



# 9

## God Calls Samuel

### Key Theme

- God uses people to accomplish His perfect plans.

### Key Passages

- 1 Samuel 2:23–26, 3:2–15, 4:3–4, 4:10–11

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Samuel responded to God.
- Describe how God judged Israel under Eli.



## Lesson Overview



### Come On In

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Students will place a bookmark at 1 Samuel 2, 3, and 4. Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Strips.



### Activity 1: God Calls Samuel Class Notes

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Students will fill out the God Calls Samuel Class Notes as you study the lesson. Pass out the class notes before you begin to teach.



### Studying God's Word

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Samuel was the last judge of Israel and a prophet of God. Samuel received his first message from the Lord. It was a terrible message of judgment against Israel and against the household of Eli. Samuel obediently delivered the message, and the Lord fulfilled the judgment.



### Activity 2: Who's Calling Samuel? Skit

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Students will act out Samuel's first message from the Lord, which was a warning of coming judgment for Israel and Eli's household.

# Lesson Preparation

## WHAT YOU WILL DO

## WHAT YOU WILL NEED



### COME ON IN

- Cut paper into strips for each student to mark today's study passages in 1 Samuel 2, 3 and 4.
- If you haven't done this, print and cut out the Memory Verse Strips from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Print on cardstock if possible.
- You may want to present this as a team activity.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Paper strips
- Memory Verse Strips in envelopes or small plastic bags



### GOD CALLS SAMUEL CLASS NOTES

- Print one God Calls Samuel Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- God Calls Samuel Class Notes for each student
- God Calls Samuel Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



### STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.

- Student Take Home Sheets



### WHO'S CALLING SAMUEL? SKIT

- Print four Who's Calling Samuel? Skits—one for each part to be played.

- Who's Calling Samuel? Skits
- 2 towels, 2 pillows



## Memory Verse

**1 Samuel 16:7** But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

➤ **Pace your lesson!** Use the clocks to mark the time you want to finish each section. This will help you stay on track and finish on time. You may need to shorten or drop sections as necessary.





# Prepare to Share

## SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

Before you begin to prepare for your lesson this week, please prepare your heart and mind by reading 1 Samuel 1–4.

As the book of 1 Samuel opens, we meet Hannah, wife of Elkanah. She was in distress at being childless. During an annual visit to the Tabernacle in Shiloh, Hannah breathed a prayer to God, asking Him for a son. She vowed to the Lord that if He would grant her a son, he would be given to the Lord's service for his whole life, and no razor would touch his head. Her wordless prayer was mistaken by the high priest Eli for drunkenness, but after Hannah shared her grief and prayer with the priest, he blessed her, asking God to grant her request. The Lord did remember her, and she conceived. Her son was born, and she "called his name Samuel, saying, 'Because I have asked for him from the Lord'" (1 Samuel 1:20). Hannah cared for him in the family's home until he was weaned. Then she gave him into the care of Eli the priest, so that Samuel would be devoted to serving the Lord as a helper to the priest, just as Hannah had promised the Lord.

Eli seemed to be a devout man, but he was weak regarding his responsibilities. His sons were wicked, corrupt, immoral, and self-serving (1 Samuel 2:12–17, 2:22), and though Eli admonished them, he failed to restrain them (1 Samuel 3:13). God's judgment was pronounced not only on Eli's house, but was conveyed also to Israel (1 Samuel 2:27–36).

The entire period of the judges shows a cycle of behavior in Israel: wickedness and idolatry, judgment, cries for mercy, deliverance by God through the means of a judge or deliverer, and then a lapse back into wickedness, which started the cycle all over again.

