

**Old Testament Survey**  
**Lesson 11 – 1 Samuel**  
**Valley Bible Church Adult Sunday School**  
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**Introduction**

We continue our study of the Old Testament books of history by looking at six books sometimes called The Six King Books or The Royal History of Israel. The books are often studied together because they tend to cover similar periods of time and overlap much information.

- 1 Samuel deals with man's choice of a king, Saul.
- 2 Samuel presents God's choice for a king, David.
- 1 Kings gives us a picture of Solomon and his Israel.
- 2 Kings follows up with Israel's remaining kings and their Israel.
- 1 Chronicles deals with Solomon and the Temple.
- 2 Chronicles returns again to the other kings and the Temple.

The approximately 350 years of leading by the judges ends with a Judge who is actually a Judge/Prophet named Samuel. Remember, a Judge leads the repentant people out of bondage and a prophet is one who speaks God's message to the people. When Samuel came into civil leadership, the nation was back in a state of rebellion and sin. They have not just rejected God as their king, they now are screaming for an earthly king so they can be like the nations around them (1 Sam 8:4-7). The great sin of Israel is not just wanting a human king, but insisting on a king of their own choice as opposed to waiting for God to choose a man.

The chronology of this period is (From Terry Riley's OT Chronology):

<b>Judges</b>	<b>Saul's Reign</b>	<b>David's Reign</b>
1388 – 1051 BC	1051 – 1011 BC	1011 – 1004 BC over Hebron
		1004 – 971 BC over all Israel

1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible. In AD 1488, at the first printing of the Hebrew Bible, the books were split into two parts and named 1 and 2 Samuel. The books of Samuel were written and compiled by more than one person (Samuel's death is recorded in 1 Sam 25:1). Jewish traditional writings name Samuel and the prophets Nathan and Gad as other contributors. Through the prophetic ministry of Samuel, God sovereignly established a monarchy in Israel, choosing David, "a man after His own heart" to rule, thus overruling Israel's rebellious, short-sighted, and disastrous choice.

1 Samuel will introduce us to a human monarchy that will rule Israel for over 500 years. As we begin 1 Samuel, Israel is again fighting for freedom. The Philistines migrated into the region about the same time as Israel escaped from Egypt. Now, from their fortified cities along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, they gradually worked their way into the heart of Canaan. They had a better trained, organized, and equipped army than Israel had, especially since Israel had become a loose confederation of 12 separate tribes with no national armed force. The Philistines brought a threat not just to individual tribes of Israel, but a national threat. They actually presented the possibility of the destruction of Israel throughout the "Promised Land." The people of Israel had the answer: "Give us a king, like the powerful nations around us have so we can fight a united struggle for survival." Thus the stage is set for the history presented in 1 Samuel.

1 Samuel presents the story of four men: Eli, Samuel, Saul, and David whose stories are interwoven.

1. **Eli:** Samuel was born in the midst of the dark ages of the Judges in Israel. As we saw at the end of Judges, the nation was fragmented into individual tribes and the priesthood was weak since many Levites set up independent places of worship, some even housing foreign idols. The official priesthood was represented by a High Priest named Eli who was a physically and spiritually feeble old man. His sons, the heirs apparent to the office of High Priest, were ungodly, wicked, and morally corrupt. It is a commentary on the power and faithfulness of God that he could use a man who could not even control his own children to direct the young man who was in his care to listen to and obey God.
2. **Samuel:** Samuel was an unusual young man. He learned early in his life to hear and obey the voice of God and he had great courage. His first message as a Prophet of God was one of judgment on his mentor, Eli. As a Judge he would lead his people out of the bondage of the Philistines. As a prophet he encouraged his people that their future was in God's hands and warned them to repent and follow God. Samuel traveled from his home in Ramah to teach the Word of God to his people and even founded a "seminary" or school for young prophets to teach young men to read, write, and teach Scripture. It was also Samuel who crowned the kings and gave them their orders as God instructed him to do.
3. **Saul:** Saul, a Benjamite, was Israel's first king. He was not at all conceited as a young man even though he was head and shoulders above other men and extremely handsome and popular. He is a great study in contradiction. He never seemed to allow God to become "Lord" of his life and so was unable to control his natural impulses, impatience, jealousies, and temper. He attempted to kill David nine different times and eventually ended up under the power of an evil spirit. He had, however, a son named Jonathan who was David's greatest friend. Jonathan was the antithesis of Saul, even though David was obviously God's choice to take away the throne that would have legitimately been his.
4. **David:** David was God's choice for Israel's king. David was one of the greatest men in all of history. From David came the entire race of kings and through his line the Messiah was born to bring salvation. He was a man, with great faults that God will not hide from us, but he had a heart for God. Much of 1 and 2 Samuel is dedicated to his life and his personal relationship with God.

