

# Notes for the Ones Called–Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtrmnc.org Today's Date: November 29, 2015

## What Do YOU Expect?

by Dan Trygg

“Now it came about, as she continued praying before Yahweh, that Eli was watching her mouth. <sup>13</sup> As for Hannah, she was speaking in her heart, ...her lips were moving, but her voice was not heard. So Eli thought she was drunk.” 1 Samuel 1:12-13

“Now Samuel did not yet know Yahweh, nor had the word of Yahweh yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup> So Yahweh called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, ‘Here I am, for you called me.’ Then Eli discerned that Yahweh was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup> And Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you shall say, ‘Speak, Yahweh, for Your servant is listening.’” 1 Samuel 3:7-9

“And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” Luke 2:25

**Eli was the high priest at Shiloh** during the latter part of the time between Joshua’s death, and the institution of a king in Israel. **He ruled over Israel as priest and judge** from the time he was 58, until his death, 40 years later. **The time of the judges was a time of lawlessness, spiritual dullness and disobedience.** As a whole, the nation had become unruly and rebellious toward God. They became tolerant of other beliefs, and soon were even worshipping at the shrines of other gods. Although you would expect the high priest of Yahweh to be a devout and holy person, **Eli was also a reflection of the dullness and laxity of the faith of so many in Israel.**

**Hannah, a woman in distress and desperation, stood praying in the house of Yahweh. Her hope, her expectation, was that the God of Israel would hear her request, and answer the desperate longing of her heart.** Like Sarah, and Rachel, of past generations, she was barren. Where else could she go to air her grief, and be understood? Where else could she go and pour out her heart, with any hope that things could be different? Only God had the ability to heal, and to conceive. Only He could give her “the fruit of the womb” (Gen. 30:2). So, she came to the “house of God” and poured out her soul to God. Eli was sitting “on his chair” (a throne, or seat of judgement?) by the doorpost of Yahweh’s house, and observed her. Her mouth was moving, but she was not talking audibly. Eli concluded that she was drunk, and rebuked her. **It is a sad commentary of that time, and maybe also of Eli’s own spirituality, that he would think she was intoxicated in the Lord’s house. It is what he expected.** He did not *expect* to find someone in prayer in the Lord’s house! **It is a sad state of affairs when prayer is considered odd or unconventional in the place where God’s people gather to honor Him.** When she corrected his assumption, and described the desperation of her soul, he recovered himself and spoke a blessing over her, uttering the appropriate benediction over her. **Hannah was the one who had faith. Her expectation was that God had heard her prayer, as is evidenced by the relief of her heavy burden, and the change in her emotional state.**

Regarding the laxity of Eli’s life, we are told that he “was sitting on his chair”, as though this was a customary practice. **As a priest, he should have been busy assisting with offering sacrifices. Especially during a feast time, there would not have been much time to be idly sitting by.** (If the chair *was* a throne, then the role of “judge” had come to supersede his function as priest, which *should have been* his higher calling.) **In the second chapter we are told of his laxity as a father and overseer of the Lord’s house.** He had two sons who were not following the prescriptions of God’s law. They showed disdain for Him, and oppressed the people. Their offensive behavior was reported to Eli. Eli *spoke to them*, but *did nothing more* to curtail their sinful practices or discipline them in any way. (How could he be the “judge” of Israel, when his own sons were lawless, rebellious and oppressive toward others, and received no accountability?) Even though he verbally warned them of God’s recompense, he did not really *expect* any repercussions. **Instead of taking a stand for righteousness, and removing his sons, he remained passive, getting fat on the ill-gotten choice meat stolen by them** (I Sam. 2:15,16,29). Even when very direct words of correction and judgment came from God through a prophet (I Sam. 2:27-36), he did nothing to change or repent. His customary lethargy of soul responded passively.

Hannah had been praying for a son. She had vowed to dedicate him to Yahweh, to serve Him all the days of his life. Again, *her* faith is revealed by her *actions*. She followed through on her commitment. After he was weaned, she presented him to Eli, to serve God at the sanctuary. **Little Samuel did not know the voice of Yahweh, and certainly did not expect Him to interact with him** (3:7). So, when he heard his name called in the night, he assumed Eli was calling out to him. Three times, he quickly arose and went Eli. **Initially, Eli did not expect Yahweh to be calling out to the boy, but after the third occurrence, he recognized what was going on, and instructed Samuel as to how he should respond. Note that Samuel had to acknowledge God, and be attentive.** God did not reveal more, until Samuel was attentive. (How much do we miss out on, simply because we do not take time to ask or pay attention? We do not *expect* God to communicate with us, so we do not cultivate a heart to hear.) This incident seemed to inspire interest and

*expectation* in Eli, and he pressed Samuel to find out what God had spoken. It was a *further* word of judgment on Eli's household. **Even though Eli acknowledged that it was God's word, he made no effort to repent or change. Instead, he passively waited for Yahweh to "do what seems good to Him"** (3:18). In his old age, he became blind, grossly obese, and spent his days sitting in his chair. When the judgment came against his family, he fell over backwards and broke his neck (1 Sam. 4:10).

