

Refine Women's Ministry  
**David: King for God's People**  
**Introduction: Samuel and Saul**  
January 10, 2018 by Kim Peelen

David is our Bible study topic for the next 12 weeks, specifically the events leading up to his taking the throne. Our primary Biblical source is 1 Samuel, but David's story is also in 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Chronicles, and, of course the Psalms. Most of us are familiar with David's amazing exploits: slayer of Giant Goliath, composer of many Psalms, mighty warrior, and King of Israel. Hopefully our time in God's word will help transform David from a character in Sunday School stories to a living, breathing, struggling, human who desires to obey the One True God no matter the cost and establish him as a fellow friend to encourage us in our own faith journey.

David models the intentional journey that Paul describes in our theme verse Ephesians 4:1-3: *I therefore, a prisoner for the LORD, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* In order to better understand David, we will first study the culture and historical setting in which he lived.

**David in Old Testament Chronology**

Source: **The MacArthur Study Bible**, Introduction to the Bible

The Old Testament (English, not Hebrew) is organized into categories:

**The Law:** Genesis through Deuteronomy

**History:** Joshua through Esther – *1 Samuel included here*

**Wisdom:** Job through Song of Solomon

**Major Prophets:** Isaiah through Daniel (based on quantity written)

**Minor Prophets:** Hosea through Malachi

After the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Twelve Sons of Jacob) in Genesis, the Bible records Israel's history:

**Exile in Egypt:** 430 years

**Exodus and Wanderings:** 40 years

**Conquest of Canaan Under Joshua:** 7 years

**\*Era of Judges:** 350 years

**\*United Kingdom of Israel Under Saul, David, and Solomon:** 110 years

**Divided Kingdom of Judah and Israel:** 350 years

**Exile in Babylon:** 70 years

**Return and Rebuild the Land:** 140 years

\*Samuel is the last judge and anoints the first 2 kings of Israel

## Historical Setting of 1 Samuel: Time of Transition

As First Samuel opens, Elkanah's barren wife Hannah is earnestly praying for a child. The birth and life of her firstborn son, Samuel, forms the framework around which the nation of Israel moves from a collection of tribes struggling spiritually under the governance of judges to a united nation under strong, godly monarchy enjoying God's blessing and favor. First and Second Samuel were considered one book in early Hebrew manuscripts, but later divided into two by the translators of the Greek version (Septuagint, LXX) and kept by later translations up to today. The events of 1 and 2 Samuel cover 135 years, occurring about 1105 BC (birth of Samuel) to about 971 BC (last words of David). Samuel lived 1105 – 1030 BC; Saul ruled Israel 1052 to 1011 BC, and David was king 1011 to 971 BC.

### Government of Israel: Last Two Judges are Eli and Samuel

When Samuel is born, Eli is the current judge of Israel and high priest in charge of offering sacrifices in Shiloh (1 Samuel 1:3, 24; 2:11,27-29; 4:18). After Hannah weans Samuel, she dedicates him to the LORD where he ministers before Eli the priest in house of the LORD (1 Sam. 2:11). By this time, Eli's two priestly sons have a sordid reputation *as worthless men; they did not know the LORD and the custom of the priests with the people. . . Thus the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for the men despised the offering of the LORD (1 Sam. 2:12-17)*. Eli judges Israel forty years and Samuel serves beside him as his assistant in his last years.

As Samuel trains in the house of the LORD, he earns a godly reputation as he *was growing in stature and in favor both with the LORD and with men (1 Sam. 2:26)*. Eventually, *all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba (north to south) knew that Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the LORD. And the LORD appeared again at Shiloh, because the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel at Shiloh by the word of the LORD (1 Sam. 19-21)*. Like judges, God raises up prophets to be His mouthpiece to speak His commands and retell God's history to the people. If any of the words of the prophet do not come true, then the LORD has not spoken through him (Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Judges 6:8). Samuel's life affirmed God's call on his life. After Eli and his two sons die on the same day, Samuel becomes the judge of Israel and he *judged Israel all the days of his life. He used to go annually on circuit to Bethel and Gilgal and Mizpah, and he judged Israel in all these places 1 Sam 7:15-16*.

### Spiritual Condition of Israel in Samuel's Time

The book of Judges describes the period of Israel's history after the conquest and settlement in The Promised land. As the events of 1 Samuel unfold, Israel is still under this form of government. In your groups, read and discuss the following:

Judges 17:6 and 21:25: *In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes.*

1. What was the law of the land when there was no king in Israel?

Judges 2:7-10: *And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. Then Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. . . And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.*

2. What happens in the nation of Israel after Joshua, his serving elders, and the eyewitnesses of the great work of the LORD die out?