## Outline:

### **I. Samuel: God's Judge and Prophet (1-8)**

There had been people prophesying from time to time as the Spirit of God "*came upon them.*" Deborah was told by God to prophesy to the people. However, the office or title of Prophet was not yet established. Samuel was to be the last Judge of the people but was also chosen by God to be His Prophet. The beginning of 1 Sam introduces Samuel in comparison to Hophni and Phinehas. Samuel's righteous upbringing, response to his calling, and his obedient service vs. Hophni's and Phinehas' permissive upbringing, misuse of their God given office, and disobedience to their father and their God.

#### **A. Birth of Samuel (1-2)**

Many think that environment determines the unrighteous or the righteous response of a person and so say that Samuel had an unfair advantage over other young men. However, compare his birth and childhood to that of Judge Samson and you will see that a heart for God, moral integrity, wise choices and obedience makes the ultimate difference.

##### **1. Samuel's birth (1:1-8, 10-28 and 2:1-10)**

Samuel's unusual birth was an early indication of what God had in store for him. Hannah was barren and prayed, promising God she would raise her child under a Nazarite vow if God would allow her to have a son. He did and she did. Her heart is clearly unmasked in her prayer of praises the Lord for his holiness, omniscience, sovereignty, compassion, and justice in chapter 2.

## 2. Failure of Eli

### a. Eli's Failure as a Priest (1:9, 13 and 2:27-36)

- 1) Eli was the High Priest in the Tabernacle at Shilo. His job was to lead the nation in the worship of God. He was not just an ineffective priest, but a selfish and evil one. He participated in corruption and allowed his servants and sons to practice immorality in and around the Tabernacle.
- 2) To illustrate these problems we are told several episodes relating to the temple and sacrifices and their perversion by Eli and company.

### b. Eli's Failure as a Father (2:12-17, 22-25)

- 1) Eli had two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They were the heirs apparent to the High Priesthood, but their hearts were evil.
- 2) According to 2:12, *"they did not know the Lord"* and showed it by: 1) Stealing choice meat from sacrifices for personal use; 2) Engaging in temple prostitution (just like the pagans); and 3) Misunderstanding and misusing the Ark of Covenant.

## 3. Samuel's Boyhood (2:11, 18-21, 26 and 3:1-21)

- Did he grow up in ideal circumstances? No, Eli and his sons are perverting their office every day and he is supposed to be learning to serve God with a pure heart.
- Did he succeed in staying pure and focused? Yes.  
<sup>26</sup>Now, the boy Samuel was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men. 1 Sam 2:26
- Did his presence make a difference? Yes, even though (3:1) tells us that because of sin, the *"word of the Lord was rare"* and *"visions were infrequent"* the Lord spoke to Samuel (v4).
- Did Samuel continue to be faithful? Yes, (v19) *"Thus Samuel grew and the LORD was with him and let none of his words fail."*
- Did the people respond to Samuel? Yes, (v20-21).

## B. Samuel the Prophet

Chapter 3 ends with the phrase, "And Samuel's words came to all of Israel."

