



9

God Calls Samuel

Key Theme

- God uses people to accomplish His perfect plans.

Key Passages

- 1 Samuel 2:23–26, 3:2–8, 3:11–13, 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

page 5

Students will practice the memory verse using the Memory Verse Cards.



Activity 1: Who Was It?

page 5

Students will circle the answers to the “Who?” questions on the Who Was It? Class Notes as you study the lesson.



Studying God’s Word

page 6

Samuel was the last judge of Israel. 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: Here I Am

page 9

Students will write their names on index cards and place them in containers. Then they will lie down and respond to the teacher with, “Here I am” and “Speak, Lord, for your servant hears” just like Samuel did.

Lesson Preparation

WHAT YOU WILL DO

WHAT YOU WILL NEED



COME ON IN

- If you haven't done this, print and cut out the Memory Verse Cards from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student.
- Put complete sets into envelopes or small plastic bags.
- You may want to present this as a team activity.

- Memory Verse Poster
- Memory Verse Cards in envelopes or small plastic bags



WHO WAS IT?

- Print one Who Was It? Class Notes from the Resource DVD-ROM for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

- Who Was It? Class Notes
- Who Was It? Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils



STUDYING GOD'S WORD

- Study the Prepare to Share section.
- Go Before the Throne.
- Print one Lesson Board Work Outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Print one Here I Am Mini-Poster from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.
- Print one Ark of the Covenant Illustration from the Resource DVD-ROM for your use.

- Student Take Home Sheets
- Lesson Board Work Outline
- Here I Am Mini-Poster
- Ark of the Covenant Illustration
- Tape



HERE I AM

- Print one Here I Am Mini-Poster from the Resource DVD-ROM.
- Print one Speak Lord Mini-Poster from the Resource DVD-ROM.

- Here I Am Mini-Poster
- Speak Lord Mini-Poster
- Index cards
- Container large enough to hold the index cards
- Pencils



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 put the Memory Verse Cards 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 Cards 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.



Who Was It?

MATERIALS

- Who Was It? Class Notes for each student
- Who Was It? Class Notes Answer Key
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Pass out one Who Was It? Class Notes to each student at the beginning of class. Have students circle the answer to each question as the lesson progresses.

Today we will be detectives trying to figure out "Who Was It?" as we study the Bible

passages. Your choices will be Eli, Samuel, or the Lord. I'll let you know when it is time to circle an answer.

After filling out each point on the class notes, repeat the verse and/or have the students re-read the statement together or call on individual students to read it.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

After we finish our Who Was It? Class Notes, we will know who each of the passages we are going to read refers to.



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.

► Because of the age and ability of 1st and 2nd graders to read and comprehend, we encourage you to read the Scriptures to the students. However, if you have strong readers, by all means have them participate by reading God's Word.

1 Samuel 2:23-25

► Print the Lesson Board Work Outline from the Resource DVD-ROM for easier planning.

READ THE WORD

Last week we learned about Ruth and Boaz. They lived during the time of the judges in Israel. Remember, Israel kept sinning against the Lord, and the Lord would punish Israel by having enemy nations take over their land. Then, the Israelites would cry out to the Lord for help, and the Lord would lead Israel in victory over their enemies. *Refer to the Judges Cycle Mini-Posters from Lesson 6 if they are still displayed or the Lesson Theme Poster.* **This happened time and time again. Everyone in Israel continued to do what was right in his own eyes. The people would not obey God. God didn't like that.**

And now we come to Samuel. Samuel was the last judge of Israel. Hannah was Samuel's mother. *Write "Hannah" on the board.* She prayed to God for a son. She promised to give him to the Lord if God would answer her prayer. God answered her and gave her a son, Samuel. *Write "Samuel" on the board. Write "Hannah was Samuel's mother."* **When Samuel was a young boy, Hannah took him to live with Eli, the priest.** *Write "Eli" on the board.* Samuel was raised by Eli in Shiloh where the Tabernacle was located. Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. *Write "Hophni and Phinehas" on the board. Write "Hophni and Phinehas were Eli's sons."* **Their job was to make sure Israel worshipped the one true God. However, Eli's sons were wicked and did not obey God. Instead of helping the people know and worship God better, they led them away from God into sin.**

It was Eli's responsibility to make sure his sons were doing the right things. He tried to get them to be obedient but wasn't very strict about it. People around town had been talking about how evil Hophni and Phinehas were acting. Eli heard about it and spoke with his sons. *Write "Wicked Sons" on the board.*

I am going to read 1 Samuel 2:23-25. Eli is talking to his bad sons. Listen carefully! *Read 1 Samuel 2:23-25 aloud to the students.*

Eli knew his sons were evil. He heard of their evil doings from the people. They were leading the people into sin! He warned them, but they would not listen!

