

1 Samuel

Leading God's people

Integrated bible studies and
personal reading plan

8:30 / 10:30 Series
5 June – 10 July 2011

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OVERVIEW

1 Samuel contains some of the best known stories in the Old Testament, from Samuel's miraculous birth, to David and Goliath, to Saul's downfall. It is tempting as we read Old Testament narratives like 1 Samuel to simply mine each story for principles and life lessons for us today.

Yet when we step back and see the Bible as a whole we know that it is a story about a King (Jesus) and His kingdom (God's people living under his rule and blessing). Books like 1 Samuel reveal a great deal to us about this King and His Kingdom.

The stories contained in 1 Samuel are not simply a collection of tales which we can learn a few lessons from. They record God's dealings with his people as he reveals Himself and as he sovereignly shapes the lives of characters like David to point us forward to our king, Jesus. Please join me in praying for this series: that study of the characters in 1 Samuel would deepen our love for and obedience to, our king, Jesus.

Your brother in Christ,

Matt Lehmann

10:30 Gathering Pastor

OUR SIX WEEKS IN 1 SAMUEL

As we are only spending six weeks in the book of 1 Samuel, I have chosen to focus on the three main characters of the book, Samuel, Saul and David, spending two weeks on each. There are three aspects to this series: the sermons, the Bible studies and the daily reading plan.

SERMON SERIES

Each week we will have two readings, as it is helpful with Old Testament narrative books such as this to read through a fair amount of the text. Below are the readings for the six weeks, and the sermon text is highlighted with an (*).

	CHARACTER	READING 1	READING 2
5 June	Samuel	*1 Samuel 1:1-28	1 Samuel 3:1-21
12 June	Samuel	1 Samuel 5:1-12	*1 Samuel 7:2-17
19 June	Saul	*1 Samuel 8:1-22	1 Samuel 10:1-25
26 June	Saul	1 Samuel 12:1-25	*1 Samuel 15:1-35
3 July	David	*1 Samuel 17:1-30	*1 Samuel:17:31-58
10 July	David	*1 Samuel 18:1-30	*John 14:15-31

BIBLE STUDIES

The Bible studies are complimentary to the sermons and don't pick up on the sermon text; rather they give you a broader picture of the character being studied that week. As such they can be done the week prior or following the sermon.

OUR SIX WEEKS IN 1 SAMUEL

Regular Bible study in small groups is a great way to grow as a Christian. If you are able to join one of our small groups and haven't done so yet, please consider it in the next few weeks. If you aren't able to make a group, perhaps find someone else who lives near you to go through the studies week each week - over breakfast for example. If you find it hard to get out, perhaps find a friend with whom you can chat through the studies over the phone.

Many of our small groups meet fortnightly, so perhaps on the other week do the study personally or with a partner or friend. I'm sure you are getting the picture by now that I think regular Bible study is important, hence the reason for this booklet.

DAILY READING PLAN

Many of us know we'd benefit from reading the Bible more regularly but find it hard. I've included daily readings from Monday to Friday each week which will get you through all of 1 Samuel by the end of the series. Why not commit to trying it for this series? And if you fall behind, don't give up, catch up!

I've included a couple of questions or observations for each day's reading. They are simply aimed at getting us all to think about the text and reflect on it. Give it a try and feel free to suggest better questions via email to matt.lehmann@trinity.asn.au

PREPARING FOR 1 SAMUEL

1 Samuel tells the story of the establishment in Israel of a monarchy for which Samuel is the king maker. We also see the early life of David as God prepares him to be king after the fall of Israel's first king, Saul.

We see in 1 Samuel that a key part of being a king acceptable to God is to be obedient to the word of God as delivered through the prophets. While David did a much better job than Saul, we have to wait until we see God's forever king, Jesus, to see this fulfilled, as Jesus was obedient even "to death on the cross" (Phil 2:8).

There are many tips to getting the most out of reading Old Testament narrative like 1 Samuel. To pick just a few, we should firstly be asking, "What is God revealing about himself in this story?" This, of course, works on the assumption that the biblical authors, inspired by the Spirit of God, chose these stories intentionally to reveal things about God to us.



A street shot from Ramah which was Samuel's birthplace and home
(A more recent photo!!!)

