presumptuous for the REB to state that theirs is the probable reading, as we have no support for this view, apart from their say-so. Note that all of the ancient readings differ with REB's <i>probable reading</i> . Furthermore, this would cause us problems in interpretation later on in this chapter. If God tells Samuel that he must reveal this information to Eli, and then Samuel appears to be reticent in 1Sam. 3:15, this does not bode well for Samuel's first prophecy. Since a prophet has already told Eli what would happen, this would support <i>every other translation</i> . This would allow for Samuel to balk at telling Eli what God said, as God did not tell Samuel that he must tell Eli this information. This is a weakness found in several places in the REB; that is, they footnote their translation as <i>the probable reading</i> ; but they actually do not cite any source as to <i>why</i> it is the probable reading.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	And I declare to him that I sentence his house to endless punishment for the iniquity he knew about—how his sons committed sacrilege at will—and he did not rebuke them.
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

<i>The Amplified Bible</i>	And I [now] announce to him that I will judge <i>and</i> punish his house for ever for the iniquity of which he knew, for his sons were [blaspheming God] bringing curse upon themselves, and he did not restrain them.
<i>Updated Emphasized Bible</i>	Therefore do I tell him, that I am about to judge his house unto times age-abiding,— for the iniquity which he knows in that his sons are cursing God, and he hath not rebuked them.
NASB	“For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them.
NRSV	For I have told him that I am about to punish his house forever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God, and he did not restrain them.
<i>Young's Updated LT</i>	...and I have declared to him that I am judging his house—to the age, for the iniquity which he had known, for his sons are making themselves vile, and he has not restrained them,...

What is the gist of this verse? God tells Samuel that He is judging Eli's house because of the evil that his sons did and because Eli did not restrain them.

1Samuel 3:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	1 st person singular, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
shâphaṭ (שָׁפַט) [pronounced <i>shaw-FAHT</i>]	<i>to judge, to condemn, to punish; to defend [especially the poor and oppressed], to defend [one's cause] and deliver him from his enemies; to rule, to govern</i>	Qal active participle	Strong's #8199 BDB #1047
ʾânîy (אֲנִי) [pronounced <i>aw-NEE</i>]	<i>I, me; in answer to a question, it means I am, it is I</i>	1 st person singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #589 BDB #58
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

1 Samuel 3:13a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	house, household, habitation as well as inward	masculine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced ʿahd]	as far as, even to, up to, until	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿōwlām (עוֹלָם) [pronounced ʿō-LAWM]	long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Together, they mean *and from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past to eternity future or from antiquity to everlasting, forever; for a lifetime (?); from a point in time to far into the future; to the end of this age.*

Translation: *And I have made known to him that I am judging his house from everlasting to everlasting...* We begin with something being revealed; in this case, verbally. The first part of v. 13 reads: *“And I have made known to him that I am judging his house from everlasting to everlasting...* God has already spoken directly to Eli (through a prophet) and has made it clear that He is judging not just Eli, but his house. This will be a judgment that God tells Samuel has been made to Eli already and a judgment which will stand for all eternity.

1 Samuel 3:13b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bē (בֵּי) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿāvōwn (אָוֹן) [pronounced ʿaw-VOHN]	iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5771 BDB #730
ʾāsher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	that, which, when, who	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81
yādaʿ (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHḤ]	to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see	3 rd person singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393

Translation: *...by means of [or, on account of] the iniquity which he was aware,...* Then we have *why* God is judging the house of Eli. We have the bēyth preposition followed by *iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing.* Then we have the relative pronoun followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect of *to know*, giving us: *...in the iniquity which he knew...* Eli was well aware of what was happening with his sons (1 Sam. 2:22) and did very little to prevent it. Just as our prepositions wear many hats, the Hebrew prepositions even more so. The bēyth preposition can act similar to the ἐν preposition in Greek, so it can mean *in*, but also *by means of*, giving us: *...by means of the iniquity which he knew...*

Eli's line will be judged and the person who will carry out this judgment, as we have seen, is King Saul. He will have all of the priests murdered because they helped David. The iniquity of the sons of Eli is that they ignored the clear Word of God and did what they chose to do because it suited their own whims (1 Sam. 2:12–17). Note the parallel: the wiping out of this line of priests will be because Saul ignored the clear Word of God and chose to do so because it suited his own whims. Bêyth is also used to mean *for, in respect to, on account of, in that, about concerning*.⁴⁰ This gives us: *...on account of [or, for] the iniquity which he knew...* This particular rendering of bêyth is very apropos to the passage—God is judging the line of Eli *because* Eli knew what his sons were doing; or there is an exchange here, where God allowed Eli to live, despite what his sons did, but this was in exchange for the ending of his line. As you see, a great deal of the legitimate meaning of some of these statements is buried in the Hebrew language, which I why I spend so much time with it.

1Samuel 3:13c			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
qâlal (קָלַל) [pronounced <i>kaw-LAL</i>]	<i>to curse, to execrate; to curse oneself; to bring a curse upon oneself</i>	masculine plural, Piel participle	Strong's #7043 BDB #886
The final two meanings are probably incorrect; see the notes below:			
lâmed (ל) (pronounced <i>l</i>)	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to</i>	directional/relational preposition with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
The emendations of the Sopherim tell us that the original text was not lâhem (לָהֶם) [pronounced <i>law-HEM</i>] (which is the lâmed preposition and the masculine plural suffix); but rather...			
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced <i>el-o-HEEM</i>]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
They did not want to write the phrase <i>they were cursing Elohim</i> , so they changed it to <i>they were cursing themselves</i> .			
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced <i>bane</i>]	<i>son, descendant</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: *...for his sons were cursing God...* Then we have the kîy conjunction (*for, because, when*) and the masculine plural, Piel participle of *to curse, to despise, to be accursed*. This is followed by *to themselves* (or, *for themselves, with respect to themselves*). The perpetrators are then named: *his sons*, giving us: *...for his sons were cursing [or, were accursed] with respect to themselves...* In Rotherham's *Emphasized Bible*, the NRSV, the REB, the NAB, the NJB and in most of the other translations which I own, the Greek is followed. The Greek has, instead, *...for his sons were cursing God...* God's Word™ says that this is in agreement with the Greek and Latin, as well as with ancient scribal tradition (which I assume as the emendation of the Sopherim).

⁴⁰ H.W.F. Gesenius, *Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*; ©1979 by Baker Books; p. 98. Two well-known examples of this rarer use of bêyth are Gen. 29:18 or Ex. 21:24, where the bêyth preposition is rendered *for* in every translation that I am aware of.

One possibility is that there was a transmission error—the Hebrew now reads *to themselves*, which is, without the vowel points מ להם; *God* is, without the vowel points, אלהים. What would have had to have happened is for two of the letters to have dropped out. However, there is an explanation for this verse and the reason that certain letters were dropped out of the text; this takes us to the **Doctrine of the Emendations of the Sopherim**. It is possible that a scribe did not feel as though it is right for him to copy the phrase *cursing God*; and changed it for that reason.

1Samuel 3:13d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô ^ʾ (אֵל or לֹא) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518

A typo in Owen lists this as a masculine singular noun. 15 times in the MT, we find lô^ʾ, but the Masorites tell us that it should read lôw instead (לו) [pronounced *low*]. Lôw means *to him*. This is not one of those 15 passages, however (and BDB tells us that each of those passages should be considered on their own merit⁴¹). BDB does suggest that here, as well as in Judges 21:22 1Sam. 20:14 and Job 9:33, this should read lû^ʾ (לֹו) instead. However, I do not know what that indicates, as I cannot find lû^ʾ in BDB.

kâhâh (הִחַיֵּךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-HAWH</i>]	<i>to be feeble, to fail in strength, to be cast down in mind, to become dim, to become darkened</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3543 BDB #462
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The meanings given above are Qal meanings. Several scholars agree that the meaning of the Piel verb at this point is *to rebuke*. The problem with that is, there are no cognates for that verb's meaning. This Piel verb is also found in Ezek. 21:7, where it is rendered *to faint*. Therefore, we have the problem to take this as it stands or to make up two completely different meanings for this verb which cannot be substantiated apart from this passage. The next problem is, Eli did *rebuke* his sons; however, he did not take it any further than that.

Gesenius gives the meanings *to chide, to restrain*; and offers up the following verb as *proof*:

kâ`âh (חַיֵּךְ) [pronounced <i>kaw-AW</i>]	<i>to be fearful, faint-hearted, disheartened, to restrain, to terrify</i>	Qal meanings	Strong's #3512 BDB #456
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This word does not exactly make their case.

The Latin, Syriac and Greek have the following verbs: *chastise, rebuke, admonish*, respectively.

b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity with the 3 rd person masculine plural suffix	No Strong's # BDB #88
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Translation: ...and he did not dim [or, *chastise, admonish?*] them. In the final line, we begin with the wâw conjunction, the negative and the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of kâhâh (הִחַיֵּךְ) [pronounced *kaw-HAWH*], which means *to rebuke*. The problems with this translation are: (1) this would be the only passage where this is translated this way; (2) there are no cognates which support this meaning; and (3) essentially, Eli did rebuke his sons. What this verb actually means is *to be feeble, to fail in strength, to be cast down in mind, to become dim, to become darkened*. It is a word primarily used of vision becoming dimmed (Gen. 27:1 Deut. 34:7 Job 17:7).

⁴¹ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 520.

In the Piel, it means *to become pale* (in reference to a spot on the skin—Lev. 13:6, 21, 26, 28, 56) or *to be feeble, to be timid, to be cast down in mind* (Ezek. 21:12 compare to Isa. 61:3 where a cognate is found). I have given you the textbook meanings; now let me elaborate. This word means *to become pale*. It would refer to a discoloration of the skin or to cataracts of the eye. A cataract is the clouding of the lenses, which appears white and obscures the vision, and is generally a function of old age. So, even though the vision has become darkened, that does not mean that this verb means *to become darkened*. The eye has a visible cloudiness or paleness on the lens in the center of the eye, and this is the primary meaning of this verb. The commonness of this disease allowed this word in later years to refer to the dimming vision or the failing of the eyes (Zech. 11:17). When not a reference to one's eyes or skin, it means *to fail, to be feeble, to be timid* (1 Sam. 3:13 Isa. 42:4). This was Eli's problem. He had rebuked his sons, but he had been timid, he had been feeble with regards to correcting the evils of his sons. Unfortunately, we have the negative used here, giving us: *...and he did not dim them*. I am assuming that the preposition simply identifies the direct object (occasionally, a preposition narrows the meaning of the verb while identifying the direct object of the verb in the Hebrew).

The entire verse now reads: *And I have made known to him that I am judging his house from everlasting to everlasting by means of [or, on account of] the iniquity which he was aware, for his sons were cursing God and he did not dim them*. God is telling Samuel that Eli's house is judged and this is because his sons cursed God in what they did and because Eli did not deal with the problem. This final phrase, *he did not dim them* is quite oblique, and I am not certain that I can correctly interpret it (and, I wonder if this is here by mistake, via a copyist's error, as this is a repetition of a verb used previously to describe Eli's vision). I've given several other translations, which deal with Eli not rebuking his sons; however, he did rebuke his sons. He just did not take it any further than that. Eli certainly did not cause his sons to quit, which is perhaps the idea which should be expressed here (which would require a different verb or an odd understanding of this verb). Accepting the meaning given to this verb by the KJV⁴² (*he did not restrain them*) pretty much solves any problems that we might have with the interpretation; the problem is, taking on that translation with a clear conscience.