3. How could this 'forgetfulness' be avoided?

*Judges 2:11 -15 Then the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals, and they forsook the LORD, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed themselves down to them; thus they provoked the LORD to anger. . . And the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He gave them into the hand of plunderers who plundered them; and He sold them into the hands of their enemies around them, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies. Wherever they went, the hand of the LORD was against them for evil, as the LORD had spoken and as the LORD had sworn to them, so that they were severely distressed.*

4. What results when people of Israel do not know the Lord or the works He has done for them?

5. What is the LORD's response to the people's disobedience? Is His response 'fair'? Why or why not?

*Judges 2:16 – 19 Then the LORD raised up judges who delivered them from the hands of those who plundered them. And yet they did not listen to their judges, for they played the harlot after other gods and bowed themselves down to them. They turned aside quickly from the way in which their fathers had walked in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do as their fathers.*

*And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them from the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed and afflicted them. But it came about when the judge died, that they would turn back and act more corruptly than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them and bow down to them; they did not abandon their practices or their stubborn ways.*

6. Describe the cycle of sin the people fell into during this time of the judges.

**Summary:** Israel's period of judges is a low-point in their history, both culturally and spiritually. At appropriate times, God introduces a godly judge to relieve Israel's oppression by their enemies and to call the people to obey God and enjoy His blessing. Samuel is one of those well-timed leaders God uses to return the rebellious Israelites to honoring the word of the LORD. It is interesting that God trains his faithful prophet and judge in Eli's household – the same one that produced his worthless, corrupt priestly sons Hophni and Phinehas! 1 Samuel 2:11-4:22 details the stark contrast between these two evil men and Samuel, the faithful, obedient servant of the LORD – a terrific study is in these chapters, but we must move on to the next important man that sets the cultural climate in David's life.

### **The People Demand a King**

Samuel fulfills his duties as judge and prophet faithfully and, as a result of his leadership, the people remove the foreign gods, confess their rebellion, and serve the LORD alone. Once again, God defeats Israel's enemies, *and the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel, the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites 1 Samuel 7:13-14.*

### **Lack of Godly Leaders Prompts Demands for a Different Kind of Ruler**

When Samuel was old, he appointed his sons judges over Israel, but sadly, his sons Joel and Abijah *did not walk in his ways, but turned aside after dishonest gain and took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah; and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."* Israel's leaders are not willing to be ruled by a judge's worthless sons again, so demand a different form of government: a monarchy. The demands of the people are consistent with this period of judges (recall Judges 2:19), and it displeases Samuel. As Samuel prays, the LORD says *"Listen to the voice of the people in regard to all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being king over them. . . however, you shall solemnly warn them and tell them of the procedure of the king who will reign over them 1 Samuel 8:2-9.*

Samuel warns the people of the pitfalls of having a king – from requiring their sons and daughters to serve him, paying taxes for his upkeep, and even confiscating their servants and flocks and fields – but they refused to listen. The LORD instructs Samuel to listen to their demand and appoint a king (1 Samuel 8:11-22).

### **The LORD Chooses Saul as King**

God divinely orchestrates the meeting of Samuel with His choice for king of Israel and informs Samuel that He will send *a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over My people Israel; and he will deliver My people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have regarded My people, because their cry has come to Me. When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, "Behold, the man of whom I spoke to you! This one shall rule over My people" 1 Samuel 9:16, 17.* Scripture describes Saul: from the tribe of Benjamin,

whose father is a mighty man of valor named Kish, *a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people* 1 Samuel 9:2. Israel's first king is striking in appearance. Samuel anoints the surprised Saul after he arrives in town and foretells the events that will occur over the next several days, including *"the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you mightily, and you shall prophesy with them and be changed into another man. It shall be when these signs come to you, do for yourself what the occasion requires, for God is with you. And you shall go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down to you to offer burnt offering and sacrifice peace offerings. You shall wait seven days until I come to you and show you what you should do"* 1 Samuel 10:6-8.

### **Saul Installed as King before the People**

Samuel calls for a gathering of the people at Mizpah where he formally reveals God's choice for Israel's first king. However, at the dramatic moment he is to select Saul from among the tribe of Benjamin, he is missing from his family group. The LORD reveals that *he is hiding himself by the baggage. So they ran and took him from there, and when he stood among the people, he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. Samuel says to all the people, "Do you see him whom the LORD has chosen? Surely there is no one like him among all the people."* [I sense a bit of sarcasm in Samuel's words.] *So all the people shouted and said, "Long live the king!" Then Samuel told the people the ordinances of the kingdom, and wrote them in the book and placed it before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, each one to his house* 1 Samuel 10:21-25. Israel's new form of government needs a new set of laws, which God reveals to the faithful last judge of God's people - a dramatic transition!