**By contrast, we read of another old man, Simeon, who lived over a thousand years later** (Lk. 2:25-35). **He was a righteous and devout man, one who "was expecting the consolation of Israel"** (Isa. 11:1-12:6; 40:1-11). He had a forward-looking faith. **Based upon God's promises, he was watching for, welcoming and anticipating His activity in his life. Because of this attitude of faith and expectation, the Holy Spirit "was being upon him"**. The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die before he would see the Messiah with his own eyes. He *believed* this revelation, and *shared it* with others. (How else would *we* know of it?) **He came "in the Spirit" into the temple, and when Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus into the temple to dedicate the child and offer the purification sacrifice required by the Mosaic Law (Ex. 13:2; Lev. 12), Simeon was there to greet them, and he "welcomed it [the baby] into his arms"** (Lk. 2:28). He said, "Now, Master, you are releasing your servant to depart, according to Your personal-word (*rhēma*), in peace; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all the peoples, a light of revelation to the nations, and the glory of Your people, Israel" (vss. 29-32).

In Luke's description, he mentions that **Simeon was "righteous and devout"**. "*Righteous*" referred to living in an upright manner in life, both in regard to treating people with fairness and equity and also to living with integrity toward God. **The word, "devout" literally means "to take hold of well"**. *It referred to a person who took spiritual truth seriously and was careful to implement it into their lives.* The word describes of an *attitude of reverence toward God* and a *circumspect care to live in a manner pleasing to Him*. Instead of the laxity and disconnectedness which Eli had portrayed, **Simeon applied his faith to his relationships and interactions with others, and gave his attention to tuning in to God and following His will.**

During a time of spiritual darkness, shortly before the judgment of God fell upon ancient Israel in the seventh century B.C., the prophet Micah described how "the *devout* person has *perished* from the land, and there is *no* upright person among the people" (Mic. 7:2). The entire nation had become like Eli. Like Eli and his sons, there was a general disregard for anything to do with God. Society had become corrupt on every level. And, like Eli and his sons, God soon removed them. **By contrast, on the day of Pentecost in the time of the apostles, "devout men from every nation under heaven" had assembled at Jerusalem to observe the Jewish Feast of Weeks. It was to these people, those who took God seriously and who chose to walk out their faith with care, day-to-day, that God chose to make known the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies.** They came from every nation to gather in Jerusalem, because they believed God's word. They *valued Him*, and *expected* that He would answer their prayers and service to Him. In *that* year, 30 A.D., they *witnessed* the "consolation of Israel" poured out in their hearing. They *heard* that this was the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, the outpouring of God's Spirit upon His menservants and maidservants. **They heard that Jesus was the promised Messiah**, who had, by God's predetermined plan, been put to death, raised to life, and who has now poured out this Holy Spirit. **Through Him, forgiveness of sins and the "promise of the Father", the gift of the Holy Spirit, was now made available. They asked, "What must we do?"** At Peter's instruction, over 3,000 responded in faith. **This became the initial group of disciples that formed the core of the early church.** These were *already* people who "took hold of truth well" by carefully applying themselves to spiritual disciplines and integrating faith into their lives. So, it was not difficult for them to "devote themselves to the doctrine of the apostles, to the sharing, to the breaking of bread, and to the prayers" (Acts 2:42). **They were already individuals who were living from faith, spiritual expectation and discipline.** God just expanded their perspective to a much larger understanding and purpose. They *believed* the promise, and *expected* that if they honored God by drawing near to Him, that He would honor them by sharing more of Himself with them (cf. 1 Sam. 2:30).

**What about you? What do you expect from God? What do you want from Him?** Are you like Eli, just coasting through life, just going through the motions of spirituality? Are you focused on being comfortable, just going –along-to-get-along, not wanting to offend people? **Are you not really expecting very much from God? Or, are you desperate for God?** Are you like Hannah, pouring out your heart to Him? Are you like Simeon, and the pilgrims at Pentecost, putting your faith center stage in your life? Are you "taking hold of well" the spiritual truths and realities you know about? **Are you choosing to implement Jesus into your life, day-to-day? What does that look like?** What spiritual disciplines are you investing in to become more open and receptive to the Holy Spirit? **Jesus did not just come to visit this planet; He came to infest this planet.** He came to raise up an army of Spirit-indwelt, Spirit-led followers of God. **Forgiveness of sins only opens the doorway of salvation and relationship with God; walking in the Spirit is the practical fulfillment of what Jesus came to do.**