PREPARING FOR 1 SAMUEL

Secondly, as God's people standing this side of the cross of Christ, we can further ask ourselves, "How does this point us to Jesus?" We don't need to find Jesus under every rock in the Old Testament, yet we need to bear in mind the famous passage in Luke 24:27. In this passage we see Jesus as he takes two of his followers on a quick Bible study through the whole Old Testament and shows us how as a whole, it all points to him.

Thirdly and finally, we can benefit from an almost mocking voice over our shoulder asking us, "So what?" 2 Timothy 3:16 states that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work" (ESV). Taking this seriously we must acknowledge that we aren't just learning history or God's ways in 1 Samuel but rather we are to be transformed by the word of God contained in 1 Samuel. I find the "So what?" question very helpful as I seek to see where the rubber hits the road.

As you seek to answer the all three of these questions, keep praying for direction by God's Spirit. Trying to answer these questions you'll also realise the great blessing of studying together in small groups (couldn't resist one last plug!!!)

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 1

Monday 30 May 1 Samuel 1

1. Is Hannah's prayer a model for us when we are in deep distress?
How can we avoid the charge of seeking to bribe God?
2. How should we think about unanswered prayer in our lives?

Tuesday 31 May 1 Samuel 2

1. As Hannah rejoices in the gift of a son, how does her praise go far beyond the gift given? Do we praise God in the same way?
2. How does God's grace overcome man's wickedness (v.27-36)?

Wednesday 1 June 1 Samuel 3

1. How do the first and last verses of chapter 3 show the problem and God's solution to it?
2. What should we pray for our current day in light of this?

Thursday 2 June 1 Samuel 4

1. Do you think the question in v.3 is the right question to ask for someone who believes in the sovereignty of God?
2. How should we respond to humbling experiences in our lives?

Friday 3 June 1 Samuel 5

1. What is God revealing about himself in this chapter?
2. God doesn't always respond so quickly to those who defy him. Should we tremble today when we see our world defying Him?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

Passage: 1 Samuel 3 Character: Samuel

1. In what ways do you think we would suffer as a community if all our Bibles were destroyed and we had no access to scripture?
2. Read 1 Samuel 3
3. What does v.1 state is the problem for God's people? Why do you think this may be the case? (See 1 Samuel 2:12-17)
4. In chapter 2 we see that Eli and his sons were defiling the priesthood, which led to a famine of the word of the Lord. Read 2:21, 2:26 and then 3:19-4:1a. How is God shaping and using Samuel throughout his life until this point?
5. What do you think of this assessment of the wider church in our day: "Churches either take the word of God for granted, or don't realise it is missing"?
6. What, therefore, should we be encouraging and praying for in our world today?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 1

7. Many people say they'd like to hear God speak directly to them. What can we learn from Eli's situation after God spoke directly to him through Samuel?

8. Do you think God is being a bit harsh with Eli here? In his word to Samuel in verses 11-14, what seems to be the issue at stake?

9. Remembering 1 Samuel 2:12-17, we see that Eli's sons had profaned sacrifices themselves - the very means of grace God provided. How do you think this applies to us today?

10. After you've thought about this, read Hebrews 10: 26-31. How should this shape us today as Christians?

11. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. What are we doing today when we proclaim the good news of Jesus?

PRAY: Thank God that he is not silent today and pray that we may proclaim God's word clearly to this world. Thank God for the means of grace he has provided us in Jesus' death on the cross.

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 2

Monday 6 June 1 Samuel 6

1. Read Romans 1:18-19
2. Do you think this is a good comment on the Philistines here in Ch. 6? How does such suppression of the truth happen today?

Tuesday 7 June 1 Samuel 7

1. How did a further 20 years of oppression shape God's people?
2. What does Samuel show us about the ideal leader of God's People? How does Samuel remind you of Jesus here?

Wednesday 8 June 1 Samuel 8

1. Was Samuel's opinion (v.6) justified? (Read Judges 8:22-23)
2. Read John 18:36. How is Jesus' kingship different in terms of the peace, justice and security he provides for us?

Thursday 9 June 1 Samuel 9

1. How do verses 15 & 16 help us understand all of Chapter 9?

Note: Similarly, we cannot presume to know God's will by observing events around us; we too need to turn to the word of God.

Friday 10 June 1 Samuel 10

1. What role does God's Spirit play in relation to Saul?
2. In v.17-19, why is God not happy with the desire for a king? What does this reveal about His intended relationship with his people?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

Passage: 1 Samuel 5 Character: What do you think?