### **Saul's First Victory as King**

An Ammonite leader harasses some Israelites of Jabesh-gilead who seek Saul's help to fight them. The Spirit of the LORD comes upon Saul and he organizes an attack force that successfully defeats the enemy. Some of the Israelites want to put to death townspeople who did not support Saul, but Saul forbids it and declares, *"Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today the LORD has accomplished deliverance in Israel."* Samuel instructs the people to travel to Gilgal where in another ceremony they *made Saul king before the LORD in Gilgal. There they also offered sacrifices of peace offering before the LORD; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly* 1 Samuel 11:13-15. A good start for the new king.

### **Samuel's Call to Obedience**

Even with Saul's first victory and giving God the credit, Samuel pleads with the people, *"You must not turn aside, for then you would go after futile things which can not profit or deliver, because they are futile. For the LORD will not abandon His people on account of His great name, because the LORD has been pleased to make you a people for Himself. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and right way. Only fear the LORD and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, both you and your king will be swept away"* 1 Samuel 12:21-25.

## Saul's First Disobedience to the LORD's Command

Later, Philistines assemble to retaliate against Israel after Saul's son Jonathan attacks their garrison. The men of Israel come to Saul seeking his leadership to combat the enemy. Samuel had instructed Saul to wait for him to arrive in Gilgal for 7 days; but when Samuel is delayed, Saul decides to offer the burnt offering himself in order to keep the people from scattering from him. Just as Saul completes the burnt offering, Samuel arrives and asks what the king has done. He answers, *because I saw that the people were scattering from me, and that you did not come within the appointed days* [it's your fault, Samuel, not mine], *and that the Philistines were assembling at Michmash, therefore I said, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not asked the favor of the LORD.'* *So I forced myself and offered the burnt offering* [I REALLY struggled against this sin, so please excuse me from guilt]. *Samuel said to Saul, "You have acted foolishly; you have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, for now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not endure. The LORD has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has appointed him as ruler over His people,* [God has selected David as the next king already] *because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you" 1 Samuel 13:7-14.*

## Saul's Second Rebellion to the LORD's Command

In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel gives Saul the LORD's specific instructions to completely destroy Amalek: *do not spare him; but put to death both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.* This tribe had opposed the Hebrews when they escaped Egypt and the LORD foretold His judgment on them and God wanted Saul to execute their just punishment. Saul humanely warns a group of innocent people living among the Amalekites to leave before his attack; then he utterly destroys all the people but spares Agag the Amalekite king. In addition, the best of the sheep, the oxen the lambs and all that is good is spared, but everything despised and worthless is destroyed.

The LORD informs Samuel of Saul's action, which distresses the prophet, and he cries out all night to the LORD. When Samuel meets Saul, the king declares, "Blessed are you of the LORD! I have carried out the command of the LORD." Samuel rebuffs the king and asks why he hears noises from sheep and oxen. Saul shifts blame and rationalizes his actions: ***They*** [not Saul] *have brought them from the Amalekites, for the people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God* [not Saul's God]; ***but the rest*** *we have utterly destroyed* [I obeyed most of the instructions].

Samuel is not fooled as he gives God's view of Saul's 'obedience'. *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.* Using the forbidden spoil as an offering to the LORD does not turn the disobedience into a righteous act! Samuel continues rebuking Saul: *"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."* Three times Saul begs Samuel to forgive him and go with him to worship the LORD and three times Samuel restates that because Saul rejected the word of the LORD, so the

LORD has rejected Saul from being king over Israel. The two men do worship together one last time before the people, then Samuel returns home to Ramah and Saul to Gibeah. *Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, for Samuel grieved over Saul. And the LORD regretted the He had made Saul king over Israel 1 Samuel 15:35.* The king whom the people begged God to give them is quickly disqualified from office by pride and disobedience to the LORD.

**Summary:** Although we did not discuss David directly in our introduction, the lives of Samuel the prophet-judge and Saul the first king of Israel are foundational to the culture in which David lives and will eventually rule as Israel's second king. Already we see God's sovereign will to have David rule as king, even though Saul will continue to rule for many more agonizing years. Samuel instructs the people how to adjust to their new form of government, including sternly warning them to obey the commands of the LORD and to not go after false gods. Will the people heed his words?

### **Resources**

The MacArthur Study Bible, New King James Version, 1997

Precept Upon Precept: 1 Samuel – God's Search for a Man After His Own Heart, 2013

### **Homework for Week 2**

1. Read 1 Samuel 1-4. Record your thoughts on Samuel's training to be a leader in Israel.
2. What do you think life was like living in Shiloh with Eli and his two worthless sons?
3. What influence in Samuel did Hannah and Elkanah have even though their son left home as a very young boy?
4. How can Samuel's upbringing help you prioritize your home and family?
5. Read 1 Samuel 14 to 16 to observe Saul's style of rule. Briefly record examples that show he is obedient to the LORD.
6. Record instances where Saul's judgment is questionable or even wrong. What kind of character is Saul displaying through how he acts as king? Is it God-honoring or exalting himself?