

HANNAH'S THANKSGIVING AND THE CALL OF SAMUEL

BIBLE TEXT : I Samuel 2:1-10; 3:1-21

LESSON 200 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE : "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name" (Psalm 91:14)..

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Samuel 2:1-10

¹ And Hannah prayed, and said,
My heart rejoiceth in the LORD,
mine horn is exalted in the LORD:
my mouth is enlarged over mine
enemies; because I rejoice in thy
salvation.

² *There is* none holy as the LORD:
for *there is* none beside thee:
neither *is there* any rock like our
God.

³ Talk no more so exceeding
proudly; let *not* arrogancy come
out of your mouth: for the LORD *is*
a God of knowledge, and by him
actions are weighed.

⁴ The bows of the mighty men *are*
broken, and they that stumbled
are girded with strength.

⁵ *They that were* full have hired
out themselves for bread; and
they that were hungry ceased: so
that the barren hath born seven;
and she that hath many children is
waxed feeble.

⁶ The LORD killeth, and maketh
alive: he bringeth down to the
grave, and bringeth up.

⁷ The LORD maketh poor, and
maketh rich: he bringeth low, and
lifteth up.

⁸ He raiseth up the poor out of the
dust, *and* lifteth up the beggar
from the dunghill, to set *them*
among princes, and to make them
inherit the throne of glory: for the
pillars of the earth *are* the LORD'S,
and he hath set the world upon
them.

⁹ He will keep the feet of his
saints, and the wicked shall be
silent in darkness; for by strength
shall no man prevail.

¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD
shall be broken to pieces; out of

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I Song of Thanksgiving

¹ Hannah's prayer was a song of praise and hankssgiving
to God, I Samuel 2:1-5

1 Samuel 1:6

⁶ And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to
make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her
womb.

1 Samuel 1:20

²⁰ Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come
about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a
son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I
have asked him of the LORD.

Psalm 113:9

⁹ He maketh the barren woman to keep house, *and to*
be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the LORD.

Isaiah 54:1

¹ Sing, O barren, thou *that* didst not bear; break forth
into singing, and cry aloud, thou *that* didst not travail
with child: for more *are* the children of the desolate
than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD.

² Hannah prayed prophetically of the future mercies of
God to the world, I Samuel 2:6-9;

Psalm 75:4-7

⁴ I said unto the fools, Deal not foolishly: and to the
wicked, Lift not up the horn:

⁵ Lift not up your horn on high: speak *not with* a stiff
neck.

⁶ For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from
the west, nor from the south.

⁷ But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and
setteth up another.

Psalm 113:7-8

⁷ He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, *and* lifteth the
needy out of the dunghill;

⁸ That he may set *him* with princes, *even* with the
princes of his people.

Luke 1:52

⁵² He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and
exalted them of low degree.

³ Hannah foretold the coming of a Savior, I Samuel 2:10;

Psalm 89:19-29

¹⁹ Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and
saidst, I have laid help upon *one that is* mighty; I have
exalted *one* chosen out of the people.

²⁰ I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have
I anointed him:

²¹ With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm
also shall strengthen him.

²² The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of
wickedness afflict him.

²³ And I will beat down his foes before his face, and
plague them that hate him.

²⁴ But my faithfulness and my mercy *shall be* with him:
and in my name shall his horn be exalted.

²⁵ I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand
in the rivers.

²⁶ He shall cry unto me, Thou *art* my father, my God,
and the rock of my salvation.

²⁷ Also I will make him *my* firstborn, higher than the
kings of the earth.

²⁸ My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my

heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.

1 Samuel 3:1-21

¹ And the child Samuel ministered unto the LORD before Eli. And the word of the LORD was precious in those days; *there was* no open vision.

² And it came to pass at that time, when Eli *was* laid down in his place, and his eyes began to wax dim, *that* he could not see;

³ And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God *was*, and Samuel was laid down *to sleep*;
⁴ That the LORD called Samuel: and he answered, Here *am* I.

⁵ And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down.

⁶ And the LORD called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again.

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, neither was the word of the LORD yet revealed unto him.

⁸ And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, Here *am* I; for thou didst call me. And Eli perceived that the LORD had called the child.

⁹ Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down: and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant

covenant shall stand fast with him.

²⁹ His seed also will I make *to endure* for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.