### 1. Teaching the people... (4:1-7:14)

In these chapters we will observe:

- Samuel as a Judge (he will lead the people in subduing the Philistines);
- Samuel as a Priest (he will clean up the Tabernacle worship);
- Samuel as a Prophet (he will warn the people to follow God);
- Samuel as a King-Maker (he will anoint Saul and later David)

#### a. To wait (4-6)

Israel went to battle against the Philistines and lost. There is no record of asking God to lead or why they lost. When the elders tried to figure out why they lost, they determined that they needed more power. So they sent to Shiloh to get the Ark of the Covenant brought to the battle-field (v3). They will rely on the Ark of God instead of the God of the Ark. God fought His own battle against Dagon and the Philistines and they sent the Ark to Abinadab in Kirath Jearim (chap 6) where it remained until David's time.

**b. To war (7:1-17)**

Just like the judges before him, Samuel led his people away from the Philistine and Canaanite deities and to repentance. When they repented God heard, responded, and allowed him to lead them to victory. Samuel commemorated the victory by erecting a huge stone "Ebenezer" (stone or memorial of help) because he said, "thus far the Lord has helped us." (v7) Samuel spends his entire life as an itinerant Judge, Priest, and Prophet: leading, teaching, and training Israel's leaders.

**II. Saul: Satan's man (8-15)**

**A. The People Demand a King (8)**

Israel's disappointment with the priesthood under Eli and the sins of Samuel's sons seemed to make them ready to try a different kind of leadership. The people wanted the benefits of a king like the people living around them. Most of chapter 8 recounts their debate with Samuel giving them God's arguments and the elders insisting. The people demand a king which displeases Samuel. But God tells Samuel to grant their desire after Samuel solemnly warns the people. The people are not rejecting Samuel, they are rejecting God. Ultimately, the people will get what they want...

<sup>19</sup>Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, "No, but there shall be a king over us, <sup>20</sup>that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." 1 Sam 8:19-20

**B. Tragedy of Saul (9-15)**

**1. Finding of Saul (9-10)**

For the details on the choosing and anointing of Saul see chapters 9 and 10. It is interesting to note that Saul was a shy and reticent candidate, but the people loved their tall, handsome king.

**2. Fitness of Saul (11-12)**

The first test of Saul's leadership came when the Ammonites attacked Jabesh-gilead (v6). "The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul in power" and he went from shy Saul to super Saul. He called his people together and mustered an army of 330,000 and routed the enemy. This confirmed to all Israel that Saul was a worthy king. In chapter 12, Samuel installed Saul and retired. Accompanied by a miraculous thunderstorm, he heard the people's confession and reminded them that they had nothing to fear if they continued with the Lord. If they failed to obey however, they and their new king, would be swept away.

**3. Failure of Saul (13-15)**

One of the first signs of Saul's impatience comes right on the tail of his great victory. His son, Jonathan initiated military action against the Philistines at Michmash. Saul called for Samuel to seek God's blessing on the action, but after seven days of waiting he took it upon himself to usurp the job as priest and offer his own sacrifice and prayers. This major act of arrogance would cost Saul the throne. In fact, Samuel prophesied his deposing that very same day.

Jonathan was a hero and God miraculously brought a victory, but Saul also issued the edict against eating that almost caused his son's death. Jonathan was saved by the people. Because of his disobedience, Saul never totally defeated the Philistines, or was a successful king, even though God gave him some great victories and a large family.

**THE LAST STRAW:** God, through Samuel, told Saul to totally destroy the Amalekites and everything belonging to them. In fact, he said, (15:3) "Now go and strike Amalek and utterly destroy all that he has, and do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." Saul's army did defeat the Amalekites, but he let Agog, the king live and saved the best of the spoil. To make matters worse, Saul came back and built a monument to himself (15:12) and lied when Samuel confronted him about his sin (15:12-19). "The Lord grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel." and Samuel "never again saw Saul until the day he died." (15:35)

### **Saul never learned the key truth of 1 Samuel 15:22**

<sup>22</sup>Samuel said, "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. <sup>23</sup>"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He has also rejected you from being king." 1 Sam 15:22-23

### **III. David: God's man; and more of Saul: Satan's man (16-31)**

Although Saul is king until the end of the book, the story switches to his already chosen successor. We will see David's life as king in detail in 2 Samuel.