? **Now, look at #1 on your class notes. Can someone read it? Who said that?** *Eli. Have the students answer #1 on the class notes.*

Eli's sons were sinning against God. Remember, Eli was the priest and his sons were supposed to honor God. But they wouldn't listen to Eli.

? **But there was a young man living with Eli; he wasn't his son. Who was Hannah's son?** *Refer to the board work. Samuel.*

That's right. Hannah left her son in the Tabernacle with Eli, so he would learn about God. Let's turn to 1 Samuel 2:26 in our Bibles. Will someone read that for me? *Help children find the verse and assign someone to read it or read it yourself.*

? What does this say about Samuel? *Allow discussion.*

Samuel was growing up to know the Lord. The Lord was pleased with him. And the people liked him as well.

Now turn to 1 Samuel 3:2–8a. *Help the students who have their Bibles find the passage.*

I'm going to read what happened next! This happened as Eli and Samuel were going to sleep. But first, who can read this sign? *Hold up the Here I Am Mini-Poster. Have the students read it together a few times. Tape it on the board.*

As I read the Bible, I'm going to stop when I get to this part of the account. I'll point to you, and I want you all to read this mini-poster together. *Read the passage with expression. When you come to the "Here I am" statement, point to the students and have the students read it together from the mini-poster.*

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

? OK. Now let me ask a couple of questions about what we read. What was Samuel doing when all of this happened? *1 Samuel 3:3. Lying down.*

? And who called Samuel? *1 Samuel 3:4. The Lord.* Circle the correct answer on #2 of your class notes.

? Yes. Who did Samuel think it was? Who did Samuel keep going to when he heard the Lord? *1 Samuel 3:5. Eli.*

? And who kept saying, "Here I am, for you called me?" *Refer to the mini-poster on the board. Samuel.* Circle the correct answer on #3 of your class notes.

? And who kept saying, "I did not call; lie down again." Do you know? *1 Samuel 3:5. Eli.* Circle the correct answer on #4 of your class notes.

? Why do you think Samuel was confused about who was calling him? Let me read this to you. It gives the answer. *Read 1 Samuel 3:7 again. He did not yet know the Lord.*

The Bible says that Samuel did not yet know the Lord. Now he had heard of the Lord, but he didn't know Him in a personal way! That was soon going to change. And so was Samuel's life.

? So, who was calling Samuel? Who remembers? *The Lord.* Circle the correct answer on #5 of your class notes.

The Lord called Samuel three times. Samuel thought it was Eli calling him. But Eli told Samuel it was the Lord calling him. Circle the correct answer for #6 on your class notes. *Eli.* Eli also told Samuel that he should listen!

➤ Read the passages again as you come to them to help students recall the answers.

The Lord had a message for Samuel. I am going to read this, and I want you to tell me what that message was. *Read the passage.*

- ? Who was going to do something in Israel? Who was speaking to Samuel? *1 Samuel 3:11. The Lord. Circle the correct answer on #7 of the class notes.*
- ? The Lord was going to judge someone. Who was that? *1 Samuel 3:12-13. Eli and his sons. Circle the correct answer on #8 of the class notes.*
- ? Why was the Lord going to judge them? *1 Samuel 3:13. Refer to the board work. Eli's sons were wicked sinners!*
- ? Who was God's prophet to Israel? *1 Samuel 3:11. Samuel. Circle the correct answer on #9 of the class notes.*

Discover the Truth

Yes. God's message to Samuel was that He was going to judge Israel, Eli, and his sons. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, did not honor God. Because of them, the family would be punished. You can imagine that when Samuel heard that message he was afraid to tell Eli. He had to tell Eli that the Lord was going to punish them all! This was a horrible message. In fact, Eli and his sons were going to die because of their disobedience to God!

Samuel obeyed God and told Eli the truth. This was God's first message to Samuel. God had called Samuel to be one of His prophets, and Samuel became a leader in the nation.

God is holy. He hates all sin. And when His people sin, He has to punish them. God had been very patient with the people. But He was finally going to judge Israel because of their sin.



HOLY
JUST

(Refer to Attributes poster)



Here I Am

MATERIALS

- Here I Am Mini-Poster
- Speak Lord Mini-Poster
- One index card per student
- Container to hold the index cards
- Pencils

INSTRUCTIONS

Add the Speak Lord Mini-Poster to the board next to the Here I Am Mini-Poster used earlier in the lesson. Have the children read both posters.

