

WEEK FOURTEEN INTRODUCTION

The book of 1 Samuel contains some of the most memorable stories of the entire Bible. It builds the bridge from the time of the Judges to the time of the monarchy. Three key characters provide a rough outline. Each leads Israel either as a judge or as king. Samuel, Saul, and David each carry the responsibility of leadership. The story of 1 Samuel follows the paths of these three characters as Israel chooses to have a king. Key principles can be gleaned, but the story points ahead to the true King, Jesus Christ. Michael Goheen and Craig Bartholomew note, “The books of 1 and 2 Samuel start with the story of a barren woman and a barren nation. The woman is Hannah...[who] cries out to the Lord to take away the stigma of her infertility (1 Sam. 1). The nation too is barren in the sense that it is not producing the fruits of obedience to God’s covenant. Even formal worship of God in Israel has become corrupt and lost its sense of God’s holiness.” God’s response to His wayward people is to provide new spiritual integrity through *leadership*. Samuel is the last judge of Israel (1 Sam. 1-8), Saul is the first king (1 Sam. 9-15), and David follows Saul (1 Sam. 16–2 Sam. 24).

Tom Schreiner puts 1-2 Samuel in the continued development of Judges and Ruth. He states, “The placement of 1-2 Samuel after Judges and Ruth is significant. Judges emphasizes Israel’s waywardness, noting that there was no king in Israel (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25). The book of Ruth relays the story of how Ruth married Boaz, explaining how she and Boaz were ancestors of the one who eventually became king: David. The books of 1-2 Samuel recount the story of how David became king...” God rules His people Israel by means of His anointed King. This principle, the Lord ruling through the anointed King, is testified throughout the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments. It is a principle that points directly to King Jesus.

KEY SCRIPTURE

Those who oppose the LORD will be shattered; he will thunder in the heavens against them. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth. He will give power to his king; he will lift up the horn of his anointed.

– 1 Samuel 2:10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1 and 2 Samuel are bookended by the song of Hannah in 1 Sam. 2 and David's song in 2 Sam. 22. The major themes of these two books appear in these songs (also see song in 2 Sam. 1:19-27). What does Hannah's song teach about the Lord? How have you seen those truths and themes in this week's reading? How has *reversal* played a part in the story? Where have the expectations surrounding the worldly strong and the worldly weak been flipped? What application should we make from this truth? Cross reference with 1 Corinthians 1:26-31.

What was the sin of Eli and his sons? How does the corruption and distortion of *worship* negatively influence the people of God? What is God's promise in 1 Sam. 2:35-36?

How did Israel *use* the ark of the covenant in 1 Sam. 4? Where do you think Israel's faith was? What are some ways today we can attempt to manipulate God or approach life superstitiously? After the ark of the covenant is taken by the Philistines, where do they put the ark? Summarize the story. What happened to the Philistine idol in the presence of the ark of the Lord? Why do you think that happened? Read Philippians 2:9-10.

Why does Israel call for a king in 1 Sam. 8? What desires motivate the people? How do the same desires show up among God's people still today? How does Samuel warn the people in 1 Sam. 8:10-18? Does Israel accept or reject Samuel's counsel?

Summarize the life of Saul. How does he stand out from the rest of the people? What is the highpoint of his reign? What is his downfall (1 Sam. 13:8-14)? Why do you think Saul performed the sacrifice? In what was he trusting?

David is anointed king in 1 Samuel 16. How do you see the themes of expectation and reversal at play in Samuel's interactions with Jesse's sons? The same principle is at work in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Jesus, by human eyes, seems *least* likely to be the anointed King, the Messiah. How is the same principle of reversal at work in the Kingdom of God now?

Describe David's friendship with Jonathan. How can your friendships grow in light of this friendship?

Who gathers to David at the cave of Adullam? Why do these people come to him? How does this episode point ahead to Jesus? Read Luke 4:40.

In Psalm 91, what kind of relationship is described in verses 1-2? Spend some time counting the promises of God in this Psalm, look for these by noting the phrases that begin with "I will," "he will," or "you will." Name specific ways these promises speak to your life right now.

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

“O my Strength, I will sing praises to you, for you, O God, are my fortress, the God who shows me steadfast love.” -**Psalm 59:17**

How will you *sing* praises this week to God who saves you in Jesus? How can you sing praises in your home? As you gather with the church this Lord’s Day, sing like one knows the steadfast love of God!