Now, I have stood by Eli several times and pointed out to you the difference between his age and the age of his sons and his health and the health and strength of his sons; and I made a case that, physically, there was not much that Eli could do.⁴³ What happened was Eli let this behavior go too long ago. When his sons were growing up, they obviously did not respond to the training of Eli or to the training of the women who served the Tent of God (or Eli's wife, who is never mentioned). If Eli's sons behave this way as full-fledged adults, then their youthful years as teens must have been hell to endure. The Bible gave Eli an option when he was much younger—he could have had his sons executed back when they were disobedient, hell-raising teens (Deut. 21:18–21). Eli certainly recognized that they were hardened toward God and he did not have to train them to take his place. Eli had options when he was much younger, options which he did not exercise. Eli made many choices throughout his young adult life concerning his sons and erred continually on the side of indulgence, producing the godless men whom we studied previously. What you must recognize is that you make a lot of choices when you are young which affect you for the rest of your life. What do you think Eli's life was like when his sons eventually became physically superior to him? They disobeyed the Laws of God and I can guarantee you that they treated Eli with the same disrespect and arrogance that they showed toward God. Apart from Samuel, Eli's life would have been most miserable. But he brought it on himself from a great many bad decisions which he made from his young adult life on up. Okay, so you suggest that Eli should call upon the help of the Levites. You are correct. Eli should have made use of the human resources afforded him by God. One of the greatest pastors ever ruined the bulk of his ministry because he was unable to delegate authority. He needed to make use of the human resources that God gave him, and he did not. As a result, he found his thumb in so many pies that he could not fulfill his ministry, which was to study and teach. As he became spread too thin, his teaching suffered.

Practical application: Listen—it does not matter if you, as a pastor, carefully select someone for an important position and they go and screw things up. That is not your problem, per se. If you went through the selection process with God's guidance, then their incompetence set in, obviously they need to be reprimanded or replaced. However, the fact that men are corrupt and will screw up what authority they are given is not reason enough not

⁴² Owen also renders this the same way.

⁴³ And maybe I did this, as I doubt that I would have done any better than Eli did with such recalcitrant sons.

to entrust men with authority. This pastor I mentioned, because he realized that those under him would undermine his authority and screw up the jobs that he gave them, was reluctant to parcel out this authority; as a result, he could not handle all that he gave himself to do, and his ministry of studying and teaching fell apart. Believers with spiritual gifts in a church must be able to depend upon one another and just because someone screws up, that is not enough reason to eliminate that person's position. Men are corrupt, they have old sin natures, and they will screw up. This is a pure and simple fact and should not affect the delegation of authority. Furthermore, I don't care how good you are, you cannot do it all. A pastor teacher's function is to study and teach, and now and again, you may need to correct problems of those to whom you have given responsibilities to.

And to thus, I swear to a house of Eli if is covered [the] iniquity of a house of Eli by a slaughtered animal or a tribute offering forever."	1 Samuel 3:14	Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli [that] the iniquity of Eli's house will not be atoned for, either by a sacrifice or by an offering ever."
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And therefore, I solemnly swear to the house of Eli that its iniquity will not ever be atoned for, either by an animal sacrifice or by a bloodless offering."

The other translations:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And to thus, I swear to a house of Eli if is covered [the] iniquity of a house of Eli by a slaughtered animal or a tribute offering forever."

Septuagint And so, I have sworn to the house of Eli, the iniquity of the house of Eli shall not be atoned for with incense or sacrifices forever.

Significant differences: No significant differences (as the *if* found in the MT implies a negative when used in an oath).

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV I warned Eli that sacrifices or offerings could never make things right! His family has done too many disgusting things.

TEV "So I solemnly declare to the family of Eli that no sacrifice or offering will ever be able to remove the consequences of this terrible sin."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Assuredly, I swear concerning the house of Eli that the iniquity of the house of Eli will never be expiated by sacrifice or offering."

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

Young's Updated LT ...and therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli; the iniquity of the house of Eli is not atoned for, by sacrifice, and by offering—unto the age.'

What is the gist of this verse? God tells Samuel that He has sworn to Eli that, the iniquity of Eli's house will not be atoned for by any means.

1Samuel 3:14a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^é (or v ^é) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
kên (י כן) [pronounced <i>kane</i>]	<i>so, thus; upright, honest; rightly, well; [it is] so, such, so constituted;</i>	properly, an active participle; used primarily as an adverb	Strong's #3651 BDB #485
Together, the lâmed preposition and kên mean <i>therefore, according to such conditions, that being so; certainly, truly.</i>			
shâbva ^ç (שבַּעַ) [pronounced <i>shaw^b-VAHG</i>]	<i>to swear, to imprecate, to curse, to swear an oath, to take a solemn oath, to swear allegiance</i>	1 st person singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7650 BDB #989
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>leh</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʿĒlîy (אֵלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: [Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli \[that\]...](#) God has already made an oath to Eli, promising what the end of his family line would be. God is now letting Samuel know what it is.

Now, even though I have kicked around the idea of Samuel's age, suggesting that he is somewhere between 8 and 18, God is giving Samuel some pretty explicit information here about Eli and his failures as a father. This would suggest to me that Samuel, is probably between 12 and 16—old enough to hear the truth about Eli. This does not negate the idea that Samuel was saved this very evening as well.

1Samuel 3:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אֵין) [pronounced <i>eem</i>]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)</i>	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49

When following an oath, either stated or implied, ʾîm, by itself, functions as an emphatic negative.

1Samuel 3:14b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâphar (כָּפַר) [pronounced kaw-FAHR]	<i>to be covered over [with], to be covered [with]; to be pardoned; to obtain forgiveness; to be expiated of a sin or crime</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hithpael imperfect	Strong's #3722 BDB #497
ʿâvôwn (אָוֹן) [pronounced gaw-VOHN]	<i>iniquity, crime, offense, transgression, depraved action, guilt, punishment from wrongdoing</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #5771 BDB #730
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced BAH-yith]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
ʿĒlîy (אֵלִי) [pronounced gay-LEE]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: ...the iniquity of Eli's house will not be atoned for,... This begins the content of God's oath to Eli: ...if a transgression of the house of Eli is covered... The Law tells us: "If the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is a native or an alien, that one blasphemes Jehovah, and that person will be cut off from among his people." (Num. 15:30). It also reads: "You will keep the sons of Israel separated from their uncleanness by their defiling of My Tent which is among them." (Lev. 15:31). Even more on point is Aaron and his first two sons, who were killed by God for their impertinence with regards to their duties. Eli's sons, at bare minimum, should have been cut off altogether as priests from the family of Eli. The evil that they have done would not be covered over; it would not be atoned for.

Why didn't Eli do something about his sons? He was an indulgent father—he allowed his sons to do what they wanted to do. Once they got to an adult age and to the age where they assumed his duties, Eli did not censure them.

1Samuel 3:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
zebach (זֶבַח) [pronounced ZEH ^b -vakh]	<i>slaughtered animal [used in a sacrificial offering], slaughter, sacrifice, slaughtering, sacrificial animal</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #2077 BDB #257
w ^e (or v ^e) (וְ) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

1Samuel 3:14c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
minchâh (מִנְחָה) [pronounced <i>min-HAWH</i>]	<i>tribute offering, gift, present; sacrifice, bloodless offering</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4503 BDB #585
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>áhahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
ʿôwlâm (עוֹלָם) [pronounced <i>óo-LAWM</i>]	<i>long duration, forever, perpetuity, antiquity, futurity</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5769 BDB #761

Together, they mean *and from everlasting to everlasting, from eternity past to eternity future or from antiquity to everlasting, forever; for a lifetime (?); from a point in time to far into the future; to the end of this age.*

Translation: *...either by a sacrifice or by an offering ever.* The entire verse is: “Therefore, I swear to the house of Eli [that] the transgression of the house of Eli will not be covered [or, atoned for], either by a slaughtered animal or by a tribute offering ever!” Now you may look over what I have put together and then examine what other translators have, and you will certainly notice that there is no negative to be found in this verse. Nor is there a negative to be found in the Greek or in the Dead Sea Scrolls. What’s the deal? The key is the little hypothetical particle *if*. This is the word ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced *eeem*], which simply means *if*. When following an oath, either stated or implied, however, ʾîm, by itself, is an emphatic negative. God emphatically states to Samuel that no type of sacrifice will be accepted by Him to atone for the sins of Eli’s sons.

A reasonable question is, *why can't the sins of Eli's sons be dealt with by animal sacrifices?* The answer is simple: Eli’s sons are unbelievers. We found this out back in 1Sam. 2:12. They *chose* not to believe in Jesus Christ, Jehovah Elohim, the God of Israel. Their function as priests was simply a way to feed themselves. Heb. 6:4–6: **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.** Although this passage is not exactly applicable, it is close. Eli’s sons are not saved; no matter what they do, apart from believing in Jesus Christ, they will not be forgiven. No ritual and no sacrifice will be good enough to save them, as they have no interest in God and God’s Word. Furthermore, God, in His omniscience, knows this as well. Eli himself told his sons: “If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?” But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death.” (1Sam. 2:25).

Again, the cursing of the household of Eli was already covered in previous verses. However, this indicates that there is no way around it. God would not forgive his house no matter what Eli or his sons did. The oath of God makes His curse irrevocable. In other words, despite the fact that Eli was unable to do much with his sons, and despite the fact that he was old and weakened and his sons were probably much stronger than he was, Eli was still responsible for the Tent of God and the offerings from the Tent of God, and in this, he fell down to a point where there was no atonement in time. Now, do not become confused. Eli was a believer and he was saved forever. This oath applies to his line and to the perpetuation of the priesthood through his line. That was cut off. His salvation and his eternal destination remained in tact. Obviously, his sons, as unbelievers, could offer no sacrifice in order to redeem themselves. They were under eternal judgment, not simply for their disrespect of God and His sacrifices, but even more so for their disrespect of God and His sacrifice.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines](#)

A reasonable question here is, *why tell Samuel this? God has already spoken to Eli through a prophet; why is Samuel brought into the loop? Isn't God's judgment of Eli and his family a matter of privacy?*

Why Does God Tell Samuel about Eli?

1. Samuel was Eli's successor; Samuel needed to know what was going on.
2. God's treatment of Eli had to be clear to Samuel.
3. Samuel knew the evil of Eli's sons; he also realized that they were still functioning as priests. In his young mind, he knew this was wrong.
4. Samuel was going to take over at a very young age—we really do not know how old he is, but his growing up is alluded to (1Sam. 2:26). He is called a young man or a boy in this chapter (1Sam. 3:1).
5. Samuel must know that there are consequences for one's actions. Samuel must realize clearly that he is in a position of very public responsibility.
6. What Eli's sons are doing is very public. This is not a private issue; this is clearly a public issue. Therefore, their sins will be dealt with publically.
7. Even more importantly, Samuel must realize that he is responsible to God. Samuel is going to have a very, very long ministry; therefore, he must have his priorities straight.
8. Samuel must become acquainted with the judgments of God.