1. In what ways do we see people openly mocking the idea that there is an all-powerful God sovereignly guiding this world?
2. Do you struggle with seeing people seeming to “get away with” their open defiance of God?

Note: In 1 Samuel 4 we see God's people presume on God's power, treating the ark as a weapon. They lose the battle, and the Philistines take the ark as a trophy. Eli's two sons are killed, and Eli himself dies upon hearing the news. God's word is fulfilled.

3. Read 1 Samuel 5
4. In 1 Samuel 4:21-22, a mother of a newborn child laments that God's glory has departed from Israel. How is God glorifying himself in 1 Samuel 5?
5. The Philistines wouldn't have known the Ten Commandments but the Israelites and we both do. (This story was recorded for both our benefits). What two commandments is God reinforcing for us here?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 2

6. In 1 Samuel 8 we see the people asking for a king, which displeases Samuel and is a rejection of God as their king. Read 1 Samuel 8:6-8 and 8:19-20. Bearing this in mind, what do you think the whole ark story is displaying to the people and us? Alternatively, why do you think the ark story is included here?

7. God's judgement and punishment of defiance is not always as swift as it is in 1 Samuel 5. How should it shape how we look at the world today though?

8. Read Colossians 2:15 and then the following quote:

All this happened a long time ago. It is, however, part of a pattern. This is how it is with defiance of God. For a time people get away with it, and it looks as though defying God is feasible. But it is not feasible. We cannot but hear this story alongside another story, which is about the greatest of all God's defeats over his enemies. It was when Jesus died on the cross. That was the moment in the history of the world when defiance of God had "got away with it." God's Christ, God's Son, was nailed to a cross, executed in weakness. When you look at the cross, who is the defeated one? As Jesus was crucified, it was like the ark being taken captive. Who was the victorious one then? But early on another morning something had happened in the tomb where they had laid him, which leaves the surprise in the temple in Ashdod far behind. And the Bible tells us that the apparently defeated one was in fact the powerful victor. To defy God is as stupid as it sounds, and far more stupid than it often looks. Don't do it.¹

9. PRAY: Knowing God's ultimate victory pray for those with whom you can share the gospel. Pray they will come to have Jesus as their king so they won't pay the price of defiance.

¹ John Woodhouse, *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2008), 110.

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 3

Monday 13 June 1 Samuel 11

1. How is the grace of God displayed in this chapter?
2. How does this positive start raise expectations for Saul's kingship in the future, and how would we expect it all to play out?

Tuesday 14 June 1 Samuel 12

1. This is a high point for God's people, but what does Samuel's recollection of history suggest will happen after this?
2. How are verses 20-25 a word for us today?

Wednesday 15 June 1 Samuel 13

1. What was Saul's great mistake in this chapter?
2. What does this teach us about obeying the Lord's commandments & trusting in him even in dire circumstances?

Thursday 16 June 1 Samuel 14

1. Do you think v.6 is teenage bravado or good theology?
2. How does the Ark narrative (ch.4-7) help you decide?
3. How should this shape our view of God's rule over this world?

Friday 17 June 1 Samuel 15

1. What do v.22-23 tell us about the danger of outward religion when compared to inward obedience?
2. Does God's refusal to forgive in v.25-26 disturb you?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

Passage: 1 Samuel 10 & 11 Character: Saul

1. As a community of God's people we have a desire and are formulating plans to plant more and more churches around Adelaide. The first four have been successful. How do you think we would cope if one failed and was shut down?
2. Read 1 Samuel 10:1-8
3. What do you make of verse 7? What do you think Samuel was suggesting Saul do after these signs were fulfilled? Hint: read verse 5 again, noting that Gibeah is well within Judah and is Saul's birthplace and where he reigned from as king. What does the Philistine presence suggest?
4. Read 1 Samuel 10:9-16
5. Did Saul clear out the Philistines from Gibeah? What kind of start is Saul off to?
6. Read 1 Samuel 10:17-26
7. What do verses 17-19 tell us about how God viewed this establishment of a monarchy?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 3

8. How would you describe Saul's performance in verses 20-26?
Take particular note of v.26 in relation to verses 5 and 7.

9. Samuel still seems to be clearly in control of events (see v.25.)
What does this suggest about the nature of the kingship of
God's people?