Through these events, Samuel played an innocent, faithful part. God had chosen to reveal His plan of judgment to this young man under Eli's care. We read the account in 1 Samuel 3. Samuel was asleep and thought that he heard Eli call him. The priest had not called, and at the third visit from Samuel, Eli realized that the Lord was the one speaking. Eli instructed Samuel to be receptive and obedient: "you must say, 'Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears'" (1 Samuel 3:9). In this context Samuel was "hearing" with a will to obey. Samuel received the fearful news from the Lord that night, the news of God's plan to judge Eli's household (1 Samuel 3:11–12). The judgment foretold to Samuel would prove to be God's final judgment on Israel

during this dark era of history. God was preparing to raise up a king. Unfortunately, even under their kings, Israel continued to be unfaithful to God, and both Israel and Judah ended up in captivity.

Eli's response to the judgment intended for him and his family may seem noble at first: "It is the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him" (1 Samuel 3:18). But at closer look, Eli's history of failing to manage his own household after repeated pronouncement of judgment gives indication that Eli was inappropriately passive—unmoved to act by the Lord's warning, just as he had been previously.

After the pronouncement of God's judgment, Israel went out to battle against the Philistines (chapter 4). Israel was defeated. The people responded by sending for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought to the battlefield (1 Samuel 4:3–4), apparently thinking that it would serve as a kind of spiritual force of protection and power.

The people believed that the Lord's power was necessary to defeat the Philistines. But this belief seems distorted when we consider the corruption in the Tabernacle, perpetrated by Eli's sons, and the continuing cycle of the nation's idolatry recorded in the book of Judges. Their intent in this instance was to use the Ark of the Covenant as assurance of victory through God's power. However, the living and true God will not be used; He will not allow even His covenant people victory if they attempt to use Him for their own ends, rather than serving and glorifying Him. God intends that His power and might—not the power and might of men—be revealed and praised.

The Philistines did, in fact, fear the outcome of the battle when the Ark was brought in. But they had no idea that God's judgment on His people was about to be executed. The Philistines won that battle and captured the Ark of the Covenant. Both of Eli's sons died in the battle, just as God had told Samuel (1 Samuel 4:9–11). And Eli, upon hearing that the Ark was taken, fell backward off his seat, broke his neck, and died (1 Samuel 4:18). This was indeed a dark time for Israel.

## HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

There are many parallels between Samuel and Christ. Both were conceived by God's intervention, though only Jesus was conceived in a virgin by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34–35). Both were to be instrumental in the deliverance of Israel, though the kinds

of deliverance were different (1 Samuel 7:3–13 and Matthew 1:21). Both were used by God to usher in a kingdom. Both arrived on the scene at a time in history when God’s dealing with Israel was to change dramatically. Both spoke God’s words; they were His prophets (Christ also being priest and king). And the song of Hannah bears remarkable resemblance to the song of Mary (1 Samuel 2:1–10; Luke 1:46–55).

There are other similarities in descriptions and phrases, such as both being described from childhood as growing in stature and in favor with God and men (1 Samuel 2:26 and Luke 2:52). Samuel is a type—a pattern, a living illustration—foreshadowing God’s unfolding plan to bring Jesus to save His people from their sins. By definition, types are necessarily incomplete, imperfect illustrations, but the similarities are still striking; and as we look back from our time, they show how God was graciously preparing Israel for the “fullness of time” in which the Messiah would come.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



## BEFORE THE THRONE

Dear Lord, I praise you for always being fair and just. I will trust you. May my actions be pleasing to you as I prepare and teach this lesson. Help me to be diligent and enthusiastic as I explain the truths in your Word. Prepare the hearts and minds of the students. Remove all obstacles and distractions that would make it difficult for parents to get to church and for students to concentrate. Reveal your truth to us again, and help us apply that truth faithfully in our lives.



## COME ON IN

As students arrive . . .

- They will mark their Bibles at 1 Samuel 2, 3 and 4 with strips of paper.
- They will put the Memory Verse Strips in order and recite the verse together and/or to each other. They may work individually or in teams.

*This time at the beginning of class should be used to review the memory verse. We have provided a template on the Resource DVD-ROM you can use to make Memory Verse Strips to be put in order each week. You may have other ideas and ways to encourage your students to memorize the verse.*



After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.



## REVIEW

Using the Lesson Theme Posters provided with each lesson, quickly review the previous lesson(s) with your students. Take 5 to 10 minutes to reinforce the important truths the students have heard so far in your class.