Luke 1:46-55

⁴⁶ And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

⁴⁷ And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

⁴⁸ For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

⁴⁹ For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

⁵⁰ And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

⁵² He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

⁵³ He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

⁵⁴ He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

⁵⁵ As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Luke 1:67-75

⁶⁷ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

⁶⁸ Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

⁶⁹ And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

⁷⁰ As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

⁷² To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

⁷³ The oath which he swore to our father Abraham,

⁷⁴ That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

II Call of God

1 There was no open vision of God in the days of Eli's priesthood, I Samuel 3:1;

Amos 8:11

¹¹ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:

Ezekiel 7:26

²⁶ Mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be upon rumour; then shall they seek a vision of the prophet; but the law shall perish from the priest, and counsel from the ancients.

Proverbs 29:18

¹⁸ Where *there is* no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy *is* he.

2 Eli's natural eyesight was so dim that he could not see that the lamp of God was about to go out, I Samuel 3:2, 3; 4:15;

Exodus 27:20-21

²⁰ And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always.

²¹ In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

heareth.

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.

¹² 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.

¹³ For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

¹⁴ And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever.

¹⁵ And Samuel lay until the morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision.

¹⁶ Then Eli called Samuel, and said, Samuel, my son. And he answered, Here *am* I.

¹⁷ And he said, What *is* the thing that *the LORD* hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide *it* not from me: God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide *any* thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee.

¹⁸ And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. And he said, It *is* the LORD: let him do what seemeth him good.

¹⁹ And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground.

²⁰ And all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel *was* established *to be* a prophet of the LORD.

²¹ And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh: for the LORD revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD.

Leviticus 24:2-3

² Command the children of Israel, that they bring unto thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamps to burn continually.

³ Without the veil of the testimony, in the tabernacle of the congregation, shall Aaron order it from the evening unto the morning before the LORD continually: *it shall be* a statute for ever in your generations.

2 Chronicles 13:11

¹¹ And they burn unto the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense: the shewbread also *set they in order* upon the pure table; and the candlestick of gold with the lamps thereof, to burn every evening: for we keep the charge of the LORD our God; but ye have forsaken him.

3 Eli's spiritual eyesight was seriously impaired by his tolerance of sin, I Samuel 3:2, 13; 2:12-17, 27-36;

1 Kings 1:6

⁶ And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was a* very goodly *man*; and *his mother* bare him after Absalom.

Leviticus 10:1-3

¹ And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not.

² And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD.

³ Then Moses said unto Aaron, This *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

Exodus 19:22

²² And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

4 Eli did not at first realize that God was calling Samuel, I Samuel 3:4-9;

Matthew 6:22-23

²² The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

Matthew 15:14

¹⁴ Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Jeremiah 5:21-24

²¹ Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not:

²² Fear ye not me? saith the LORD: will ye not tremble at my presence, which have placed the sand *for* the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it: and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it?

²³ But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.

²⁴ Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.

Romans 2:1-4

¹ Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that

judgest doest the same things.

² But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things.

³ And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Romans 2:17-24

¹⁷ Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God,

¹⁸ And knowest *his* will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law;

¹⁹ And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness,

²⁰ An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law.

²¹ Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?

²² Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?

²³ Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?

²⁴ For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

5 Samuel, because of his youth and spiritual immaturity, did not realize that God was calling him, I Samuel 3:7;

Acts 18:24-26

²⁴ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

²⁵ This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

²⁶ And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

Acts 19:23

²³ And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

John 20:14

¹⁴ And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

John 1:4-7

⁴ In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

6 Eli at last perceived God was calling Samuel, and instructed him to answer God, I Samuel 3:8-10;

Psalms 85:8

⁸ I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

Isaiah 6:8

⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here *am* I; send me.

Daniel 10:19

¹⁹ And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not: peace *be*

unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me.

Acts 9:5-6

⁵ And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

⁶ And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

III Prophet of God

God told Samuel of the judgment that would come upon Eli and his house, I Samuel 3:11-14;

Isaiah 29:13-16

¹³ Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

¹⁵ Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

¹⁶ Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?

Amos 3:1-8

¹ Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

² You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

³ Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

⁴ Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

⁵ Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin *is* for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

⁶ Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?

⁷ Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

⁸ The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

Habakkuk 1:5

⁵ Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for *I* will work a work in your days, *which* ye will not believe, though it be told *you*.