Because Eli and Samuel are both very public figures, therefore, there are some things which cannot be kept private.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

Samuel Relays God's Message to Eli

And so lay Samuel until the morning and so he opened doors of a House of Y^ehowah and Samuel was afraid of a making known of the vision to Eli.

1 Samuel
3:15

So Samuel lay until morning, then opened the doors of the House of Y^ehowah; but Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.

So Samuel lay in his bed until the morning. Then he got up and opened the doors to the House of Jehovah, but he was afraid to make known this vision to Eli.

First, what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so lay Samuel until the morning and so he opened doors of a House of Y^ehowah and Samuel was afraid of a making known of the vision to Eli.

Septuagint

And Samuel slept until morning and rose early in the morning and opened the doors of the house of the Lord; and Samuel feared to tell the vision.

Significant differences:

There are some minor differences, but none are significant.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV

The next morning, Samuel got up and opened the doors to the LORD's house. He was afraid to tell Eli what the LORD had said.

The Message

Samuel stayed in bed until morning, then rose early and went about his duties, opening the doors of the sanctuary, but he dreaded having to tell the vision to Eli.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Samuel lay there until morning; and then he opened the doors of the House of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to report the vision to Eli,...

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

The Emphasized Bible And Samuel lay until the morning, and rose early in the morning, and opened the doors of the house of Yahweh, —but ||Samuel|| feared to tell the appearing unto Eli.
 NASB So Samuel lay down until morning. Then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. But Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.
 NRSV Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli.
Young's Updated LT And Samuel lay until the morning and opened the doors of the house of Jehovah, and Samuel is afraid of declaring the vision unto Eli.

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel lay in his bed until morning. When he gets up, he opens the doors to the Tabernacle of God, but he is afraid of telling Eli what he saw.

1Samuel 3:15a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
shâkab (שָׁכַב) [pronounced <i>shaw-KAH^{AV}</i>]	<i>to lie down, to lie down [to sleep, to have sexual relations, to die; because of sickness or humiliation]; to relax</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7901 BDB #1011
Sh ^e mûw`êl (שִׁמְוֵאל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
‘ad (עַד) [pronounced <i>‘ahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
bôqer (בֹּקֶר) [pronounced <i>BOH-ker</i>]	<i>morning</i>	masculine singular noun with a definite article	Strong's #1242 BDB #133

The Septuagint adds here: *...and rose early in the morning...* Rotherham believes this to be the correct reading as well (you will note that the NRSV did not choose to follow that reading, however).⁴⁴

Translation: So Samuel lay until morning,... Recall that it is dark and that there is not a lot for anyone to do at night. It is unlikely that Samuel slept; but he remained prone, however, more than likely pondering the dramatic event being spoken of by God.

I want you to realize that there is a certain sadness to this appearance of God to Samuel. Samuel has essentially been raised by Eli, and Samuel no doubt looks up to Eli. That God would bring such a message to him and bypass Eli might stroke the ego of one who is more arrogant than Samuel; however, Samuel is no doubt taken aback by all of this. God speaks to him directly, and the first thing that God does is pronounce judgment on Eli, the man who

⁴⁴ The Vulgate and the Aramaic translation do not have this phrase.

raised him. There is no reason to assume that Samuel knows exactly what the prophet has previously told Eli (1Sam. 2:27–36), despite the fact that God says that He will carry out against Eli that which He has already spoken (1Sam. 3:12). God knows what judgment He has pronounced against Eli; Samuel may or may not know (my guess is, he does not know). I have already explained what the likely order of events was; that is, **how Samuel came to know the judgment of the prophet against Eli**.

1Samuel 3:15b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
pâthach (פָּתַח) [pronounced <i>paw-THAHKH</i>]	<i>to open, to open up; to let loose</i> [as in, <i>to draw (a sword); to begin, to lead in</i>]	3 rd person feminine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6605 BDB #834
ʾêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
deleth (דְּלֵת) [pronounced <i>DEH-leth</i>]	<i>doors, gates of a city</i>	feminine plural construct	Strong's #1817 BDB #195
bayith (בַּיִת) [pronounced <i>BAH-yith</i>]	<i>house, household, habitation as well as inward</i>	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1004 BDB #108
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: ...then opened the doors of the House of Y^ehowah;... It might be good to get an idea as to exactly where Eli and Samuel were. Samuel is said to be lying down in the *Temple of Jehovah where the Ark of God* was back in v. 3. We might assume that the *Temple of Jehovah* refers to the entire religious compound, which would include the Tent of God, the fenced-in area around the Tent of God, and any additional tents or residences for those who served Jehovah. Within this religious compound would have been the Tent of God, and within that tent in the Holy of Holies would have been the Ark of God. Nothing is really said about where Samuel and Eli lay in the original text, whether it was outside, whether there were separate tents for them to reside in, or what. It appears as though Eli slept either in the Tabernacle of God or within the fenced in area about the Tabernacle of God. Keil and Delitzsch suggest: *Samuel neither slept in the holy place by the side of the candlestick and table of shew-bread, nor in the most holy place in front of the ark of the covenant, but in the court, where cells were built for the priests and Levites to live in when serving at the sanctuary.*⁴⁵ This understanding seems to be in keeping with all of the Scripture in this context. Furthermore, I personally know of nothing which would suggest that any priest used the Tabernacle as a sleeping quarters.

When referring to Eli and his lack of vision, it is also mentioned that the lamp of God had not gone out. Again, this would reasonably be within the fenced in area, inside the Tent of God. The mention of the lamp of God would indicate that Eli was sleeping inside the Tabernacle (semi-permanent tent) of God. Either that, or he is nearby. Once Samuel gets up, he opens the doors of the house of God, which would reasonably either be the door to the fenced-in area or the screen for the doorway into the Tabernacle of God.

⁴⁵ Keil & Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Old Testament*; ©1966 Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; Vol. 2, p. 394.

Barnes comments: *We learn thus incidentally the nature of some of Samuel's duties. This duty was quite Levitical in the character. In the interval between Joshua and David, when the Tabernacle was stationary for the most part, it may have lost something of its tent character, and among other changes have had doors instead of the hanging.*⁴⁶ There is no reason to assume that he opens these doors to go inside; he might open these doors to indicate that the Temple of God was ready for business, so to speak.

Keil and Delitzsch comment on the structure of the Tabernacle and its outbuildings: *Originally, when the tabernacle was simply a tent, traveling with the people from place to place, it had only curtains at the entrance to the holy place and court. But when Israel had become possessed of fixed houses in the land of Canaan, and the dwelling-place of God was permanently erected at Shiloh, instead of the tents that were pitched for the priests and Levites, who encamped round about during the journey through the desert, there were erected fixed houses, which were built against or inside the court, and not only served as dwelling-places for the priests and Levites who were officiating, but were also used for the reception and custody of the gifts that were brought as offerings to the sanctuary. These buildings in all probability supplanted entirely the original tent-like enclosure around the court; so that instead of the curtains at the entrance, there were folding doors, which were shut in the evening and opened again in the morning. It is true that nothing is said about the erection of these buildings in our historical books, but the fact itself is not to be denied on that account. In the case of Solomon's temple, notwithstanding the elaborate description that has been given of it, there is nothing said about the arrangement or erection of the buildings in the court; and yet here and there, principally in Jeremiah, the existence of such buildings is evidently assumed.*⁴⁷ Although this is all conjecture, it is probably accurate. Recall that a doorpost is mentioned in 1Sam. 1:9 and that, in that same verse, the Tabernacle is called a *Temple of Jehovah*.

1Samuel 3:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
Sh ^e mûw ^e êl (שמׁוּוֹאֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
yârê ^ʿ (יָרַע) [pronounced <i>yaw-RAY</i>]	<i>to fear, to fear-respect, to reverence, to have a reverential respect</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3372 BDB #431
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
nâgad (נִגַּד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	Hiphil infinitive construct	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
ʿêth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84

⁴⁶ Barnes' Notes; *1 Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 13.

⁴⁷ Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*; from e-Sword; 1Sam. 3:15.

1 Samuel 3:15c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
mar ^{ah} (מַרְאֵה) [pronounced <i>mahr^e-AWH</i>]	<i>vision [as a means of revelation]; looking glass, mirror</i>	feminine singular noun	Strong's #4759 BDB #909
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced <i>e</i>]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
ʿĒlîy (עֲלֵי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750

Translation: ...but Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. Samuel has a respect and a fear of Eli—again, the idea that Samuel is about 12 years old⁴⁸ at this point in time, seems in line with this reading—out of a *fear/respect*, Samuel at 12 would have felt uncomfortable with revealing these kinds of things to Eli, who is, essentially his father (or, *father-figure*, if you will).

Now, had God revealed such information to me, there are a half-dozen people that I would hop in my car immediately, drive over to their place, and tell them how God has judged them. It would be a joy to do. The phrase *neener neener neener* might be used. However, there are a great many more people to whom I would not want to reveal a judgment from God. Barnes: *Here was Samuel's first experience of the Prophet's cross: the having unwelcome truth to divulge to those he loved, honoured, and feared.* Barnes further suggest that we examine a similar burden upon Jeremiah (Jer. 15:10 17:15, 18 20:7–18).⁴⁹

Samuel was unsure about telling Eli, and since God did not require him to do so, he was not going to volunteer the information. How unbelievable difficult to pronounce judgment on your own father figure.

And so called Eli Samuel and so he said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Behold, me." I Samuel 3:16 **Then Eli called Samuel, and he said, "Samuel my son." And he answered, "Observe, [it is] I."**

Then Eli called to Samuel, saying, "Samuel, my son." Then Samuel answered, "Here I am."

Let's see what others have done first:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so called Eli Samuel and so he said, "Samuel, my son." And he said, "Behold, me."

Septuagint And Heli said to Samuel, "Samuel, son;" and he said, "Behold, I."

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message But then Eli summoned Samuel: "Samuel, my son!" Samuel came running: "Yes? What can I do for you?"

⁴⁸ Recall that Samuel may be as young as 8 or as old as 18 here.

⁴⁹ *Barnes' Notes; I Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 13.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) ...but Eli summoned Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son”; and he answered, “Here.”

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB Then Eli called Samuel and said, “Samuel, my son.” And he said, “Here I am.”
 Young's Updated LT And Eli called Samuel, and said, 'Samuel, my son;' and he said, 'Here am I.'

What is the gist of this verse? Eli called for Samuel and Samuel came to him.