#### **A. David Anointed (16)**

Samuel is sent out to anoint the new king. He finds Jesse's family of eight fine strapping young sons. This is encouraging to Samuel, but the Lord said to him,

<sup>7</sup>But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, **but the LORD looks at the heart.**" 1 Sam 16:7

When they ran out of sons, they called the youngest from the field where he is tending the sheep. The Lord told Samuel that this was the one. Samuel anointed David in the midst of his brothers and the Spirit came mightily upon David from that day forward (16:13). Later, David is called to play the harp for Saul as he is tormented from without by a messenger of Satan. This exacerbates Saul's already man fearing disposition to bring about severe bouts of depression, anger, and delusion. As Saul declines David is introduced into the court of the King where he is seen by the people.

#### **B. David the Courageous (17)**

Here is the familiar story of Dave killing the Philistine giant Goliath. The Israelites and the Philistines face off for battle on opposites sides of the valley of Elah. Among the Philistines is a fierce fighter named Goliath, who is over nine feet tall! Goliath defies Israel, demanding that they send out a soldier to fight him. Goliath makes this challenge twice every day for 40 days. Meanwhile, David's father instructs him to carry food to three of his brothers in Saul's army. When David arrives at the site of the impending battle, he is rebuked by his oldest brother for asking why Goliath is allowed to insult Israel's army. David volunteers to fight Goliath, but Saul is afraid that David will be no match for the Philistine giant. David tells Saul that as a shepherd he killed lions and bears who threatened his sheep. He promises to do the same with Goliath! Saul agrees to let David fight. Saul offers David his own royal armor, but David refuses it, choosing to use his sling and five smooth stones instead (2 Sam 21:22). Goliath taunts the Israelites and curses David by the names of his gods. David says that the battle belongs to the Lord. He uses one stone which sinks into Goliath's head knocking him down so David could cut his head off with Goliath's own sword. The Philistines flee and are pursued and destroyed by Israel.

### **C. Saul's Fury (18-20)**

David and Jonathan become the best of friends. Jonathan loves David as himself and makes a life-long covenant. Saul did not let David return to his father's house, but kept him close to keep an eye on him. David prospers and becomes more popular with the people than Saul. Saul becomes jealous and angry and attempts to kill David:

1. By the spear twice – saved by fleeing (18:11-16)
2. By deceit in battle with the Philistines – saved by God's might in battle (18:17-30)
3. By the spear after reconciliation through Jonathan – saved by fleeing (19:1-10)
4. By assassins at David's house – saved by Michal (19:11-17)
5. By assassins and Saul himself – saved by the Spirit (19:19-24)
6. By Saul at the king's table – saved by Jonathan, informed by arrows (20:1-42)

### **D. David Flees (21-22)**

David flees to Nob where the Tabernacle is and meets Ahimelech the priest. He eats consecrated bread and obtains the sword of Goliath. He flees to the Philistine city of Gath where he pretends to be insane because he fears what king Achish would do to him (chapter 21).

David flees from Gath and comes to the cave of Adullam where his father and brothers go to him. He gathers 400 men who are in distress, in debt, or discontented (relatives?). He leaves his father and mother in Mispah of Moab and was told by the prophet Gad to go into the land of Judah. He flees to the forest of Hereth. Saul is incensed that the people (including his son) protect David. Then Doeg the Edomite betrays David and tells Saul that Ahimelech the priest helped David. Saul summoned Ahimelech and is so enraged that he is not able to understand or inquire about the details of how Ahimelech helped David (David actually lied). Saul orders Ahimelech and all his father's household killed. Only Doeg was willing to kill the priests – 85 men who wore the linen ephod. Then Saul struck the city of Nob and killed "both men and women, children and infants; also oxen, donkeys, and sheep he struck with the edge of the sword." Only Ahimelech's son Abiathar survives and escapes to David where David promises to protect him (chapter 22).