10. Read Chapter 11

11. Given the less than ideal start of Saul's kingship in Chapter 10,
what does Chapter 11 tell us about the grace of God and
God's commitment to establishing His kingdom?

12. Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. How is God's king supposed to
be different from those of the nations around them?

13. Where should we place our hope, even in our failures, as we
seek to see many more brought into God's kingdom today?
What role does the word of God play in our life together?

PRAY: Acknowledge our trust in God that He will build his kingdom.

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 4

Monday 20 June 1 Samuel 16

1. What is the great contrast between Saul and David in v.14-23?
2. What is the great evidence we have today that God has chosen us to be part of His people forever?

Tuesday 21 June 1 Samuel 17

1. How does David summarise the problem in verse 26?
2. David's faith in God's covenant promises leads to action. How do good theology and trust in God shape your decisions?

Wednesday 22 June 1 Samuel 18

1. What is the key to David's success in battle (v.14)?
2. As we seek to share the good news of Jesus and make Disciples, what is our greatest comfort? (see Matthew 28:16-20)

Thursday 23 June 1 Samuel 19

1. How do we see God's sovereignty on display in this chapter?
2. How does it comfort you to see how God's purposes are never thwarted and how he protects those who love him?

Friday 24 June 1 Samuel 20

1. Jonathon is the heir to the throne by birth, David by God's Choice. What then strikes you as odd about their friendship?
2. How should our loyalty to Jesus be like Jonathon's to David?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

Passage: 1 Samuel 12 Character: Samuel and Saul

1. How do you understand the link between our 'free will' and the sovereignty of God?
2. Read 1 Samuel 12:1-7
3. Would you be a little nervous at this point if you had heard this as a sermon intro? Why do you think Samuel establishes his own righteousness at this point?
4. Read 1 Samuel 12:8-19
5. What do you think the point of this truly devastating sermon was? What was God displaying about himself in verses 17-19?
6. I'm sure you've heard people say the God of the Old Testament is angry and violent and in the New Testament all love and grace. Read 1 Samuel 12:20-25. How would you use this text to argue against this?
7. Why do we know God will not ultimately reject his people (v.22), and how should this comfort us today?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 4

8. What is the interaction between people's 'free will' and God accomplishing his sovereign purposes? Are God's plans ever thwarted by the sin of His people?

9. How would you sum up the roles of prophet, king, the people and the word of God, now that Israel is a monarchy? (See verses 13-14 and 23-24)

10. How does Jesus now fulfil the roles of prophet and king? (He's high priest as well of course!)
 - Some verses to check out are: Romans 8:34, John 6:68

11. How might we encourage one another to persist in obedience to 1 Samuel 12:24 and continue to turn from verse 25?

PRAY: Thank God that his sovereign will is done despite the sin of His people. Pray for the things discussed in the last question and ask for God's Spirit to work powerfully in your heart.

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 5

Monday 27 June 1 Samuel 21

1. Read Mark 2:25-28
2. How does Jesus use the story here in 1 Samuel 21 to illustrate the true purpose of the law?

Tuesday 28 June 1 Samuel 22

1. Should we be unnerved by the many who are martyred today for obedience to our king Jesus? How should we respond?
2. Read Psalm 52. How should this guide us?

Wednesday 29 June 1 Samuel 23

1. How do we see David acting at least as the model king here?
2. Go back and read 1 Samuel 3:1. How does Chapter 23 show how much things have changed?

Thursday 30 June 1 Samuel 24

1. How do David's relationship with and trust in God shape this encounter? How should we do the same with our enemies?
2. Read Matthew 5:43-48 and pray.

Friday 1 July 1 Samuel 25

1. Do you think David would have been over-reacting and sinful if he had carried out his plans in verse 34?
2. How did God act to 'deliver him from evil'?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

Passage: 1 Samuel 16 Character: David

1. We probably know better, but what circumstances cause you to be concerned that God's kingdom is going down the tube?
2. Read 1 Samuel 16:1
3. How does this one verse display God's preparedness to provide for His people when things look their worst?
4. Read 1 Samuel 16:2-5a
5. Samuel, of all people, should have not doubted God's word and feared for his life, yet God is extremely accommodating. What does this reveal about God's character and our ability to bring all our fears and concerns before God?
6. Read 1 Samuel 16:5b-7
7. Samuel is a shining light in 1 Samuel, but even he cannot be trusted to choose rightly without being given God's wisdom. As God restrains Samuel from being 'trigger happy' with his horn of oil, what do we learn about God?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 5

8. Read 1 Samuel 16:8-13
9. What strikes you about the way Jesse obviously thought about David and how God viewed him?

10. This event happened at a time of great national crisis: Saul had just been rejected as king (see 1 Samuel 15:26). How should this passage comfort us when we see God's people lurching from one crisis to the next?