1Samuel 3:16a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
qârâ' (קָרָא) [pronounced <i>kaw-RAW</i>]	<i>to call, to proclaim, to read, to call to, to call out to, to assemble, to summon</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #7121 BDB #894
Ēlîy (עֵלִי) [pronounced <i>gay-LEE</i>]	transliterated <i>Eli</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #5941 BDB #750
ĕth (אֶת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
Shēmûw'êl (שְׁמוֹעַל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of Eli</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: Then Eli called Samuel,... Eli knew that God spoke to Samuel and he simply wanted to know what was up. So, at first dawn, Eli calls to Samuel to get the scoop. Given that there had not been any direct revealing of truth for sometime, this was an exciting moment for Eli, even though he no doubt suspected that he might be judged in all of this.

1Samuel 3:16b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ĕamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
Shēmûw'êl (שְׁמוֹעַל) [pronounced <i>sh^e-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of Eli</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

1Samuel 3:16b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
bên (בֵּן) [pronounced bane]	son, descendant	masculine singular noun with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #1121 BDB #119

Translation: ...and he said, "Samuel my son." We don't know how much time had passed. Although, at first I thought, enough time had passed for Eli to realize that Samuel was not going to tell him what God said unless he pried it from him; I realize that, given the rarity of visions from God, Eli probably asked Samuel to tell what happened the moment that they awoke. Wanting to know what God had said is a pretty normal reaction; I imagine that, the primary thing on Eli's mind is, *have I been reprieved? Has God changed His mind?* However, maybe I am only projecting the thoughts that I would have.

1Samuel 3:16			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	and so, then	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
hinnêh (הִנֵּה) [pronounced hin-NAY]	lo, behold, or more freely, observe, look here, look, listen, pay attention, get this, check this out	interjection, demonstrative particle with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #2009 (and #518, 2006) BDB #243

Translation: And he answered, "Observe, [it is] I." The final line is, literally: And so he said, "Behold, me!" This was Samuel's answer anytime Eli called him. This time, he knew it was Eli who had summoned him.

And so he said, "What [was] the word which He declared unto you? Do not, please, hide from me; thus will do to you God and thus He will add if you hide from me a word from all of the word which He declared unto you."

1 Samuel 3:17

Then he said, "What [was] the word which He declared to you? Do not, please, hide [it] from me. God will do the same to you and the same He will add if you hide from me a word of everything which He declared to you."

Then he said "What did God say to you? Please, do not conceal any what He said from me; otherwise, I would ask God to do to you whatever He has declared against me."

We go from a fairly simple exchange to a more complex one. Reasonably, Eli is a bit shaken up, realizing that Samuel's reticence to talk meant that the vision spoke more about Eli than about Samuel. His highly emotional state shines through, even in the Hebrew. Here are what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text

And so he said, "What [was] the word which He declared unto you? Do not, please, hide from me; thus will do to you God and thus He will add if you hide from me a word from all of the word which He declared unto you."

Septuagint And he said, "What [was] the word that was spoken to you? I pray you hide it not from me; may God do these things to you, and more also if you hide from me anything of all the words that were spoken to you in your ears."

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

CEV Eli said, "What did God say to you? Tell me everything. I pray that God will punish you terribly if you don't tell me every word he said!"

The Message "What did he say? Tell it to me, all of it. Don't suppress or soften one word, as God is your judge! I want it all, word for word as he said it to you."

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

God's Word™ "What did the LORD tell you?" he asked. "Please don't hide anything from me. May God strike you dead if you hide anything he told you from me."

HCSB "What was the message He gave you?" Eli asked. "Don't hide it from me. May God punish you and do so severely if you hide anything from me that He told you."

JPS (Tanakh) And [Eli] asked, "What did He say to you? Keep nothing from me. Thus and more may God do to you if you keep from me a single word of all that He said to you!"

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And he said, "What is the word that He spoke to you? Please do not hide it from me. May God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the words that He spoke to you."

Young's Updated LT And he said, 'What is the word which He has spoken unto you? I pray you, hide it not from me; so does God do to you, and so does He add, if you hide from me a word of all the words that He has spoken unto you.'

What is the gist of this verse? Eli asks Samuel what God said to him, and asked him not to hold anything back.

1Samuel 3:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾamar (אָמַר) [pronounced <i>aw-MARH</i>]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
mâh (מָה) [pronounced <i>maw</i>]	<i>what, how, why</i>	interrogative; exclamatory particle	Strong's #4100 BDB #552
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
ʾasher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced <i>ash-ER</i>]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

1Samuel 3:17a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^h -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
ʿel (אֶל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: Then he said, “What [was] the word which He declared to you? Now, the only problem with the English translations at this point is that they make this sound too logical and too normal. Eli’s speech is repetitive, it seems to run together, and, by its very nature, seems to be fraught with emotion. When a translation attempts to make what he says easily readable, then we lose Eli’s state of mind. We begin simply enough with *and he said*. Then we have the interrogative particle, the definite article and the noun *word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter*. It occurs well over 1300 times in the Old Testament and its verbal cognate occurs over a thousand times; the noun and verb occur five times in just this verse alone. Its primary meaning is what is said; this can be extrapolated to refer to the content of what is said, and hence the translation *things, matters, reports*. Then we have the relative pronoun followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect of *to speak, to declare, to proclaim, to announce*. In the Piel, it is stronger and it can carry with it the idea of providing guidance and direction, if not a set of mandates (and this would be determined by context). I don’t know exactly how this would be differentiated by the very common verb *to say*, which is found innumerable times in this chapter. However, the Piel, or intensive stem, would be appropriate for God speaking. This is followed by *unto you*. This gives us: **So he said, “What [was] the word that He declared to you?”** Eli knows that God spoke directly to Samuel, which was a very rare event.

1Samuel 3:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʿal (אֵל) [pronounced a/]	<i>not; nothing; none</i>	adverb of negation; conjunction of prohibiting, dehorting, deprecating, desire that something <i>not</i> be done	Strong's #408 BDB #39.
nâʾ (נָא) [pronounced naw]	<i>now; please, I pray you, I respectfully implore (ask, or request of) you, I urge you</i>	particle of entreaty	Strong's #4994 BDB #609

1Samuel 3:17b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kâchad (כַּחַד) [pronounced kaw-KHAHD]	<i>to deny, to disown</i> (when followed by the accusative); <i>to cover, to hide</i> (when followed by the accusative of a thing and a lâmed); <i>to conceal from anyone</i> (when followed by a min)	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3582 BDB #470
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: [Do not, please, hide \[it\] from me.](#) Eli continues speaking to Samuel. Eli no doubt suspects that God spoke of His judgment against Eli and his family. Eli might be able to read this in Samuel's face—that is, he might be able to tell that Samuel is reticent to share what God has said, which would indicate that there is nothing good said about Eli—hence, an earnest request not to hold back any information. Eli knows that God's judgment could go in two different ways—however, I suspect that inside, he knows this is just a repetition of God's judgment against Eli as spoken by the prophet.

1Samuel 3:17c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
ʿâsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced gaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793
lâmed (ל) [pronounced lʰ]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
ʿĒlôhîym (אֱלֹהִים) [pronounced el-o-HEEM]	<i>gods or God; transliterated Elohim</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #430 BDB #43
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
kôh (כֹּה) [pronounced koh]	<i>so, thus, here, hence</i>	adverb	Strong's #3541 BDB #462
Kôh is repeated, which often gives us a slight change of meaning (<i>here...there; on this side...on that side; hither...thither</i>).			
yâçaph (יָצַח) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414

Translation: *God will do the same to you and the same He will add...* Don't misunderstand this as some kind of a curse upon Samuel—this was more of a saying, albeit one which indicated strong emotion, than a curse. When Ruth declared her loyalty to Naomi, she used a similar saying in Ruth 1:17. David also makes a similar vow in 2Sam. 3:35. The NIV Study Bible calls this a *curse formula*, and notes that it can also be found in I Sam. 14:44 20:13 25:22 2Sam. 3:9, 25 19:13 1Kings 2:23 2Kings 6:31.⁵⁰ However, let me make it clear that this is not some kind of threat against Samuel; Eli desires to know what God said to Samuel, despite the ramifications, and this curse/oath indicates that Eli has *this intense desire to know what God said*.

1Samuel 3:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
ʾîm (אִם) [pronounced eem]	<i>if, though; lo, behold; oh that, if only; when, since, though when</i> (or, if followed by a perfect tense which refers to a past event)	primarily an hypothetical particle	Strong's #518 BDB #49
When following an oath, either stated or implied, ʾîm, by itself, functions as an emphatic negative.			
kâchad (כָּחַד) [pronounced kaw-KHAHD]	<i>to deny, to disown</i> (when followed by the accusative); <i>to cover, to hide</i> (when followed by the accusative of a thing and a lâmed); <i>to conceal from anyone</i> (when followed by a min)	2 nd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3582 BDB #470
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of</i>	preposition of separation with the 1 st person singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
min (מִן) [pronounced min]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, they mean <i>from all...</i> However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> . These are taken from over a half-dozen literal translations for I Sam. 23:23.			
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	<i>word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command</i>	masculine singular noun with the definite article	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
ʾăšher (אֲשֶׁר) [pronounced ash-ER]	<i>that, which, when, who</i>	relative pronoun	Strong's #834 BDB #81

⁵⁰ *The NIV Study Bible*; ©1995 by The Zondervan Corporation; p. 377.

1Samuel 3:17d

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
dâbar (דָּבַר) [pronounced daw ^h -VAHR]	<i>to speak, to talk [and back with action], to give an opinion, to expound, to make a formal speech, to speak out, to promise, to propose, to speak kindly of, to declare, to proclaim, to announce</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel perfect	Strong's #1696 BDB #180
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced e/]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied) with the 2 nd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #413 BDB #39

Translation: ...if you hide from me a word of everything which He declared to you.” The entire verse reads: **Then he said, “What [was] the word which He declared to you? Do not, please, hide [it] from me. God will do the same to you and the same He will add if you hide from me a word of everything which He declared to you.”** Eli knew that God had promised terrible things to his line. He says that the same will be done to Samuel if Samuel does not reveal all that God said to him. Don't misunderstand this as Eli being bitter nor take this to mean that Eli is really asking for God to put a similar curse on the line of Samuel. It is simply an emphatic way to indicate that he wants the unadulterated and unabridged truth from Samuel. Again, we find a similar oath of devotion given in Ruth 1:17. Eli's approach here confirms to us that Samuel is rather young and probably close to 12 than he is to 18.

And so made known to him Samuel all the words and he did not conceal [anything] from him. And so he said, “Y^ehowah He [is]; the good in His [two] eyes He will do.” 1 Samuel 3:18

So Samuel made known to him all the words and he did not keep [anything] from him. Then he said, “He [is] Y^ehowah—He will do the good in His eyes.”

So Samuel made known to Eli all that God had said and he held nothing back. Then he concluded, saying, “Jehovah will do what He sees as good.”

Let's see what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text	And so made known to him Samuel all the words and he did not conceal [anything] from him. And so he said, “Y ^e howah He [is]; the good in His [two] eyes He will do.”
Septuagint	And Samuel reported all the words and hid them not from him. And Heli said, “He [is] the Lord; He will do that which is good in His sight.”