Ask the children questions about the previous lessons as you display the Lesson Theme Posters. Reflect briefly on the passages you read, bringing the objectives and themes back into focus. This will refresh the truths in your students' minds and maintain continuity as you teach through the lessons.



# God Calls Samuel Class Notes

## MATERIALS

- God Calls Samuel Class Notes for each student
- God Calls Samuel Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

## INSTRUCTIONS

*Pass out the class notes at the beginning of class. Have students fill in the blanks as you study today's lesson.*

We will be completing the class notes as we study the Bible passages. Try not to work ahead. Fill in the blanks as we come

to them. I'll let you know when to fill in something.

*After filling in each point on the class notes, have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.*

## CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

When we finish our class notes, we will have discovered some important things about God's judgment and Samuel's obedience.



# Studying God's Word

➤ Use the History of Israel Poster included with your teacher kit to show your class where the biblical accounts you study chronologically fit into this timeline.

➤ If necessary, write the words on the board as you complete the class notes to help students with spelling.

## READ THE WORD

The biblical account of Ruth we learned about last week occurred during the time of Israel known as the judges. You remember that the time of the judges was a time of disobedience and idolatry in Israel's history. Throughout the book of Judges the Israelites continued to repeat the cycle of disobedience and idolatry toward God, followed by God's punishment. God used other nations to punish them in the form of violence and persecution. The people would finally cry out to God because they were sorry and begged Him to have mercy. God would raise up a judge who would lead them out of trouble, until they fell into sin and idolatry—only to begin the cycle again. Everyone in Israel continued to do what was right in his own eyes.

And now we come to Samuel. Who was Samuel? Look at your class notes while I give you some background information. Samuel was the last judge of Israel. Fill in #1a on the class notes. Samuel's mother, Hannah, prayed to God for a son. Fill in #1b on the class notes. Hannah promised the Lord that she would dedicate her son back to Him if the Lord would answer her prayer. God answered her and gave her a son. When Samuel was old enough, Hannah took him to live with Eli the priest. He was raised by Eli in the tabernacle. Fill in #1c on the class notes. Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Fill in #1d on the class notes. Their job was to lead Israel in pure worship of God. Fill in #1e on the class notes. But they were not doing it. In fact, they were known for their wickedness and greed and for disobeying God. Fill in #1f on the class notes. That is the background for today's lesson. Now turn to 1 Samuel 2:23–26. That is what we are going to read.

Eli was Hophni and Phinehas's father. He was responsible for keeping them on track. Although he tried, he wasn't really very strict about it. Listen to what Eli said to his sons and how they reacted. *Read 1 Samuel 2:23–26 aloud to the students.*

### 1 Samuel 2:23–26

Eli knew his sons were evil. They were not helping the people to honor God. In fact, they were leading the people into sin. It sounds like Eli tried to convince them to change their ways. He knew they would face God's judgment.

- ? How did Eli's sons react to him? Look in 1 Samuel 2:25. *1 Samuel 2:25b. They did not heed his voice.*
- ? Right. They would not listen. And at the same time, how was Samuel living? Look in 1 Samuel 2:26. *He was growing up and the Lord loved him.*

Let's read what happened next to Samuel, Eli, and Eli's sons. Turn with me to 1 Samuel 3 and we'll read 1 Samuel 3:2–8a. *Choose students to read the passage.*

1 Samuel 3:2–8a

## EXAMINE THE WORD

### Observe the Text

? When did Samuel hear the Lord's call? Look in 1 Samuel 3:3. *While he was lying down.*

? Yes. In 1 Samuel 3:5, who did Samuel think it was? *Eli.*

? Why was Samuel confused about who was calling him? The answer is in 1 Samuel 3:7. *He did not yet know the Lord.*

Samuel knew of the Lord, but did not know the Lord personally. That was soon going to change. And so was Samuel's life.