11. Read 1 Samuel 16:13-23 (yes we are re-reading v.13)
12. What is the stark contrast we are meant to note here?

13. How much should we praise God that all believers now have God's Spirit within them?

PRAY: Give thanks that God's sovereign guidance, taking David from the fields to the king's side, still guides us today. Give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit.

PERSONAL READING – WEEK 6

Monday 4 July 1 Samuel 26

1. How does Abishai misread the events before them in v.8?
2. What dangers do we face when we act on gut instinct, or on what we call 'direction from the Spirit,' without considering the word of God?

Tuesday 5 July 1 Samuel 27-28:2

1. What is the big surprise in this passage?
2. Do you think David ever could have been king of Israel if he had ended up marching against his own people?

Wednesday 6 July 1 Samuel 28

1. What is Saul's biggest problem here (see v.6)?
2. Do you think we rightly value the great blessing it is for us never to be without the word of the God?

Thursday 7 July 1 Samuel 29 & 30

1. David has himself in a pickle here, but even amidst all this he has the word of God still (see 30:8) which is a stark contrast to Saul. What does David do when all looks lost (see 30:6)?

Friday 8 July 1 Samuel 31

1. How is chapter 31 a good book end for all that has happened in 1 Samuel so far? How does it leave you emotionally?
2. How lost are we in this world without the word of God?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 6

Passage: 1 Samuel 23 Character: David

1. Many of us will already have faced some pretty difficult challenges in life. How has God strengthened you to endure through these times? Can you attest to times of refreshment from God that have been a real help?
2. Read 1 Samuel 23:1-6 then 1 Samuel 3:1. How much have things changed so far in 1 Samuel and what has been the key to this change?
3. Read 1 Samuel 23:7-29.
4. Whose responsibility was it really to carry on the anti-Philistine crusade to save the city of Keilah?
5. How disheartening then do you think David would have found God's reply in verse 12?
6. How did God display his faithfulness to David despite this, as shown in verse 14 as well as verses 26-29?

BIBLE STUDY – WEEK 6

7. We could easily say that David has God's protection and God's word and that should be enough for him. (Sounds very evangelical doesn't it?) What further source of encouragement does God give David during this difficult time?

8. Assuming you picked Jonathon's friendship (v.16) what does this tell you about God's care for David and indeed for us?

9. How has God blessed you through the encouragement of faithful friends in the past?

10. How can you be a blessing to others who are going through difficult times?

PRAY: Thank God for his providential guidance of our lives even through the tough times. Pray that God would use our community and friendships with others to be a blessing, especially those on the fringes who might not be blessed with many faithful friends like Jonathon.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Woodhouse, John. *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*.

Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 2008.

Other great books that I haven't quoted from but found extremely useful and would recommend as library additions are:

Keddie, Gordon J. *Dawn of a Kingdom - The message of 1 Samuel*

Welwyn Commentary Series. Hertfordshire, England:

Evangelical Press, 1988.

Davis, Dale R. *The Word Became Fresh – How to preach from Old*

Testament Narrative Texts. Ross-Shire, Scotland:

Christian Focus Publications, 2006.

FEEDBACK

I'd really appreciate feedback on the series, how helpful you found it and any suggestions for improvement. If you are able please send any feedback via email to:

matt.lehmann@trinity.asn.au

Feedback on each aspect of the series would be helpful:

SERMONS

1. Do you think they were faithful to God's word?
2. How engaging were they?
3. Did you feel they were applicable to your life?

BOOKLET

1. How helpful were the daily readings and questions?
2. Were the studies helpful?
3. Would you use them again if they were produced in future?

OVERALL

1. Did the series help you grow in your relationship with God?
2. Do you have a better understanding of how 1 Samuel fits into the bigger picture of the Bible and points us to Jesus?

Any other comments would be welcome.



Holy Trinity Church 2011