

A Voice in the Night

There once was a boy named Samuel. Samuel didn't grow up like other children. Samuel lived in the temple with the High Priest whose name was Eli. Eli's sons were also priests who lived in the temple. Samuel lived there with them from a very young age. His mother, Hannah had been barren for many years. She came to the temple and prayed that God would give her a son that she might give him back to God so he could serve God all his life. God gave Samuel to Hannah and Hannah kept her promise and gave him back to God to grow and serve God in the temple.

Samuel loved God and helped Eli in the temple any way he could. Eli's sons did not love God the way they should. They were evil men who were supposed to help people who came to the temple to make a sacrifice to God, but instead, they took from their offerings and kept it for themselves. They also were not nice to a woman who came to the temple. Eli should have punished his sons for the things they were doing but instead he just let them keep doing bad things.

One night when Samuel was in his bed about to go to sleep, he heard someone call "Samuel." Samuel thought it was Eli calling him, so he jumped from his bed and ran to Eli's room. He said, "Here I am, you called me?" But Eli hadn't called Samuel. Eli told Samuel to go back to bed. A little while later, Samuel heard someone calling his name again. Once again, he jumped up and ran to Eli but once again Eli told him to go back to bed. Time passed and Samuel heard his name a third time. So, a third time, he jumped from his bed and ran to Eli's room. This time Eli had figured out what was going on. Eli knew that it was God calling Samuel. Eli told Samuel to go back to his bed and if he heard someone calling again to stay in his bed and say "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Samuel went back to his bed and soon he heard God calling his name a fourth time. This time he didn't get out of his bed. This time he laid in his bed and said, "Speak: for thy servant heareth." God had a very special message for Samuel. God was calling Samuel to be a prophet. God was going to speak to Samuel so Samuel could go out into the world and tell people the things that God wanted them to know. He was going to be a messenger for God and do great big, wonderful things for the people of Israel. Then God told Samuel some very sad news. God told Samuel that he was going to punish Eli's sons for the bad things they had been doing. God was also going to punish Eli for letting them do those bad things.

The next day Eli asked Samuel to tell him all the things that had happened during the night. Samuel told Eli everything, even the sad news about him and his sons. Not long after that, both of Eli's sons were killed in a battle against the Philistines. When Eli found out that his sons had died. He fell out of his chair, broke his neck, and he also died. Even after Eli had died, Samuel continued to grow closer to God doing whatever God was calling him to do.