

1 Samuel 3:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

Eli's instruction provides the proper response formula: 'Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth.' This response positions Samuel correctly - as servant awaiting the Master's word. The structure reverses Samuel's earlier mistake of speaking before listening. Eli offers Samuel what he himself has apparently lost - knowledge of how to receive divine revelation. The instruction to 'lie down' indicates patient waiting; the response formula indicates humble receptivity. Eli's mentoring in this moment accomplishes something his years of compromised priesthood could not.

Historical Context

The response formula Eli provides became paradigmatic for prophetic receptivity. Similar language appears in prophetic call narratives throughout Scripture. Isaiah's 'Here am I; send me' (6:8) follows this pattern of available servanthood.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What posture of heart and mind does 'Speak, LORD; for thy servant heareth' represent?
2. Who has taught you how to listen for God's voice?

Interlinear Text

אָם	וְהָיָה	וְשָׁכַב	לֵךְ	שְׁמוּאֵל	עַל־י	וְאָמַרְתָּ
H518	H1961	H7901	H1980	H8050	H5941	H559
שָׁמַעַ	כִּי־י	יְהוָה	דִּבֶּר־ר	וְאָמַרְתָּ	אֵלַיִךְ	יִקְרָא
H8085	H3588	H3068	H1696	H559	H413	H7121
בְּמָקוֹמוֹ	וְשָׁכַב	שְׁמוּאֵל	וַיִּלֶּךְ	עַבְדְּךָ		
H4725	H7901	H8050	H1980	H5650		

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 20:19 (Parallel theme): And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

Isaiah 6:8 (References Lord): 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.

Psalms 85:8 (References Lord): 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.

Acts 9:6 (References Lord): 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.

