

Hebrew Grammar
Ross Homework Key

IBH 39.11, Section C, 1 Sam 3.1-10¹

Translation

¹Now the boy Samuel (was) serving
YHWH before Eli. And the word of
YHWH was rare in those days; (prophetic)
vision was not spreading (about).

Hebrew Text

¹וְהַנְעֹר שְׁמוּאֵל מִשְׁרַת ²אֶת יְהוָה לִפְנֵי
עָלִי וּדְבַר יְהוָה הָיָה ³יָקָר בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם
אֵין חֲזוֹן נִפְרָץ ⁵:

²On that day, while Eli was lying down in
his place

²וַיְהִי ⁶בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וְעָלִי שָׁכַב ⁷בְּמָקוֹמוֹ

¹ This is a passage about the call of Samuel during the time of the judges, when Eli was high priest. Note: there is some repetition in the text, so if I've parsed a verb form for you that occurs multiple times, I will not parse it again.

² שָׁרַת Pi ptc ms (abs), 'to serve, minister to'. This is a predicate use of the ptc in a null-copula clause (the S is וְהַנְעֹר שְׁמוּאֵל). As with regular finite verbs, even ptc's can take a DO (יְהוָה), here marked with אֶת.

³ הָיָה Qal pft 3ms 'to be, become'. S = cst chain יְהוָה. The predicate (also called a copular complement or a subject complement) is the ms adj. יָקָר 'costly, precious, rare'. Here it has the last sense.

⁴ הָהֵם is the mp far demonstrative + art ה. It functions here as the demonstrative adj rather than the pronoun, since it is articular (pronouns are always anarthrous) and follows the noun that it agrees with in gender, number, and definiteness. So 'the days the those' = 'those days'.

⁵ נִפְרָץ Ni ptc ms (abs). In the Qal, this verb has the sense 'to break, break out, break through'. Here, in the Niphal, the lexicons suggest it means something like 'to spread (out)'. In the grammatical construction, אֵין functions as a negative copula ('was not'), חֲזוֹן 'vision' (i.e., prophetic vision) functions as the S, and נִפְרָץ functions as a predicate ptc: 'vision was not spreading (about)'. This is a way of saying that prophecies were uncommon at the time.

⁶ הָיָה Qal wci 3ms 'to be, become'. This is a discourse הָיָה that doesn't really function as a copula; it simply sets the setting of the next clause (as being past-time due to the wci form, and the PP הַהוּא בַּיּוֹם locating the temporal context as 'in that day'). So one need not translate וַיְהִי: 'In that day, (while) Eli was lying down....' Now, after this wci form, we have a series of 4 clauses that begin with disjunctive waw (see Ross 21). The first (...וְעָלִי שָׁכַב...), the third (וְנָרְאָה לְעֵינָיו טָרָם יִכְבְּהָ), and the fourth (...וְשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב...) are all circumstantial (temporal) clauses indicating the other situations going on at the time that the next narrated action in the form of a wci (וַיִּקְרָא 'YHWH called' v.4) occurred. The second disjunctive clause (וְעֵינָיו הִחֲלוּ כְּהוֹת לֹא יוֹכֵל) I take to be a genuine parenthesis that serves as an aside to provide background information necessary to understand Eli's condition during this narrative. Thus, aside from the discourse וַיְהִי, there are no wci forms that further the narrative in 1 Sam 3:1-3. The first 3 verses are all setting the context for Samuel's call narrative.

⁷ שָׁכַב Qal ptc ms (abs), 'to lie down'. This is a predicate use of the ptc in a null-copula clause (the S is וְעָלִי 'Eli').

(now his eyesight had begun [to be] dim—
he was not able to see)

וְעֵינָיו⁸ הֵחֵלּוּ⁹ כְּהוֹת¹⁰ לֹא יוּכַל¹¹
לְרֹאוֹת¹²:

³and the lamp of God was not yet going
out, while Samuel was lying down in the
temple of YHWH which the ark of God
was there [= ‘where the ark of God was’],

וַיִּהְיֶה אֶלֹהִים טָרָם¹³ יִכְבֶּה¹⁴ וּשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב
בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר¹⁵ שָׁם אָרוֹן אֱלֹהִים:

⁴YHWH called to Samuel, and he said,
“Here I am.”