Even though David is being pursued by Saul he still is concerned for his people and goes to their aid at Keilah when the Philistines are raiding their land. David flees with his men, because God tells him that Keilah will deliver them to Saul. David flees to the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh where Jonathan finds him and "encouraged him in God." Saul pursues David in the wilderness until the Philistines raid the land and Saul must break off the pursuit of David (chapter 23).

Saul again pursues David. Saul enters cave to relieve himself where David happens to be hiding. David counts crow with Saul, but then his conscience bothers him and he persuades his men to not kill Saul. David comes out of the cave and humbles himself before Saul. Saul is ashamed and clearly sees that David is a better man than he. Saul acknowledges that David will be king over Israel and makes a pact with David to not cut off his descendents (chapter 24).

Samuel dies and David moves to the wilderness of Paran. David sends messengers to ask a wealthy man named Nabal to provide provisions to David and his men since David had acted kindly toward Nabal and his servants. Nabal scoffs at David's messengers. David plans on taking 400 men to punish Nabal when Nabal's wise wife Abigail intercedes for the household of Nabal. When Abigail tells Nabal what she did, he dies from a stroke. David takes Abigail as his wife (chapter 25).

Saul again pursues David. David had a second opportunity to kill Saul when the Lord causes a deep sleep to fall on Israel's army, but he will not strike the Lord's anointed king. He was determined to let Saul be king as long as God let him and not take things into his own hands. Saul again sees that David is righteous and they separate to their own places (chapter 26).

David fears that Saul will continue to pursue him unless he moves to the cities of the Philistines. He and his men move to Gath and Saul no longer searched for him. Achish of Gath gives David and his men the city of Ziklag. David and his men raid the villages of the people living along the road to Egypt. David lies to the king of Gath telling him that he is raiding Israelite villages (chapter 27).

The Philistines gathered for war (with David) against Israel. With Samuel dead, Saul did not have any counsel. He inquired of the Lord, but the Lord did not answer him. When heaven was silent, Saul turned to hell. Saul had removed from the land all mediums (one who supposedly communicates with the dead but who actually communicates with demons) and spiritists (one who has an intimate knowledge of the demonic, spiritual world). But now he seeks out a medium and finds one in Endor. He disguised himself and asked for the women to "bring up" Samuel. Samuel reviews the judgment that had already been pronounced on Saul and that Saul and his sons would die the very next day (chapter 28).

Most commentators believe that this was a unique case of actually being able to contact a dead person. More than likely this woman had contacted spirits in the past, but those spirits were actually demons. This is why she cried out with a loud voice when she realized it was Samuel, since she had not expected to actually contact Samuel. God used this instance to show both his power and presence to the medium revealing himself as the one true God. He also used it to send a message of condemnation to Saul.

David goes out to war with the Philistines. Achish of Gath trusts him, but the other lords of the Philistines do not. David and his men return to Ziklag (chapter 29).

Upon returning to Ziklag, David finds that Amalekites had conquered Ziklag and taken all the inhabitants captive. David's men threaten to kill him because he let this happen. David strengthened himself in the Lord his God (v6). David pursues the Amalekites with speed and tires 200 of the 600 men, so he leaves 200 behind. David slaughters the Amalekites and retrieves all the inhabitants of Ziklag and all the spoil of the Amalekites. David divides the spoil with all his men and sends some to the cities that he and his men were accustomed to going (chapter 30).

### **E. The Death of Saul (31)**

The Lord's word to Samuel is fulfilled. The Philistines rout Israel. Saul's sons are killed and Saul is badly wounded by archers. Saul commits suicide rather than be taken captive by the Philistines. The Philistines mutilate Saul and fasten his body to the wall of Beth-shan. The valiant men of Jabesh-gilead retrieved Saul and his son's bodies, burned them, and buried them.

### **Homework:**

- Read 2 Samuel.
- Read 2 Samuel 12:1-15 and Psalm 51. Think about the nature of repentance.