Significant differences: No significant differences.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)	Samuel then told him everything, withholding nothing from him. And [Eli] said, “He is the ; He will do what He deems right.”
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Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB	So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. And he said, "It is the LORD; let Him do what seems good to Him."
Young's Updated LT	And Samuel declared to him the whole of the words, and had not hid from him; and he said, 'It is Jehovah; that which is good in His eyes He does.'

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel tells Eli what God said to him; Eli recognizes that what God does is just and proper.

1Samuel 3:18a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
nâgad (נָגַד) [pronounced <i>naw-GAHD</i>]	<i>to make conspicuous, to make known, to expound, to explain, to declare, to inform, to confess, to make it pitifully obvious that</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #5046 BDB #616
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l'</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	No Strong's # BDB #510
Sh ^o mûw'êl (שָׁמוּאֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^o-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of Eli</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
'êth (אֵת) [pronounced <i>ayth</i>]	generally untranslated; occasionally <i>to, toward</i>	indicates that the following substantive is a direct object	Strong's #853 BDB #84
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
dâbâr (דְּבָר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural noun	Strong's #1697 BDB #182

Translation: *So Samuel made known to him all the words...* Samuel, even though young, realized the importance of conveying all the information that he could to Eli concerning this event. This was no doubt as difficult for Samuel to say as it was for Eli to hear.

1Samuel 3:18b			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251

1Samuel 3:18b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
lô` (אֵל or אֵלֵל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
<p>A typo in Owen lists this as a masculine singular noun. 15 times in the MT, we find lô`, but the Masorites tell us that it should read lôw instead (אֵל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]. Lôw means <i>to him</i>. This is not one of those 15 passages, however (and BDB tells us that each of those passages should be considered on their own merit⁵¹). BDB does suggest that here, as well as in Judges 21:22 1Sam. 20:14 and Job 9:33, this should read lû` (אֵלֵל) instead. However, I do not know what that indicates, as I cannot find lû` in BDB.</p>			
kâchad (כָּחַד) [pronounced <i>kaw-KHAHD</i>]	<i>to deny, to disown</i> (when followed by the accusative); <i>to cover, to hide</i> (when followed by the accusative of a thing and a lâmed); <i>to conceal from anyone</i> (when followed by a min)	3 rd person masculine singular, Piel imperfect	Strong's #3582 BDB #470
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #4480 BDB #577

Translation: ...and he did not keep [anything] from him. Then we have the wâw conjunction, the negative and the Piel perfect of kâchad again (which means *to conceal from anyone* when followed by a min, as it is here). Then we have *from him*, giving us: ...and he concealed nothing from him. Samuel realized that he had to reveal all of this information to Eli; that was a given. He simply did not want to and had to be coaxed into it. However, Eli's insistence made him realize how important it was to share this information, even though it would seem harsh to Eli personally.

McGee's comments: *Now this boy Samuel is loyal to Eli to the very end. He did not attempt to undermine him. He went to Eli and told him everything God had said to him. I want to say that if you are in God's service today and serving under some other man, be loyal to him. Don't tell me that you can be loyal to Christ and be disloyal to God's man who is above you. Oh, how Loyalty is needed today!*⁵² Let me add, this is particularly true of assistant pastors. If you are an assistant pastor, even if you desire your own pastorate, it is never a part of your job to berate the current pastor, nor are you to *steal* believers from the church when you go. If you are an assistant pastor, then you may want to also take into consideration that may be your spiritual gift.

Samuel here passes his first test as a prophet to God. What could be more difficult than to pronounce judgment upon your father (for all intents and purposes, Eli was Samuel's father)? Samuel was young and he needed encouragement, and Eli encouraged him to tell all that God said. Eli probably even knew what God would say about him and his sons and his line—yet he encouraged Samuel to reveal all that God told him. God is not a respecter of persons. His pronouncement against Eli is just. God entrusts Samuel with this information, and it is therefore Samuel's mission to speak that which God has conveyed to him. Since Samuel is willing to do this, we recognize some greatness in this still very young man.

⁵¹ *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*; Hendrickson Publishers; ©1996; p. 520.

⁵² J. Vernon McGee; *I & 11 Samuel*; Thru the Bible Books; ©El Camino Press, 1976, La Verne, CA; p. 29.

1Samuel 3:18c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, then</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
ʾāmar (אָמַר) [pronounced aw-MARH]	<i>to say, to speak, to utter; to say [to oneself], to think</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #559 BDB #55
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohoh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
hûwʾ (הוּא) [pronounced hoo]	<i>he, it</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, personal pronoun	Strong's #1931 BDB #214
ṭôwb (טוֹב) [pronounced toh ^b ṽ]	<i>pleasant, pleasing, agreeable, good, better; approved</i>	masculine singular adjective which acts like a substantive; with the definite article here	Strong's #2896 BDB #373
As a noun, this can mean <i>the good thing, that which is good [pleasing, approved, kind, upright, right]; goodness, uprightness, kindness, right; that which is fair [beautiful].</i>			
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced b ^{eh}]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
ʿayin (עַיִן) [pronounced ʿAH-yin]	<i>spring, fountain; eye, spiritual eyes</i>	feminine singular noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5869 (and #5871) BDB #744
Written <i>his eye; read his eyes</i> . ⁵³			
ʿāsâh (עָשָׂה) [pronounced ʿaw-SAWH]	<i>to do, to make, to construct, to fashion, to form, to prepare</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #6213 BDB #793

Translation: Then he said, “He [is] Y^ehowah—He will do the good in His eyes.” Then we have *And so he said*—I must admit that a second and third reading of this does not make it clear to me who is speaking, whether it is Eli or Samuel—although, it seems most reasonable that this is Eli. Literally, we have: *And so he said, “Y^ehowah—He the good in His eyes He will do.”* Smoothing it out, we have (assuming that it is Eli who is speaking): *Then he concluded, “He [is] Jehovah—He will do the good in His eyes.”* Eli has resigned himself to what must come to pass. Eli is making a summation. *Eli concluded, “He is Jehovah—He will do what is right in His eyes.”* This sounds much more like Eli coming to a conclusion, rather than Samuel. Samuel had been speaking (i.e., the content of what he says is generally given in v. 15a); and Eli draws the conclusion that a man of God would draw, so that Samuel does not feel as though these pronouncements were from him. This, I feel, is the proper understanding of this final portion of v. 15.

Eli was essentially his father and Eli was the High Priest and Eli had been a judge for 40 years, which positions in life afforded Eli a great deal of respect and deference. There are some believers who would hop on the bandwagon

⁵³ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 292.

here and say, “You know, there are a whole lot of things wrong with you, and this is why God is destroying your line.” Samuel would not—he simply says that God will do what God sees as right. Samuel is not saying that he approves or disapproves; simply that what will be will be, as God has already determined what He would do.

Gill expands on this statement: “the Lord is he Who has a sovereign right to all His creatures, and may dispose of them as he pleases; He is all wise, and does all things well; He is holy and righteous in all His ways and works, and there is no unrighteousness in Him; He is faithful to his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening; and all He does to his people is in love, mercy, and kindness.”⁵⁴ Gill continues to summarize Eli’s response: *“let Him do what seems to Him good”; not what seems good to men, or is so in their esteem, but what seems good to the Lord, Who knows what is best for His people, and can do nothing but what is good; all is good He does; there is nothing but goodness in Him, and nothing but goodness comes from Him; He does good, and nothing else, and even when He afflicts His people; all He does is well done in creation, providence, and grace: and Eli’s desire is, that He would fulfil the good pleasure of His will. [Eli] appears to be in an excellent temper, not surly and morose, taking it ill that such a message should be sent him by a child; nor was he unaffected with the case of his family, but humbly submitted to the will of God, and acquiesces in it as good, and neither arraigns his justice, nor murmurs at his providences.*⁵⁵

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

Examples of Submission to God’s Will

Eli here indicates that Samuel is not at fault here; God has made His decision and God will do that which is right in His own eyes. Eli does not hold Samuel, the messenger, responsible for the message. Both Barnes and the NIV Study Bible take this as a statement of Eli, who is bowing to the ultimate authority of God. Barnes⁵⁶ suggests comparing Eli’s submission to God to...

Person	Circumstances	Scripture
Aaron	Aaron’s first two sons were judged by God for their lack of reverence (they apparently offered something other than God’s required sacrifices on His altar). God executed them.	Lev. 10:1–3
Job	God removed all the Job had, apart from a nagging wife, and Job said to her, <i>“Shall we indeed accept good from God but not accept adversity?”</i> (Job 2:10b).	Job 1–2
Hezekiah	I must admit to having mixed emotions about Hezekiah here. Isaiah pronounces a curse against Hezekiah’s line and Israel in general (Hezekiah, by the way, is one of the <i>good</i> kings over Judah). Hezekiah’s reaction is: <i>“The word of Jehovah which you have spoken is good.”</i> For he thought, <i>“Is it not so, if there will be peace and truth in my days?”</i> (2Kings 20:19b)	2Kings 20:16–19
Our Lord	In an act of will which we cannot fully appreciate, our Lord get His assent to God’s will for Him to go to the cross and endure the suffering which we deserve for our sins. <i>“Father, if You would will, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Your will be done.”</i> was our Lord’s solemn prayer.	Luke 22:42

⁵⁴ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:18.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Most, but not all of these examples, were suggested by Barnes in *Barnes’ Notes; 1Samuel to Esther*; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 13.

Consider also Gen. 18:25 Judges 10:15 2Sam. 16:10-12 Job 1:21 2:10 Psalm 39:9 Isa. 39:8 Lam. 3:39 1Peter 5:6—additional examples of man submitting to God's will.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

Epilogue: Samuel and His Spiritual Impact

These last few verses appear to be written near the end of Samuel's life, or as a retrospect to his life. They essentially sum up the ministry of Samuel the prophet in relatively general terms. These words could have been written by Samuel at the end of his life or penned by another at the end of Samuel's life or after Samuel's passing. It would not be out of the question for someone to have even added these verses to the end of chapter 3. Obviously, these words could have been written prophetically by Samuel, although I doubt that occurred (in order to maintain consistent authorship, some have suggested that about the deaths of both Moses and Joshua). The fact that a writer of Scripture, as inspired by God, possibly inserted an epilogue here, does not contravene the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. There are portions of Scripture which were based upon existing historical records and eyewitness testimonies which were woven together and edited (see Luke 1:1–4); there were times when a continuous historical record appears to be written by several successive eye-witnesses (the book of Genesis, for instance); and there are times when one author appended one book with a concluding chapter or some concluding verses, to properly tie together and/or to properly end a literary unit (see Deut. 34 or Joshua 24). None of these things negate the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Now, if someone came along after a book had been completed and added or changed something, that falls outside the realm of inspiration.

And so Samuel grew and Y^howah had been with him and He did not cause to fall from all his words ground-ward.

1Samuel
3:19

So Samuel grew and Y^howah was with him and He did not cause to fall to the ground any of his words.

So Samuel grew and Jehovah was with him. Furthermore, God fulfilled all that Samuel prophesied; Samuel's words were always reliable.

Let's see what others have done with this verse:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so Samuel grew and Y^howah had been with him and He did not cause to fall from all his words ground-ward.