וַיִּקְרָא¹⁶ יְהוָה אֶל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר¹⁷
הִנְנִי¹⁸:

⁵And he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for
you called me.” And he said, “I did not call.
Return; lie down.” So he went and lay
down.

וַיָּרֻץ¹⁹ אֶל עָלִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי כִי קָרָאתָ²⁰
לִי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא קָרָאתִי²¹ שׁוּב²² שָׁכַב²³
וַיֵּלֶךְ²⁴ וַיִּשְׁכַּב²⁵:

⁸ The form וְעֵינָיו is spelled defectively for the normal וְעֵינָיו (f. du. cst of עֵין ‘eye’ + 3ms sfx + conj ו).

⁹ חָלַל Hi pft 3cp ‘to begin’; S = וְעֵינָיו ‘his eyes’. The verb הֵחֵלּוּ has a Hiphil prefix-ה (due to being Hiph pft); the R1 ח is followed by a ל with DF, indicating that this is a geminate verb root. Finally, in the Hi stem, חָלַל ‘to begin’ is normally followed by an infc. Here, it appears that the infinitive ‘to be’ has been omitted but is implied: ‘his eyes began (to be) dim’. A similar construction occurs in Gen 9:20, “Noah began (to be) a man of the soil.”

¹⁰ This is the fp abs form of the adj. כְּהוֹת ‘colorless, dim, faint’. It is declined like נָפֶה ‘beautiful, handsome’, in that the ms form ends with a historically long vowel having a *mater hē*, but this is removed when you need to add any of the other adjectival inflectional endings. Note: Do not mistake the form כְּהוֹת for an infc of a III-he verb (those also end with וֹת-).

¹¹ יוּכַל Qal impf 3ms ‘to be able’. Note here that since we’re dealing in historical narrative, this impf verb is not future-time, but past-time, ‘he was (not) able’.

¹² רָאָה Qal infc + prep ל ‘to see’.

¹³ Although Ross gives the form טָרָם in the vocab list with the sense ‘before’, it also occurs in a number of places with the sense of a negative adverb, ‘not yet’. You should render the occurrences of טָרָם that way in this passage.

¹⁴ כָּבַה Qal impf 3ms ‘to go out’. S = אֱלֹהִים.

¹⁵ The אֲשֶׁר-relative clause modifies the head, יְהוָה בְּהֵיכַל. Within the relative clause, the head is resumed with the adverb שָׁם functioning as a predicate in a null-copula clause, whose S is אָרוֹן אֱלֹהִים. So it is rendered: ‘in the temple of YHWH, which the ark of God was there’.

¹⁶ קָרָא Qal wci 3ms ‘to call, proclaim, read, invite’. S = יְהוָה.

¹⁷ אָמַר Qal wci 3ms ‘to say’. S is null, but the 3ms inflection indicates it’s a “he” (the referent is Samuel).

¹⁸ This form consists of הִנְנִה + 1cs sfx. It is a way of announcing one’s presence: ‘Here I am!’

¹⁹ רָץ Qal wci 3ms ‘to run’.

²⁰ קָרָא Qal pft 2ms ‘to call, proclaim, read, invite’.

²¹ קָרָא Qal pft 1cs ‘to call, proclaim, read, invite’.

²² שׁוּב Qal impv 2ms ‘to return’.

²³ שָׁכַב Qal impv 2ms ‘to lie down’.

²⁴ הָלַךְ Qal wci 3ms ‘to go, walk’.

²⁵ שָׁכַב Qal wci 3ms ‘to lie down’.

⁶YHWH called still again, “Samuel!” And Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” And he said, “I did not call, my son. Return; lie down.”

²⁶וַיִּסַּף יְהוָה קְרָא ²⁷עוֹד שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּקָּם ²⁸שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל עָלִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי כִי קָרָאתָ לִי וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא קָרָאתִי בְנִי שׁוּב שָׁכֵב:

⁷Now Samuel did not yet know YHWH, and the word of YHWH was not yet being revealed to him.

וַשְׁמוּאֵל טָרָם יָדַע ²⁹אֵת יְהוָה וְטָרָם יִגְלֶה ³⁰אֵלָיו דְּבַר יְהוָה:

⁸And YHWH again called Samuel for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli perceived that YHWH was calling the boy.

