

1 Samuel Lesson 1 Historical, Political and Religious Background

Pray: Before you begin lift your heart to God and ask for the Spirit's help as you read the passage and work through these questions in His divine presence and you certainly will be given understanding.

Background Information

Author and Title: The author of 1 Samuel is unknown. The title of "Samuel" refers to the key figure of Samuel. He was the last judge of Israel and a prophet. He established the monarchy in Israel by anointing first Saul and then David as king.

Date: Unknown. Most scholars believe it was written not long after David's monarchy.

Key Themes in 1 Samuel :

- The connection between our obedience and our relationship to God
- God opposes the proud and exalts the humble
- Despite human evil, God is working out His purposes in history
- Kingship in Israel and God's plan to one day raise up an anointed divine king

Genre : "Genre" defined: A class or category of artistic endeavor. Examples of biblical genre are the epistles, Old Testament narratives, the gospels, wisdom books, poetry, prophecy and apocalyptic books. The genre of 1 Samuel is an historical Old Testament narrative. It is part of the story of the ongoing history of the nation of Israel. From this nation would eventually come God's chosen savior, Jesus Christ. The book focuses on the three characters of Samuel, Saul and David. All three transition Israel from a nation of tribes ruled by judges to a unified kingdom ruled by King David. King David is the type of the true King, Jesus Christ who will come through David's line.

Historical, Political and Religious Context of 1 Samuel

In Genesis 12:2 God makes a covenant with Abraham and promises him He will make him into a nation and will give that nation the land of Canaan. . That nation is the nation of Israel. The promise is passed on through Abraham's children who eventually must go to Egypt due to a famine in the land of Canaan. In Egypt they multiply and become slaves of Pharaoh. In the book of Exodus we read that God delivers the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and makes a covenant with them at Mt. Sinai. God met Moses on the mountain and gave him the 10 commandments and various laws for the nation of Israel. The new nation was to be a theocracy with God as their king.

1. What was the people's response to all the words God had given to them through Moses?
Exodus 24:3
2. It did not take long for the people to disobey. What did they do when Moses returned to the mountain and which commandments did they disobey? Ex 32:1-8 Exodus 20:1-6

The people, after 40 years of wandering in the wilderness due to their disobedience and unbelief, are now ready to conquer the land that God had promised them. Moses gathers them together and gives them a review of their history and God's law for them. (Deuteronomy). God expected the people to obey His Word when they entered and occupied the land.

3. Read through Deuteronomy 6: 1-15 What did God expect of the people when they conquered and lived in the land He would give them?

a. In regards to their relationship with Him:

b. In regards to His Word:

4. We have learned that God is a God who is faithful to his covenant and merciful to his people even when they don't deserve it. What do you learn of the faithful, covenant keeping God and his dealings with his people in the following verses: Deut. 4:31, Joshua 23:14, Psalm 103: 8-11, Lamentations 3:21-23

Application: How can you apply what you just learned about God to your own relationship with Him?

5, Joshua, Moses' successor, now led the Israelites into the promised land (Book of Joshua). Eventually, as they obeyed the Lord, being faithful to the covenant, they were able to conquer most of the promised land. What happened to the next generation after Joshua died? Judges 2:6-13

6. A pattern of rebellion, repentance, and deliverance occurs over and over throughout the book of Judges. In general how is the moral climate in Israel described. Judges 17:6, 21:25 ? Compare these two verses with Deuteronomy 6:18 What did the Lord expect of them when they lived in the land?

7. According to Judges 17:6, and 21:25 what was the political situation in the land?

Application: How can you apply the situation in Israel as stated in Judges 21:25 to mankind without Christ? How does the rule of Christ in a Christian's life make a difference in the "moral climate" of that person's life?