2 Eli persuaded Samuel to tell him God's message, I Samuel 3:16

Psalm 141:5

⁵ Let the righteous smite me; *it shall be* a kindness: and let him reprove me; *it shall be* an excellent oil, *which* shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also *shall be* in their calamities.

Daniel 4:19

¹⁹ Then Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, was astonished for one hour, and his thoughts troubled him. The king spake, and said, Belteshazzar, let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.

Belteshazzar answered and said, My lord, the dream *be* to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.

3 God was with Samuel, and the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, I Samuel 3:19-21;

1 Samuel 4:1

¹ And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek.

1 Samuel 9:6

⁶ And he said unto him, Behold now, *there is* in this city a man of God, and *he is* an honourable man; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go.

Isaiah 44:26

²⁶ That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

NOTES:

Song of Praise

The story of Hannah's prayer and consecration to God that He might grant her a son is beautiful and touching. Hannah was given a son in answer to her prayers — a son who was destined to be one of the greatest of prophets and a man whose exemplary life would be an inspiration for all. What a fitting climax to such a story is her prayer of praise and thanksgiving unto God! To praise Him in song and prayer is a beautiful manifestation of a heart full of gratitude because of God's love and mercy.

The preciousness of the gift Hannah received from God was not undervalued by her. Neither was she ignorant of the utter impossibility of ever having a son unless God gave her the desire of her heart; for "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD" (Psalm 127:3). Nevertheless, Hannah lost none of her regard for the Lord in favor of her son. On the contrary, her love and regard for the Lord was deepened because of His great goodness and mercy to her. Hannah knew from personal experience that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of-turning" (James 1:17).

Too often God is important with people only when they are in great trouble or sorrow, or when adverse circumstances come upon them. When adversity is gone, or they have their petition from God, He is forgotten or relegated to a very minor position in their affections. Not so with Hannah, because she burst forth in a song of prayer and praise to God that sprang spontaneously from her heart.

Her song of praise began with a theme of thankfulness to God for His goodness to her, and then rapidly developed into a much deeper and more significant subject — Jesus Christ, God's Anointed, and our coming King.

Hannah, inspired of the Holy Ghost, spoke of Jesus Christ through whom all the nations of the earth would be blessed; spoke prophetically of the sinners who would be exalted to a place of honor through the same mercy that had been extended to her. The beggar would be lifted up to sit among princes and to inherit the throne of glory, while the adversaries of the Lord would be broken to pieces, when Jesus came to be the ruling King of all the earth. Such was Hannah's song of praise, a beautiful prophecy of Jesus Christ who shall reign in peace and judgment.

There are several other passages in the Bible that are similar in their inspiration and development into prophecies of Christ. The Song

of Moses speaks of Christ as "the Rock," as did Hannah (I Samuel 2:2). (**Deuteronomy 32:15** ¹⁵ But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. **Deuteronomy 32:18** ⁸ Of the Rock *that* begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.) Likewise the Holy Spirit, through Mary, the mother of Jesus, applied Hannah's theme that the mighty would be brought low, and those of low estate would be exalted — this through the Son who would be born in a miraculous manner. (**Luke 1:52** ⁵² He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.)

Indulgent Parent

According to Hannah's promise to the Lord, the child Samuel began his service to God in the Tabernacle, under the guidance of Eli, the high priest. The high priest was responsible for the spiritual welfare of God's people and for the proper administration of the worship of God. How miserably Eli failed of his duty and responsibility!

The New Testament states the requirements of a bishop: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (I Timothy 3:4, 5).

"Now the sons of Eli were men of Belial; they knew not the LORD" (I Samuel 2:12). They were very sinful men, and because of their wickedness "men abhorred the offering of the LORD" (I Samuel 2:17).

Eli, as an indulgent father, remonstrated with his sons once about their promiscuous sinning, and did no more about it. His refusal to take any corrective measures other than a mild rebuke was a sin against his own soul and those of his children. The evil that has been brought into the world through parents who are so unconcerned about their children's welfare that they refuse to discipline them can hardly be overestimated. The tolerance of sin is a fire that shall burn men's bones, and shall condemn all participants of sin into a lake of everlasting fire.