²⁸וַיִּסַּף יְהוָה קְרָא שְׁמוּאֵל בְּשִׁלְשִׁית וַיִּקָּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל עָלִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי כִי קָרָאתָ לִי וַיִּבֶן ³¹עָלִי כִי יְהוָה קָרָא ³²לְנַעַר:

⁹And Eli said to Samuel, “Go, lie down, and if He calls to you, you shall/should say, ‘Speak, YHWH, for your servant (is) listening.’” So Samuel went and lay down

וַיֹּאמֶר עָלִי לְשְׁמוּאֵל לֵךְ ³³שָׁכֵב וְהָיָה ³⁴אִם יִקְרָא ³⁵אֵלָיְךָ וַאֲמַרְתָּ ³⁶דַּבֵּר ³⁷יְהוָה ³⁸:

²⁶ וַיִּסַּף Hi wci 3ms ‘to add to, increase’.

²⁷ קָרָא Qal infc ‘to call’. This infc serves as a complementary infinitive with the main verb וַיִּסַּף; ‘and he added to call’ = ‘and he called again’.

²⁸ וַיִּקָּם Qal wci 3ms ‘to return, go back’.

²⁹ יָדַע Qal pft 3ms ‘to know’; S = וַשְׁמוּאֵל. Remember, although Ross gives the form טָרָם in the vocab list as ‘before’, here it occurs with the sense of a negative adverb, ‘not yet’. You should render the occurrences of טָרָם that way in this verse.

³⁰ יִגְלֶה Ni impf 3ms ‘to be revealed’. S = דְּבַר יְהוָה; the impf is used again here for past-time, customary/habitual action: ‘the word of Y. was not yet being revealed to Samuel’.

³¹ וַיִּבֶן Qal wci 3ms ‘to understand, perceive’. S = עָלִי, and the DO is the כִּי-clause (it constitutes what Eli understood).

³² קָרָא Qal ptc ms (abs), ‘to call, proclaim, read, invite’. This ptc is a predicate use: ‘YHWH (was) calling to the boy’.

³³ הָלַךְ Qal impv 2ms ‘to go, walk’.

³⁴ הָיָה Qal wcp 3ms ‘to be, become’. This is a discourse הָיָה that doesn’t really function as a copula; it simply sets up the setting of the next clause (as being future-time due to the wcp form, and contingent due to the conditional clause). So one need not translate וְהָיָה: ‘and lie down, and if he calls, you shall/should say....’

³⁵ קָרָא Qal impf 3ms ‘to call, proclaim, read, invite’. This is the first part of a conditional sentence (known as the protasis), introduced by the conditional particle אִם ‘if’.

³⁶ וַאֲמַר Qal wcp 2ms ‘to say’. This is the second part of a conditional sentence (known as the apodosis); it is rarely introduced in Hebrew by a word like ‘then’. It is, however, frequently going to be a clause beginning with a wcp form: ‘if ... then you shall/should say’.

³⁷ דַּבֵּר Pi impv 2ms ‘to speak’.

³⁸ The name יְהוָה here is vocative in function. That is, it names the addressee.

in his place.

¹⁰And YHWH came and took his stand and called as at other times, “Samuel! Samuel!” And Samuel said, “Speak, for your servant (is) listening.”

כִּי שָׁמַעַ ³⁹עֶבְדְּךָ וַיִּלֶּךְ שְׁמוּאֵל וַיִּשְׁכַּב
בְּמָקוֹמוֹ:
וַיָּבֹא ⁴⁰יְהוָה וַיִּתְיַצֵּב ⁴¹וַיִּקְרָא כָּפְעַם
כָּפְעַם ⁴²שְׁמוּאֵל שְׁמוּאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל
דַּבֵּר כִּי שָׁמַעַ עֶבְדְּךָ:

³⁹ שָׁמַעַ Qal ptc ms (abs) ‘to hear, listen’. This is a predicate use of the ptc in a null-copula clause (the S is עֶבְדְּךָ ‘your servant’): ‘for your servant (is) listening’.

⁴⁰ בֹּא Qal wci 3ms ‘to come, enter’. S = יְהוָה.

⁴¹ יָצַב Hithp wci 3ms ‘to stand, take one’s stand, station/set oneself’.

⁴² The expression כָּפְעַם כָּפְעַם means something like ‘as at other times’.