? How many times had the Lord called Samuel so far? The answer is in 1 Samuel 3:8—at the beginning of the verse. *The Lord had called Samuel three times.*

The Bible says it was the Lord. But Samuel thought it was Eli calling him. Eli finally told Samuel it was the Lord calling him. And Eli told him that he should listen! Let's read some more. *Read 1 Samuel 3:9–15 aloud.*

1 Samuel 3:9–15

? The Lord's message to Samuel had two parts. The Lord mentioned that He was going to do something in verse 11. Where was He going to do it? *1 Samuel 3:11. Israel.*

? What does the Lord mean by "the ears of those who hear it will tingle"? *1 Samuel 3:11 The people would not like hearing the news the Lord had for them.*

The first part of God's message and warning to Samuel was against the Israelites because of their sin against God. The Lord said the message would make the ears of the people tingle! That is a figure of speech. It means that He was going to judge all of Israel—and the people would not like hearing about this judgment.

? And what was the second part of the warning? This time the judgment was against certain people. Who were they? Do you see it in 1 Samuel 3:12–13? *This judgment is against Eli and his sons.*

? Why was the Lord going to judge them? 1 Samuel 3:13. *Because of the iniquity of Eli's sons, and because Eli did not restrain his sons.*

Yes. God's message to the prophet Samuel was that He was going to judge Israel and also judge Eli and his sons. Now, look on #2 and #3 on your class notes. What will you put in the blanks? *Allow discussion. #2: Israel. #3: Eli, sons. Have students fill in their class notes.*

? Look in your Bibles again at 1 Samuel 3:15. What did Samuel think of this first warning from God? *He was afraid to tell Eli.*

## Discover the Truth

God came to Samuel in a dream. Samuel was to be one of God's prophets and Samuel was to share this first message with the people. This was a horrible message. God was going to judge all the people of Israel for their sin, and not only that, He was going to judge Eli and his evil sons. And now Samuel had to tell them that God's judgment was coming against them all. Israel would be judged and Eli and his sons were to die—all because of the sin, iniquity, and wickedness of the people.

? Which attribute of God reminds us that God's judgment against wickedness and sin is fair? *God is just.*

Yes. Because God is holy, He is just to punish all sin. And this message from God through Samuel made it clear that God finally would judge the Israelites because of their sin.

JUST

*(Refer to Attributes Poster)*



## Who's Calling Samuel? Skit

### MATERIALS

- Four copies of Who's Calling Samuel? Skit
- Two towels and two pillows

### INSTRUCTIONS

*Choose students to play Samuel, Eli, and the Lord. You may want to be the Narrator or you can assign someone to do that as well. Pass out the skits and act out this scene from the Who's Calling Samuel? Skit.*

We're going to review what we just talked about by acting out this passage from 1 Samuel 3:1–18. Remember, Samuel was

about to receive his first word from the Lord. And it wasn't good news. *Act out the skit.*

### CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

This was the first prophecy Samuel got from the Lord. The Lord was using Samuel to accomplish His plan by delivering that prophecy to Samuel. Eli believed what the Lord told Samuel. Do YOU think it would really be fulfilled? Would judgment come on Israel and Eli's household? Let's continue the lesson to find out.



## READ THE WORD

1 Samuel 4:3–4

The Word of God continued to come to Samuel. And God's judgment was coming on Israel. The Philistines were a nearby nation. They hated God's people and wanted to destroy them. Israel often found themselves in battle with the Philistines. During one of these battles, Israel suffered a terrible loss. About four thousand men were killed by the Philistines. Let's see what the Israelites suggest to do in order to win the next battle. Listen carefully. They think if they bring something into battle with them, they will have victory. What do they want to bring? *Read 1 Samuel 4:3–4. Choose a student to read passage.*

## EXAMINE THE WORD

Now that's interesting! I'm going to ask you some questions about these verses, so we can figure out what they really mean.