Septuagint And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and there did not fall one of his words to the ground.

Significant differences: None.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

The Message Samuel grew up. GOD was with him, and Samuel's prophetic record was flawless.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) Samuel grew up and the LORD was with him: He did not leave any of Samuel's predictions unfulfilled.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB

Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail [lit., fall to the ground].

Young's Updated LT

And Samuel grew up, and Jehovah had been with him, and had not let fall any of his words to the earth;...

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel grew physically and spiritually and all that he said was accurate.

1Samuel 3:19a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
gâdal (גָּדַל) [pronounced gaw-DAHL]	<i>to be [become] great; to grow; to be greatly valued [celebrated, praised]; to twist together, to bind together</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #1431 BDB #152.
Sh ^e mûw ^{êl} (שִׁמְעוֹן) [pronounced sh ^e -moo-ALE]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028

Translation: [So Samuel grew](#) [or, *became great*]... Although the verb here can be used for a person simply growing up, Samuel did more than that. He became the spiritual leader of Israel. He grew up physically and spiritually and he became a leader.

1Samuel 3:19b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced weh]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
hâyâh (הָיָה) [pronounced haw-YAW]	<i>to be, is, was, are; to become, to come into being; to come to pass</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal perfect	Strong's #1961 BDB #224
ʿîm (עִם) [pronounced geem]	<i>with, at, by, near</i>	preposition of nearness and vicinity; with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #5973 BDB #767

Translation: [...and Y^ehowah was with him...](#) The verb *to be*, although we would expect the Qal imperfect, is in the Qal perfect, meaning that God's being with Samuel was seen by God the Holy Spirit as an entire event, a completed action, even though we would see this as a continuous day-by-day thing. This is followed by *with him*, giving us: [And so Samuel grew and Y^ehowah had been with him...](#) This statement distinguishes the spiritual atlases from the hoi polloi. In New Testament times, we all have a place in God's plan, which is pretty incredible. No one is

designed by God to simply believe in Jesus Christ and do nothing beyond that. God has designed a plan and purpose for everyone’s life in the Church Age, which, of course, generally goes unfulfilled. However, in the Old Testament, not every believer received the Holy Spirit. Not every believer had God with him, as we have here in reference to Samuel.

Old Testament Believers Whom God was With		
Believer	Scripture	Quotation
Abraham	Gen. 17:1b-4 Gen. 21:22	“I am God Almighty—walk before Me and be blameless, and I will establish My covenant between Me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly.” And Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, “As for Me, listen—My covenant is with you.” Later, it was recognized that God was with Abraham by a third party: “Now it occurred at that time that Abimelech and Phicol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, “God is with you in all that you do.”
Isaac	Gen. 26:3, 24	“Live in this land and I will be with you and I will bless you, for to you and to your descendants, I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham.” Later, when Isaac had a dispute over the use and ownership of some wells, God told him, “I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you, and I will multiply your descendants for the sake of My servant Abraham.”
Jacob	Gen. 28:15 31:3	“Behold, I am with you and I will keep you wherever you go and I will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” Later, God told Jacob: “Return to the land of your fathers and I will be with you.”
Joseph	Gen. 39:2, 21-23	And Jehovah was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. Later, after being falsely accused and placed in jail, God remained with Joseph. But Jehovah was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and He gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. And the chief jailer committed to Joseph’s charge all the prisoners who were in the jail, so that whatever was done there, he was responsible. The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph’s charge because Jehovah was with him and whatever he did, Jehovah made it prosper.
Moses	Ex. 3:10-12 4:12	When God first spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He said: “Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt.” But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?” And He said, “Certainly, I will be with you, and this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this mountain.” Later, when Moses protested, saying that he talked too slowly, God told him: “Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and I will teach you what you are to say.”

Old Testament Believers Whom God was With

Believer	Scripture	Quotation
Aaron	Ex. 4:15	When Moses continued to protest about being a spokesman for God, God chose Aaron to speak on His behalf: “Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. Furthermore, listen, he is coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. And you will speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do.” Notice that there is not as much strength given to Aaron in this promise as compared to the previous promises. Aaron was to be primarily under Moses’ supervision throughout their lives.
Joshua	Joshua 1:5	Jehovah Elohim spoke to Joshua, saying, “No man will be able stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you nor will I forsake you.” See also Deut. 31:6–7.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

1Samuel 3:19c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
w ^e (or v ^e) (ו) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
lô' (לֹא or אֵל) [pronounced <i>low</i>]	<i>not, no</i>	negates the word or action that follows; the absolute negation	Strong's #3808 BDB #518
nâphal (נָפַל) [pronounced <i>naw-FAHL</i>]	<i>to cast lots, to cause to fall, to be brought down</i>	3 rd person masculine plural, Hiphil perfect	Strong's #5307 BDB #656
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced <i>kohl</i>]	with a plural noun, it is rendered <i>all of; any of</i>	masculine singular construct with a masculine plural noun	Strong's #3605 BDB #481
Literally, they mean <i>from all...</i> However, together, various literal translations give the following renderings: <i>about all, of all</i> . These are taken from over a half-dozen literal translations for I Sam. 23:23.			
dâbâr (דְּבַר) [pronounced <i>daw^b-VAWR</i>]	<i>words, sayings, doctrines, commands; things, matters, reports</i>	masculine plural noun with the 3 rd person masculine singular suffix	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
'erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...and He did not cause to fall to the ground any of his words. No matter what Samuel said, no matter what ruling that he made, God did not cause any of his words to fail nor any of his predictions to go unfulfilled. Saul's personal servant said to Saul concerning Samuel: "Listen, now—there is a man of God in this city, and the man is held in honor; all that he says certainly comes true. Now let us go there, and perhaps he can tell us about our journey on which we have set out." (1 Sam. 9:6).

Gill tell us that this is an *allusion either to water that falls to the ground, and becomes useless, or to an arrow falling out of the bow, and to the ground, before it reaches the mark, and so unsuccessful; or to any weapon of war, sword or spear, falling out of the hand of the soldier, whereby he is disarmed and rendered unserviceable.*⁵⁷ With the negative, this means that Samuel was *not* useless or unsuccessful.

The testimony here given by the writer (who is probably Samuel) is both strong and interesting. First of all, this would mean that Samuel would pass the prophet test—all that he said, came to pass; all that he said was truth. However, what is interesting is, we find very little by way of quotations of God in the book of 1Samuel. God speaks to him in 1Sam. 8:7–9 and in a couple of other places, and that is it. Samuel is known as a prophet far and wide; he is accepted as a prophet, throughout all Israel; yet, the first quotation to which we are privy takes place after Samuel has grown old (1Sam. 8:5). What happened? Samuel, as an author, was completely different from Moses. Moses carefully wrote down all that God said, and huge portions of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers are the direct words of God. Samuel, insofar as we know, wrote down very little of what God said. When it comes to the history of Samuel, even though it will extend from this point on to his death in 1Sam. 25:1, about half of that deals with Saul or with David. That's 22 chapters. 3 chapters will deal with the Ark of God. 4 of them will deal with finding Saul and him gaining popular approval, and then becoming king. Then we have 3 chapters on Saul and Jonathan, including Saul's failures. Although Samuel's role in these 7 chapters is pivotal, it is also minimal. Then Samuel goes to Bethlehem to anoint David (1Sam. 16); and, again, very little is said about Samuel (although, God does speak to Samuel in this chapter). Then, from 1Sam. 17 to the end of this book, we deal with David and/or Saul. Samuel's appearance at this point is sparse: 1Sam. 19:18, 24 and his death is mentioned in 1Sam. 25:1. From this point forward, in 22 chapters, only two of these chapters will focus on Samuel (1Sam. 8–9). It is fascinating that a prophet of Samuel's stature plays such a small part in recorded history—and history probably recorded by Samuel himself. Samuel appears to be a man who did not feel comfortable focusing on himself. We will examine this in detail at the end of 1Sam. 19.

With regards to authorship, this would be the kind of verse which would be written near the end of a person's life or after a person has died. We have a similar passage which was spoken by Joshua in the last month or so of his life in Joshua 23:14. He told those around him that he was going the way of all earth, but that they knew in their hearts that "...not one word of all the good words which Jehovah your God spoke concerning you has failed; all have been fulfilled for you—not one has fallen to the ground." (Joshua 23:14b). It is possible that Samuel serves Israel for several decades and then tacks on this and the next couple of verses, picking up with the history of the Ark of God. It is also possible that someone, a later editor, tacked these verses on as well. If I was to make a guess, it would be that Samuel wrote 1Sam. 1–3 at age 40 or so, after having served Israel for nearly 3 decades, and that 1Sam. 3:19–21 are a summation of Samuel's life from this point forward over the next 30 or so years.

In any case, the next 3.5 chapters occur almost immediately after 1Sam. 3, as they will contain the death of Eli, which is prophesied in this chapter as being imminent. These final 3 verses of 1Sam. 3 might be seen as an overall view of Samuel's ministry, a few incidents from which are to be studied in portions of the remainder of Samuel. This verse summary is necessary because we will actually only look at a minimal portion of Samuel's life. Near the end, much of Samuel's life will only be seen in relation to David and Saul.

And so knew all of Israel, from Dan and unto Beer-sheba that was being entrusted [or, confirmed] Samuel for a prophet to Y^howah. 1Samuel 3:20

So all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was confirmed [entrusted, faithful and/or steadfast] as a prophet to Y^howah.

⁵⁷ Dr. John Gill, *John Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible*; from e-Sword, 1Sam. 3:19.

So all of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of Jehovah.

First what others have done:

Ancient texts:

Masoretic Text And so knew all of Israel, from Dan and unto Beer-sheba that was being entrusted [or, *confirmed*] Samuel for a prophet to Y^howah.

Septuagint And all Israel knew from Dan even to Bersabee, that Samuel [was] faithful as a prophet to the Lord.

Significant differences: The second sentence appears different, but it is probably just a matter of translation.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NLT All the people of Israel from one end of the land to the other knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh) All Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was trustworthy as a prophet of the LORD.

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD.

NKJV And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been* established [or, *confirmed*] as a prophet of the LORD.

Young's Updated LT ...and all Israel know, from Dan even unto Beer-Sheba, that Samuel is established for a prophet to Jehovah.

What is the gist of this verse? Samuel was clearly a prophet of God, a fact known all over Israel.