Give each student an index card and have them write his or her name on it. Put the cards in an appropriate container. Ask kids to lie down on their backs or put their heads on the table as though they are sleeping, like Samuel was sleeping. As they "sleep," draw one name from the container. Call out the student's name. When they hear their name, the student will come to you and say, "Here I am, for you called me." Refer to the mini-poster.

As each student comes to you, say, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

Do another round. Now they know it is the Lord calling. When you call their name, the student should stay down and say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." Refer them to the mini-poster.

We're going to review what we just talked about by acting out a part of the passage from 1 Samuel. You will play the part of Samuel. I want you to lie down on the floor (or put your heads on your table) as though you are asleep. When you hear me call your name, I want you to answer the way Samuel answered. First you'll answer by coming to me and saying, "Here I am, for you called me." The next time you'll answer by saying, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears." Refer to the mini-posters from the Resource DVD-ROM.

CONNECT TO THE TRUTH

God wants us to listen and follow when He tells us what to do. Samuel didn't hear God at first, did he? But he finally understood that it was God calling. Then Samuel was able to hear from the Lord! The Lord used Samuel to accomplish His plan by delivering a message to Samuel. Eli believed what the Lord told Samuel.



READ THE WORD

God's message to Israel was that He would judge them because of their sin. God used the Philistines to judge them. The Philistines were a nearby nation. They hated God's people and wanted to destroy Israel. The Israelites fought often in battles with the Philistines. One day they were fighting the Philistines, and they lost badly! Lots of people were killed. They thought they knew how to win the next battle! Listen carefully. *Read 1 Samuel 4:3-4.*

1 Samuel 4:3-4

EXAMINE THE WORD

Observe the Text

- ? What did the people ask? Let me read it again. *Re-read 1 Samuel 4:3. Why has the Lord defeated us? Allow discussion.*

They were wondering why they lost the battle. They knew the Lord had left them. They wondered why the Lord had defeated them. But they thought they knew how they could beat the Philistines. They would bring the sacred Ark of the Covenant into the battle with them. If you remember, the Ark of the Covenant was the special box that God told Moses to build while they were still in the wilderness. *Show the Ark of the Covenant Illustration. Briefly explain the ark.*

The people thought the Ark of the Covenant would bring them good luck. They thought if they brought it into battle, they would win the battle. The people had more faith in the Ark of the Covenant—a thing that God gave them—than they did in God Himself! Instead of praying to God, they brought the Ark of the Covenant into battle with them.

Hmmm. This doesn't look good. Let's see if their plan worked! Listen as I read 1 Samuel 4:10–11. Remember, the Israelites thought the Ark of the Covenant of God would be their good luck charm! *Read 1 Samuel 4:10–11 aloud.*

- ? Who was defeated? *1 Samuel 4:10. Israel.*
- ? 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.*
- ? And who was killed during the battle? *Hophni and Phinehas.*
- ? Do you remember who Hophni and Phinehas were? *Allow discussion.*

They were Eli's sons. God had warned Eli that his sons would die. And they did die in the battle with the Philistines.

Discover the Truth

This was a terrible defeat. So many people were killed! The Ark of the Covenant was taken. 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 Israelite people lost; the Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant; and Hophni and Phinehas died. In fact, Eli died too. He died when he heard that the Ark had been taken and his sons had been killed. He fell over 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

God gave Samuel a difficult job to do. He had a hard message from God to give to Eli and the nation of Israel. He was afraid to go to Eli and tell of God's judgment, but he was obedient and did as God told him. And God would continue to use Samuel as a prophet and a judge of Israel.

We know that God gave Samuel the message that judgment had come. And we saw, as always, God was faithful to His Word. He always keeps His promises. Israel was judged, and they lost the battle against the Philistines. They even lost the Ark of the Covenant of God. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in the battle, and Eli died shortly after. The people did not listen to God. They continued in their sin, iniquity, and wickedness.

GOD'S WORD IN THE REAL WORLD

We can learn from this account. 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, and correct us. God's instruction can come from parents, teachers, friends, family, pastors—from many different places. Our job is to listen and learn from them as they tell us the truth of God's Word.

Because God has given us the whole Bible, prophets like Samuel are no longer needed—God's Word is all we need. So, we must use the Bible to guide us. We can trust that if we listen, learn, and obey God from His Word, He will use us to accomplish His purpose.



► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind the children 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 putting people in our lives to help us learn His Word.
- Ask God to help you and the students to listen and obey God's Word.