### Observe the Text

- ? What question were the elders asking? *1 Samuel 4:3. Why has the Lord defeated us?*
- ? They were wondering why they had been defeated. So what did they want to bring into battle with them? *1 Samuel 4:3. They sent people to get the Ark of the Covenant.*
- ? What did they think would happen if the Ark was with them? *1 Samuel 4:3. It would save them from the hand of their enemies.*
- ? Now look in verse 4, toward the end of the verse. Who came with the Ark? *The sons of Eli: Hophni and Phinehas.*

Well, this may sound like a good idea. But is it? They were going to try to use the sacred Ark of the Covenant like a good luck charm. The people thought if they brought it into battle, they would win the battle. The people had more faith in the Ark of the Covenant—the thing God gave them—than they did in God Himself! Let's answer #4, #5, and #6 on the class notes. *Allow discussion. Have students fill in #4: good luck, #5: faith, God, and #6: circle no.*

Hmmm. This just doesn't look good. Someone read 1 Samuel 4:10–11 for me. We'll see what happened in this battle. Remember, the Israelites thought the Ark of the Covenant was their good luck charm! *Read 1 Samuel 4:10–11 aloud.*

- ? Who was defeated? *1 Samuel 4:10. Israel.*
- ? Where did every man flee? *1 Samuel 4:10. To his tent.*
- ? How many Israelites died in the battle? *30,000!*
- ? And what was captured by the Philistines? *1 Samuel 4:11. The Ark of the Covenant.*
- ? Oh, no! And who was killed during the battle? *Hophni and Phinehas.*

Eli's sons were killed in the battle. And the Bible tells us that when Eli heard the news of the battle—the capture of the Ark, and the death of his sons—he died, too! *Read 1 Samuel 4:14–18, if you have time.*

Let's fill in #7, #8, and #9 on the class notes based on what we just talked about. *Allow discussion. Have students circle the answers on #7: 30,000; #8: All three died; and #9: The Ark of the Covenant.*

### Discover the Truth

The message God gave Samuel was fulfilled on this day. God judged the people of Israel for their sin, just like He said He would. And God judged Eli and his sons, who were leading the people into sin, just like He said He would. God kept His Word. The people were defeated; the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant; and Hophni and Phinehas died. In fact, later in 1 Samuel 4:18, the Bible says that Eli died, too. When he heard that his sons were killed and the Ark of the Covenant had been captured, he was shocked, fell, and broke his neck. God's judgment had come. God's Word to Samuel was fulfilled.



## Applying God's Word

### WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE WORD

We know that God gave Samuel the message that judgment was coming. And we saw that, as always, God was faithful to keep His Word. The nation of Israel was judged when the people were defeated by the

Philistines and lost the Ark of the Covenant of God. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in the battle, and Eli died shortly after that. The people did not listen to God. They continued in their sin, iniquity, and wickedness against God, and so His judgment had come.

This wasn't an easy first job for Samuel. He was afraid to go to Eli and tell of God's judgment. But, he did obey the Lord and the Lord's Word came true. Because of Samuel's obedience, God would continue to use him as a prophet and judge of Israel. And later, God would use Samuel to anoint the first two kings of Israel!

## GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We can learn from this. Although there are no longer prophets in the world like Samuel to warn us, God uses people in our lives to teach us, warn us, instruct us, and correct us. God's instruction can come from parents, teachers, friends, family, pastors—God's instruction can come from many different places. Our job is to listen and learn from them as they tell us the truth of God's Word.

It is important to remember that because we now have the completed written Word of God, prophets like Samuel are no longer needed today. So all of our instruction must be measured against the Bible. The Bible will verify if it is true or not.

We can trust that if we listen to God's Word, learn from Him, and obey Him, He will use us to accomplish His purpose. Let's fill in #10 on the class notes. *Have students fill in #10 on their class notes: Listen, learn, obey.*



➤ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the students to practice the memory verse this week.



### MEMORY VERSE

**1 Samuel 16:7** But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."



### GROUP PRAYER TIME

- Praise God for the way He always works out His perfect plans and how He uses people like us.
- Thank God for giving us people in our lives to help us to learn His Word.
- Ask God to help us hear and obey Him when He calls us.

