

LOOKING BACK OVER 1 SAMUEL...

What are the important things that you have learned from this book?

Which characters and characteristics do you most identify with?

Can you see good and bad in each character?

How do you see God's purposes being played out, even when things appear to be going badly for David?

First Samuel

A study in nine parts

J. D. West

USING THIS STUDY

The Hebrews were great story tellers, and I believe that the most benefit is gained from those Scriptures when they are read as whole stories. This study booklet is designed to give you the bigger picture, to enable you to learn from the good and bad examples of the characters in 1 Samuel, and more importantly to discover that God is always at work even when circumstances seem to indicate otherwise.

Because there are a number of chapters to read each week, it is important that each member of the group prepares well and is reasonably familiar with the content of each study. However the text for the first study can be read together as a group.

INTRODUCTION

After the Israelites left Egypt, conquered and settled in the land of Canaan, there followed the period of around 400 years when the twelve tribes had no king and did what was right in their own eyes. Although God was the Lord who linked these tribes they soon turned to the idolatry of the people they had conquered. What followed was a cycle of invasion from neighbouring non-Israelite tribes, the Israelites calling out to God for help, and God raising up a Judge (a charismatic leader) who united some of the tribes under God, to defeat the enemy. Peace followed for a time until Israel lapsed into her old ways, and the cycle continued.

Samuel comes at the end of this period of the Judges. His story ushers in the age of the kings and he is presented as a priest, prophet and the last of the Judges.

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1 SAMUEL 27 to 31

The End of Saul

In chapters 27&29 do you think David was wrong in his deception with Achish?

In 28:4-6 Why does God not give guidance to Saul?
How does this chapter emphasize Saul's powerlessness?

In what ways does David show wisdom as a leader in chapter 30?

Is there anything else that strikes you from these chapters?

In chapters 24 & 26 how does David demonstrate his respect for authority? Why should he do so when Saul has been rejected by God? What may we learn about our own attitudes to those who have authority over us?

In chapter 25 Compare the characteristics of Nabal, Abigail and David.. What may we learn from Abigail's example?

1

Read 1 Samuel 1 The birth of Samuel

What do you learn of Hanna's & Elkanah's relationship?

**From verse 11, was Hanna bargaining with God?
What do you think about that?**

The Bible gives us the birth narratives of Moses, John the Baptist, Jesus, and here, Samuel. It doesn't give us a birth narrative of kings Saul or David.

Why do think Samuel is given this emphasis above Saul and David?

From verse 11 we see that Samuel was to be a Nazirite. See Numbers 6:1-8 and Judges 13:2-7, 24.

What does this tell you about Samuel's future role?

FOR NEXT WEEK Read 1 Samuel 27 to 31

Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11
Hannah's Song of Praise 1-10

What does Hannah say about God?

Do you experience God in any of the ways she describes?

From verses 9-10, what does she foresee?

What is worth following in the example of Hannah?

FOR NEXT WEEK read 1 Samuel 2:12 to 3:21
1 SAMUEL 2:12-36 Eli's Sons

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1 SAMUEL 21-26
DAVID THE OUTLAW

What potential for both good and bad had the group that gathered around David (22:1-2)?

Read 21:7, 22:9, 22:18-22. In retrospect what should David have done about Doeg?

Make a note of the ways God protects David in these chapters.

How does David make it easier for God to afford him protection?
(23:1-4, 10-12)

How is it that David's faith is so strong in chapter 17?

In chapter 18 Saul's jealousy becomes very destructive. Do you see this force at work in the world and the church?
What are the results?
How can jealousy be countered?

How do you understand the recurring idea that *God* sends an evil spirit on Saul? (16:14, 18:10, 19:9)

What are some of Jonathan's good qualities?

What evidence do you have from these chapters that God had his hand upon David's life?

When have you seen God's hand upon your own life?

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read 1 Samuel 21-26

2

How are Samuel and Eli's sons contrasted in these verses? v17, 18, 21, 26, 35

**Are there similar ways in which we show contempt to God?
What should we learn from Samuel's example?**

Why is Eli also judged by God in verses 27-36?