Great as Eli's sin was in tolerating his sons' wickedness in his own house, an even greater evil was committed in that he permitted his sons to bring great dishonor upon the house of God. They were helping in the administration of the Tabernacle worship, and in that work they became a stumbling block to all who desired to worship God.

The worship of God has always demanded holiness. More is required of those who are directly concerned in the service of the ministry. The tenet of abstinence from all sin and immorality has always distinguished the Gospel of Jesus Christ from all other religions and philosophies. Even so, Eli, whose official duty was that of guardian of the faith, was so indifferent to God's cause of holiness and purity that he did little to stop sin, either in his own house, or in the house of God.

Judgment of God

God's word is not to be taken lightly, but Eli dared to affront the holiness of God; and the anger of God began to smoke against him. (**Deuteronomy 29:19-20** ¹⁹ And it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: ²⁰ The LORD will not spare him, but then the anger of the LORD and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his

name from under heaven) "Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves!" (Ezekiel 34:2) was the word of the Lord to Ezekiel. These words fit Eli's case also. Eli was soon to be removed; his posterity was to be destroyed; and no more would his family serve in the worship of God. Such was Eli's reward for his tolerance of sin.

Eli's sin so blinded him to all real truth that he was no longer able to see things in their proper perspective. He was of that number of whom Jesus once spoke, who could see the mote that was in another's eye, but could not see the beam that was in his own (**Luke 6:39-42** ³⁹ And he spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind? shall they not both fall into the ditch? ⁴⁰ The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. ⁴¹ And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ⁴² Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye). Eli went so far as even to accuse Samuel's mother of being intoxicated while in the house of God, while in actuality she was deep in prayer to God. At the same time Eli's sons were destroying the worship of God by their unrestricted wickedness.

Dimming Light

Eli's eyes began to wax dim so that he could no longer see that the lamp of God was about to go out for lack of proper care. How, emblematic this lamp was of the worship of God! It represented God's Word, illuminated by the Holy Spirit. And now it was fast going out! The Scripture says of this period of Israel's history that "the word of the LORD was precious in those days; there was no open vision" (I Samuel 3:1). In other words, the truth of God's Word was gone from men's hearts, and God was hindered from revealing Himself to men because of their sinfulness. It was at this crucial hour that God spoke in the night to Samuel.

"Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors" (Proverbs 8:34). Such were the duties of Samuel in the Tabernacle. Samuel served God daily in His house, with an open heart, and with his ear tuned to spiritual things. When God spoke to him in the middle of the night, Samuel was quick to answer.

Not immediately realizing that God was speaking to him, Samuel went to Eli. Eli seemed to have lost the ability to recognize the voice of God, for he sent Samuel back to his rest. Three times God called Samuel, and three times Eli sent Samuel back to his rest. The third time Eli did perceive that God was calling Samuel, and advised him to answer, if he was called again, for it would be the Lord. God did call Samuel again, and he answered Him with those beautiful words, "Speak; for thy servant heareth." Thus God called Samuel to the service and commission of God. He was still very much a youth, but he had an ear to hear, and a heart to do the bidding of the Lord

Faithful Stewardship

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). Let all who are growing old in the service and worship of God retain with enthusiasm their portion and responsibility in it. Because we have aged bodies does not imply that our service to God has become outdated or of no further usefulness. The Bible says, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (Proverbs 4:18). Also, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it

be found in the way of righteousness" (Proverbs 16:31).

A ripe maturity of faith and confidence toward God that has been accumulated through many years of faithful service to God is an achievement that every younger person can admire and strive for.

Open Vision

Let all who are young learn of the boy Samuel. Would that all would answer the call of God as readily as did Samuel, and with the same consecration and zeal in their answer! He was a man much used of God, and the Bible says of him, "All Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD." The Lord "did let none of his words fall to the ground" (1 Samuel 3:19, 20).

Samuel's life was useful and profitable in every respect. It was a beautiful life because he listened to God in his youth, and took good heed to what he heard. Surely God's Word is true: "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (Proverbs 3:1-4).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the occasion of Hannah's prayer?
- 2 In what manner did she speak of Jesus Christ?
- 3 What is meant by "no open vision"?
- 4 Why was Eli rejected of the Lord?
- 5 Of what was the lamp of God typical?
- 6 Why is a man required to be a faithful steward?
- 7 What is the benefit of serving God while young?