1Samuel 3:20a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (וַ) [pronounced wah]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâda ^ç (יָדָעַ) [pronounced yaw-DAHÇ]	<i>to know, to perceive, to acquire knowledge, to become acquainted with, to know by experience, to have a knowledge of something; to see</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect	Strong's #3045 BDB #393
kôl (כֹּל) [pronounced kohl]	<i>every, each, all of, all; any of</i>	masculine singular construct not followed by a definite article	Strong's #3605 BDB #481

1Samuel 3:20a

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Yis ^e râ ^l êl (יִשְׂרָאֵל) [pronounced <i>yis-row-ALE</i>]	transliterated <i>Israel</i>	masculine proper noun	Strong's #3478 BDB #975
min (מִן) [pronounced <i>min</i>]	<i>from, away from, out from, out of from, off, on account of, since, above, than, so that not, above, beyond, more than, greater than</i>	preposition of separation	Strong's #4480 BDB #577
Dân (דָּן) [pronounced <i>dawn</i>]	<i>judge</i> and is transliterated <i>Dan</i>	Masculine proper noun	Strong's #1835 BDB #192
w ^e (or v ^e) (וּ) [pronounced <i>weh</i>]	<i>and, even, then; namely; when; since, that; though</i>	simple wâw conjunction	No Strong's # BDB #251
ʿad (עַד) [pronounced <i>gahd</i>]	<i>as far as, even to, up to, until</i>	preposition	Strong's #5704 BDB #723
B ^e êr Shâba ^ʿ (בְּעֵר שֶׁבַע) [pronounced <i>b^eayr SHAW^B-vahg</i>]	<i>well of the oath</i> and is transliterated <i>Beersheba</i>	proper noun; location	Strong's #884 BDB #92

Translation: [So all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew...](#) At the time that this was written, the tribe of Dan had been established in the northern portion of Israel. The tribe of Dan was unable to take the land which God had given them (it was distributed to them by lot), so they went north, found a relatively peaceful people, and took their land from them (Judges 18). The latter portion of Judges (Judges 18–21) took place near the beginning of the period of the judges, soon after the death of Joshua. We begin with, literally *And so knew all of Israel from Dan and unto Beer-sheba...* The tribe of Dan occupied essentially the most northern portion of Israel (there were likely times when the tribe of Reuben or Gad occupied even more northern portions); and Beersheba was one of the southernmost cities in Judah; so the expression *from Dan to Beersheba* was simply a way of referring to all of Israel. Today, we might say, *the entire United States, from Bangor, Maine to San Diego, California.*⁵⁸ This is simply a saying, and we need not be overly concerned if we are dealing with the absolute most northern and most southern areas of Israel. We first find it used in Judges 20:1. [So all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew...](#)

1Samuel 3:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
ʿâman (אָמַן) [pronounced <i>aw-MAHN</i>]	<i>founded, firm, stable, stabilized; long continuance, perennial; faithful, trustworthy, sure, dependable</i>	Niphal participle	Strong's #539 BDB #52

⁵⁸ Or, *from Alaska to the Florida keys.*

1Samuel 3:20b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
Sh ^o mûw`êl (שׁמׁוּׁוֹׁעֵל) [pronounced <i>sh^o-moo-ALE</i>]	which means <i>heard of El</i> ; it is transliterated <i>Samuel</i>	proper masculine noun	Strong's #8050 BDB #1028
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l^o</i>]	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
nâbîy` (נָבִי) [pronounced <i>naw^b-VEE</i>]	<i>spokesman, speaker, prophet</i>	masculine singular noun	Strong's #5030 BDB #611
`erets (אֶרֶץ) [pronounced <i>EH-rets</i>]	<i>earth (all or a portion thereof), land</i>	feminine singular noun with the directional hê	Strong's #776 BDB #75

Translation: ...that Samuel was confirmed [entrusted, faithful and/or steadfast] as a prophet to Y^ohowah. What all Israel knew follows, which is prefaced with a *that* followed by the Niphal (passive) participle of `âman (אָמַן) [pronounced *aw-MAHN*], which means, in the Niphal, it means *to be well-founded, firm, stable, of long continuance, perennial, faithful, trustworthy, sure, certain*; something that someone can *lean upon*. The Niphal is generally the passive of the Qal, but it also can indicate a state of being, progress or development. To indicate a continuous action, I have insert the verb *remains* rather than the verb *is*. The word itself can mean several things: *confirmed, faithful, certain, lasting, steadfast, dependable, trustworthy, entrusted, reliable*; note that I am giving the English equivalents as adjectives, and not as verbs—the participle behaves like an adjective here, or a predicate nominative. The subject of the verb (or the object of the verb's adjectival pointing) is the proper noun *Samuel*. Then we have the lâmed preposition and the masculine singular noun *spokesman, speaker, prophet*. Our concept of a prophet is pretty messtup. First and foremost, a prophet is a *spokesman* for God. He relays God's Word to man and he represents God to man; he is practically the opposite of a priest, who primarily represents man to God (the two together present a more clear picture of Jesus Christ).

Now, since God knows the end from the beginning, He sometimes relays information to the prophet, which involves events still to come, events whose outcomes were related to the behavior of those who listened to the prophet. So, the prophet's primary function was representing God to man. Our concept of prophecy is actually more incidental to the whole of his function—we focus on what God says will come to pass, but our behavior is more closely related here.

However, on the other hand, a huge amount of Scripture is prophetic (I believe I have heard the fraction $\frac{1}{3}$ bandied about). Although that seems rather high, somewhere between a fifth and a tenth sounds about right to me. Now, preceding *prophet*, I would have expected a kaph preposition (*like, as*), but instead, there is a lâmed (*for, to, regarding*). Then we have *to Y^ohowah*, giving us: ...that Samuel was confirmed [or trustworthy] as [lit., *to or for*] a prophet to Y^ohowah. The fact that God did not allow any of what Samuel said to fail (lit., *to fall to the ground*), this caused him to be known throughout all of Israel as a prophet who could be trusted, a prophet who had been confirmed by God. Now, bear in mind, this is what makes a man a prophet of God—it is not simply that he talks in a deep voice about stuff in the future—it is that, what he says is 100% accurate and reliable. “When a prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which Jehovah has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously, and you will not fear him...And the prophet who speaks a work presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet will die.” (Deut. 18:22, 20). Prophets who have spoken since the end of the Apostolic age are much less reliable. God's prophets are not 80% or 90% accurate; they are 100% accurate.

And so added Y^ehowah to appear in Shiloh for revealed Y^ehowah unto Samuel at Shiloh in a word of Y^ehowah.

1Samuel
3:21

So Y^ehowah continued to appear in Shiloh for Y^ehowah had revealed [Himself] unto Samuel at Shiloh by the Word of Y^ehowah.

And Jehovah continued to appear in Shiloh, as Jehovah continued to reveal Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the Word of Jehovah.

Let's see what others have done:

Latin Vulgate

And the Lord again appeared in Silo, for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel in Silo, according to the word of the Lord. And the word of Samuel came to pass to all Israel. Note that v. 4:1a is included as a part of 1Sam. 3 in the Vulgate.

Masoretic Text

And so added Y^ehowah to appear in Shiloh for revealed Yehowah unto Samuel at Shiloh in a word of Y^ehowah.

Peshitta

And the LORD continued to reveal himself by his words in Shiloh; and Samuel's words were declared throughout all Israel. The Peshitta also has a similar statement to begin 1Sam. 4:1: And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Septuagint

And the Lord manifested Himself again in Selom, for the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel; and Samuel was accredited to all Israel as a prophet to the Lord from one end of the land to the other; and Heli was very old and his sons kept advancing [in age and in their evil behavior] and their way [was] evil before the Lord.

Significant differences:

Obviously, from the readings above, the Greek has a lot more going on than we find in the Hebrew. It is not a matter of the Greek including a portion of chapter 4, nor is it a matter of the Greek taking liberties with the text—this goes beyond paraphrasing. I glanced through about half of my translations, and none of them had the longer Septuagint version of this verse. It is as though someone wanted to sum up what had happened to date.

The end of this verse is somewhat confusing (*Jehovah revealed [Himself] to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of Jehovah*), and it appears to possibly be confounded with the beginning of 1Sam. 4:1 (*Thus, the word of Samuel went out to all Israel*). Although the information in the LXX concerning Eli's sons does not seem to really fit here, it is pertinent to the next chapter where they will die. This is one of the many places where I could not say with even 60% accuracy which reading is correct.

Thought-for-thought translations; paraphrases:

NEB

Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. So the LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, because he had revealed himself there to Samuel. [the NEB mentions that the Hebrew adds *according to the word of the LORD*; which they believe is an inaccurate reading]

TEV

The LORD continued to reveal himself at Shiloh, where he had appeared to Samuel and had spoken to him. And when Samuel spoke, all Israel listened.

Mostly literal renderings (with some occasional paraphrasing):

JPS (Tanakh)

And the LORD continued to appear at Shiloh; the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh with the word of the LORD; [and Samuel's word went forth to all Israel]. [I added the first portion of v. 1 of the next chapter, as the Tanakh reasonably puts these verses together as one sentence].

Literal, almost word-for-word, renderings:

NASB And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

NRSV So the LORD continued to appear in Shiloh, because he had revealed himself there to Samuel.

Young's Updated LT And Jehovah added to appear in Shiloh, for Jehovah had been revealed unto Samuel, in Shiloh, by the word of Jehovah.

What is the gist of this verse? Jehovah continued to appear to Samuel in Shiloh and He reveals Himself by means of the Word of God.

1Samuel 3:21a			
Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
wa (or va) (ו) [pronounced <i>wah</i>]	<i>and so, and then, then, and</i>	wâw consecutive	No Strong's # BDB #253
yâçaph (יָצַח) [pronounced yaw-SAHPH]	<i>to add, to augment, to increase, to multiply; to add to do = to do again</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect	Strong's #3254 BDB #414
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
lâmed (ל) [pronounced <i>l</i> ']	<i>to, for, towards, in regards to, with reference to, as to, with regards to, belonging to</i>	preposition	No Strong's # BDB #510
râ`âh (רָאָה) [pronounced raw-AWH]	<i>to be seen, to be visible; to let oneself be seen, to appear; to present oneself; to be provided [cared] for (i.e., looked after)</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #7200 BDB #906
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Shilôw (שִׁלוֹ) [shi-LOH]	<i>quiet, relaxed, prosperous; transliterated Shiloh</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017

Translation: *So Y^ehowah continued to appear in Shiloh...* Anyway, to begin, we have the wâw consecutive followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Hiphil imperfect of *to add, to augment, to continue to do a thing*. The subject of the verb is given next, the proper noun *Y^ehowah*. Then we have the lâmed preposition and the Niphal infinitive construct of *to see, to look*. The Niphal is the passive voice, and it means *to appear*. Then we have the prepositional phrase *in Shiloh*. Again, this verse is written with an historical perspective. The writer is looking back over the life of Samuel and observing: *So Y^ehowah continued to appear in Shiloh...* Thieme rendered this first portion of the verse: *And the LORD caused to increase His appearances...* This is a fitting end for this chapter, as this chapter began with: *And the word of Jehovah was rare in those days—there was no widespread revelation.*

Specific appearances will be covered throughout the remainder of this book of 1Samuel. Interpretation of what exactly these appearances are is tricky. Many would like to read this as, *God took on a human or angelic form and sat down and talked with Samuel*; or, *from the Ark, behind the Holy of Holies, God spoke to Samuel*. However, it does not say that, nor do we have any specific instances that would confirm that. My thinking is that Samuel, if he

is recording what is happening, would mention such things. What we will have is, God will manifest Himself with respect to His Ark on at least four occasions (as I have mentioned before, I believe that God spoke to Samuel on many more occasions, but that information was not recorded in Scripture for us).