**1 SAMUEL 3 God speaks to Samuel
Why might visions have been rare? (v1)**

What was revealed to Samuel about Eli was already known to Eli so...
Why did God tell Samuel what he was going to do to Eli and his sons? (v 19-20 may help).

For different reasons neither Samuel nor Eli realised that God had been speaking to Samuel. What can prevent us from recognising God at work?

Have you experienced God speaking to you in some way? Share.

FOR NEXT WEEK READ 1 Samuel 4-7

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1 SAMUEL 16-20 DAVID AT COURT

Read 16:7. What do you think it was about David's heart that would make him a suitable king?

In contrast to God, what does the world value in people?

When do you find yourself judging people as the world does?

If David was just a teenager, how long was it after his anointing that he actually became king? (See 2 Samuel 5:4) Why the delay?

As you read these chapters note down the contrasts between Saul and David.

SAUL

DAVID

In what ways does he show a general lack of good judgement?

Who is the real king of Israel? (15:1)

How do you feel about the command given in 15:3?
Why do you think it was given?

What was Saul's main problem in 15:23

Read 15:7-9, 12, 20-26. What sorts of parallels do Christians show with these attitudes? How does Saul seek to minimise his blame?

When have you found it difficult to show interest in God?
When have you been tempted to rush ahead of God?
What are the solutions to these problems?

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1 SAMUEL 4-7

The Ark and the Philistines

Israel had experienced conflict with various neighbouring tribes, but the wars with the Philistines, occupying the coast were the most enduring. They had weapons of iron and chariots, while the Israelites largely made do with wooden weapons and farm implements.

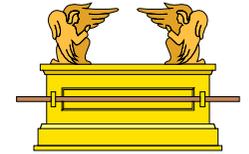
The ark had made by Israel according to God's instructions through Moses, during their time in the wilderness.

What was its significance?

Exodus 25:10-22,

Numbers 10:33-36,

Joshua 3:3, 11, 14-17



Why didn't it work for them now as it had in times past?

Read v22. Have you ever felt that God had left you? What made you think that way?

Had God left Israel? What evidence is there for your answer?

What factors brought about the change in Israel's victory over the Philistines? (give references)

Are there lessons to learned here about effectively living as a Christian?

What have these chapters taught you about God?

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1 SAMUEL 13 to 15

The Failure of Saul

At first glance it would seem that Saul's reign is to be cut short. What does 13:1 tell you?

Why did Saul act as he did in chapter 13? What was his fault 13, and what was his punishment?

Share a time when you did something similar. What was the result for you?

What were the strengths and weaknesses of each army?

Did Jonathan demonstrate faith or foolhardiness (14:6-10, 15, 23)

What examples do you see of Saul's lack of interest in the things of God? (14:31-36, note also "your" in 15:30)

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read 1 Samuel 8 to 11

high		
Birth	10yrs	20yrs
low		

high		
	30yrs	40yrs
low		

high		
	50yrs	60yrs
low		

high		
	70yrs	80yrs
low		

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read 1 Samuel 13 to 15

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1 SAMUEL 8 to 11
Anointing a King.
What made Israel want to have a king? 8:3-5, 8:19.



What was wrong with that?

What would be the disadvantages of a king? 8:10-18

What was the process by which Saul became king. How was he affirmed?

9-10:1

10:6, 9-11

10:20-24

11 (esp verses 14-15)

What do these chapters tell us about Saul's character?

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1 SAMUEL 12

Samuel's Farewell Speech

Samuel sets before the people two ways to live.

What are the characteristics of each of those ways?

verses 9-19, 25

What lessons might we learn from these chapters about appointing people to positions of leadership?

verses 20-24

What example has Samuel himself left them? verses 1-5

FOR NEXT WEEK: Read 1 Samuel 12 and think about significant and life changing encounters with God through your life.

Think back over your own life and using the next page plot the most significant highs and lows in your relationship to God. How can looking back over our lives help us at times? Share some of those experiences with the