There appears to be no physical apparitions of God, but His presence is definitely manifested (recall, for instance, that, even though God *took a stand* next to Samuel, there is no indication that Samuel could see anything). That's an increase of *His appearances*, as there will be thousands of people affected by this. However, this verse does not say that, exactly. It says that Jehovah continued to appear *in Shiloh*. So that we understand what that means, this verse continues and becomes more specific.

1Samuel 3:21b

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
kîy (כִּי) [pronounced <i>kee</i>]	<i>when, that, for, because, at that time, which, what time</i>	conjunction; preposition	Strong's #3588 BDB #471
gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced <i>gaw-LAWH</i>]	<i>to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal</i>	3 rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect	Strong's #1540 BDB #162
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly <i>yhoh-WAH</i>]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217
ʿel (עַל) [pronounced <i>e/</i>]	<i>unto, in, into, toward, to, regarding, against</i>	directional preposition (respect or deference may be implied)	Strong's #413 BDB #39
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88
Shilôw (שִׁלוֹ) [<i>shi-LOH</i>]	<i>quiet, relaxed, prosperous; transliterated Shiloh</i>	proper noun locale	Strong's #7887 BDB #1017

Translation: ...for Y^ehowah had revealed [Himself] unto Samuel at Shiloh... We continue with the kîy conjunction and the 3rd person masculine singular, Niphal perfect of gâlâh (גָּלָה) [pronounced *gaw-LAWH*] again, which means *to depart, to uncover, to remove, to reveal* in the Qal; *to reveal, to publish* in the Niphal. The subject of the verb again is *Y^ehowah*, which proper noun is followed by *unto Samuel in Shiloh*. With the perfect tense, this does not appear to be an ongoing event, but this appears to refer back to this specific incident which is recorded in chapter 3—that God, that night, revealed Himself for the first time directly to Samuel.

1Samuel 3:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
b ^e (בְּ) [pronounced <i>b^{eh}</i>]	<i>in, into, through; at, by, near, on, upon; with, before, against; by means of; among; within</i>	a preposition of proximity	No Strong's # BDB #88

1Samuel 3:21c

Hebrew/Pronunciation	Common English Meanings	Notes/Morphology	BDB and Strong's Numbers
One early printed edition has <i>...according to the word of God</i> . ⁵⁹ I assume this would be the preposition ׀el (לְאֵל) [pronounced e/] instead.			
dābār (דְּבַר) [pronounced daw ^b -VAWR]	word, saying, doctrine, thing, matter, command	masculine singular construct	Strong's #1697 BDB #182
YHWH (יהוה) [pronunciation is possibly yohh-WAH]	transliterated variously as <i>Jehovah, Yahweh, Y^ehowah</i>	proper noun	Strong's #3068 BDB #217

Translation: *...by the Word of Y^ehowah*. Then we have the bēyth preposition (*in, into, at, by, by means of*) followed by *a word of God*, giving us: *...for Y^ehowah revealed [himself] unto Samuel at Shiloh by the Word of Y^ehowah*. The *word of Y^ehowah* can have three meanings: (1) it can refer to the second person of the Trinity, the revealed member of the Trinity, Christ Jesus, Who is often called the *Word of God* (John 1:1–3, 14); (2) it can refer to the spoken Word of God, which is clearly in view in this chapter; and, (3) it can refer to the written Word of God, which I would suggest is the case here. God had revealed Himself through Moses primarily to man, and in the Tent of God were the chronicles of those appearances. Samuel, having believed in Jehovah Elohim, and as a believer who was positive toward God's Word, would have delved into God's written Word. This verse is now the antithesis of v. 7, which reads: *Now Samuel did not yet know Jehovah, nor had the Word of Jehovah yet been revealed to him*. Samuel now knew Jehovah, and God's Word was revealed to him periodically. Let me suggest to you that all three meanings are applicable. The first two meanings are clearly applicable to this instance which we have recorded. However, there is no doubt that Samuel began to study God's Word and God was revealed to him via His written Word as well.

Let me explain this by way of my own experience. I went to several different churches when I was young—mostly cultic and apostate churches; but I did have my own Bible and I did attend a Baptist Summer School session of one week (and brought the most kids to this session). Now, in all of this, I do not recall ever hearing the gospel or having any idea as to what the gospel was (no idea whether I actually heard the gospel or not). I knew several Bible stories, I knew that Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected, but that seemed to be no different than any of the other Bible stories. I certainly had no clue as to why four books dealt with His life alone. None of it made any sense to me. Then, at age 21, I believed in Christ Jesus and, through an excellent pastor-teacher, I began to understand what was in the Bible. It wasn't as though I had studied it prior to that time—but the little I knew was meaningless. Samuel has been brought up in the Tent of God. He has seen a lot of sacrifices offered, he has examined the articles of furniture; he may have even seen and possibly read the Word of God. Eli may have taught him a few things. However, none of this was meaningful. It didn't sink in. Whatever he heard were Bible stories about some old guys; whatever he saw was a series of rituals—but they meant very little. Because, *Now Samuel did not yet know Y^ehowah, nor had the Word of Y^ehowah yet been revealed to him* (I Sam. 3:7). However, God spoke to Samuel and Samuel understood that it was God Who spoke to him. God told him what He would do to Eli's house, Samuel repeated this, and *Y^ehowah was with him and let none of his words fail* (I Sam. 3:19b). It was this prophecy which confirmed that Samuel was a man of God—a prophet of God. *And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of Y^ehowah* (I Sam. 3:20).

Historically, Shiloh is seen as the place where God dwelled and revealed Himself to Israel for a long time (in modern times, we tend to associate His ancient Presence with Jerusalem). Jeremiah spoke for Jehovah, saying, *“But go now to My place which was in Shiloh, where I first made My name dwell, and see what I have done to it because*

⁵⁹ Joseph Bryant Rotherham's *The Emphasized Bible*; ©1971 by Kregel Publications; p. 292.

We begin with the wâw consecutive followed by the 3rd person masculine singular, Qal imperfect of *to be* followed by *a word of Samuel to all of Israel*. This gives us: **And so the word of Samuel was to all Israel**. This fits in naturally with the previous verse, giving us: **So Y^ehowah continued to appear in Shiloh for Y^ehowah had revealed [Himself] unto Samuel at Shiloh by the Word of Y^ehowah. And so the word of Samuel came [lit., was] to all Israel**. In other words, God continued making appearances to Samuel in Shiloh, revealing Himself and revealing to Samuel the Word of God. And this was the manner in which the word of Samuel (which was the *Word of God*) went out to all of Israel.

Barnes: *Some attach the opening words to the close of ch. iii., as the complement of what is there said, "The Lord revealed himself to Samuel...in Shiloh, and the word of Samuel went forth to all Israel." If placed at the commencement of ch. iv., and in connexion [sic] with what follows [i.e., a war between Israel and the Philistines], they are to be understood in the sense that Samuel called all Israel to battle against the Philistines (Cp. vii. 5.) But this is not the natural interpretation of the words, which seem clearly to belong to what went before.*⁶⁰

Given that several different translations do not like where this chapter division occurs, we might want to examine the...

Verse and Chapter Divisions in the Bible

The original Old and New Testament manuscripts were written without spaces, without punctuation, without chapter divisions and without verse divisions (although a very few specific portions of Scripture were divided into verses by the use of the Hebrew alphabet, e.g., Psalm 119 and Lamentations—each verse would begin with the next Hebrew letter in the alphabet). Prior to the Babylonian captivity (586 B.C.), the Pentateuch was divided into 154 sections, for study and reading purposes (it allowed for the entire Pentateuch to be divided into a 3 year cycle). During the Babylonian captivity (536 B.C.), the Torah was divided into 54 sections, which were later divided into 669 sections, set up for a single year cycle of reading and studying. The prophets were separated into 54 sections around 165 B.C. (during the Maccabean era); these sections somehow corresponded with the 54 sections of the Torah. And then, way later, while books were still being printed by hand, chapter divisions as we know them were placed in the margins in 1330 A.D. These divisions were printed into the text in 1517 A.D. and the text itself was divided in 1571.

Now, you would think that the division into verses would be similar and parallel the chapter divisions—not so! In the ancient texts, there were no spaces between the words. At some point in time, a space was placed between the individual verses. It is not clear when or where this began; however, after the Babylonian captivity, for the purposes of public reading and interpretation, space stops were used between verses. There was no real uniformity in this regard, and they varied from place to place. These verse separations were not standardized until 900 A.D. In the Reformation text, verse separations began with the Bomberg edition of Scripture (1547 A.D.)—every fifth verse was so indicated. In 1571, Montanus noted the separation of each verse in the margin. My point in all of this is, there were no chapter or verse divisions in the original, and they are not inspired. I keep to them, on the whole, because this is how most people see their Bibles—divided into chapters and verses. However, this was not always so. Therefore, taking one verse (or a portion of a verse) from chapter 4 and placing it with the previous chapter is not some great sinful act of desecration—it is not added or taking from Scripture. Why did someone originally separate the chapters here? Perhaps it was a function of the printing process; and perhaps someone was simply asleep at the wheel.

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

The Contemporary English Version puts several of the previous verses into one simple paragraph entitled, **The LORD Helps Samuel**

⁶⁰ Barnes' Notes; 1 Samuel to Esther; F. C. Cook, editor; reprinted 1996 by Baker Books; p. 14.

Contemporary English Version of I Sam. 3:19–4:1a

As Samuel grew up, the LORD helped him and made everything Samuel said come true. From the town of Dan in the north to the town of Beersheba in the south, everyone in the country knew that Samuel was truly the LORD's prophet. The LORD often appeared to Samuel at Shiloh and told him what to say. Then Samuel would speak to the whole nation of Israel.

Robert P. Gordon concludes: *Our narrator is thus careful to trace Samuel's career to its zenith before letting us see Israel at its nadir (ch. 4). For the moment Shiloh's reputation is enhanced and all seems to be well, but tragedy supervenes.*⁶¹

In retrospect, let me add a slightly different, if not simpler, spin on this verse. It reads: [And the word of Samuel went out to all Israel](#). This could simply refer to information about Samuel. That is, God had called Samuel, and that was a pretty big deal. Eli confirmed that, recognizing how God worked in certain cases. The information that God had called Samuel would have gone out to all Israel, so that Israel would know that God would work through Samuel. This seed needed to be planted in order for Samuel to later assume spiritual authority over Israel 20 or so years later, as he does in 1Sam. 7:3.

Edersheim: *Henceforth, "the word of the Lord" was permanently with Samuel...[and] a new period in the history of the kingdom of God had commenced. All Israel, from Dan to Beer-sheba, knew that there was now a new link between them and their Heavenly King—a living center of guidance and fellowship, and a bond of union for all who were truly the Israel of God.*⁶²

[Return to Chapter Outline](#)

[Return to the Chart and Map Index](#)

⁶¹ Robert Gordon, *I & 2Samuel A Commentary*; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI; ©1986; p. 91.

⁶² Alfred Edersheim, *Bible History Old Testament*; ©1995 by Hendrickson Publishers, Inc.; p. 417 (slightly revised).