

## **LOOKING FOR A LEADER**

<b>Study 1</b>	<b>Eli &amp; Sons</b>	<b>1 Samuel 2</b>
<b>Study 2</b>	<b>A Son is Born</b>	<b>1 Samuel 1</b>
<b>Study 3</b>	<b>The God who Sees, The God Who Calls</b>	<b>1 Samuel 2 &amp; 3</b>
<b>Study 4</b>	<b>The Heavy Hand of the Lord</b>	<b>1 Samuel 4-6</b>
<b>Study 5</b>	<b>The Leader Israel Needs/Wants</b>	<b>1 Samuel 7 &amp; 8</b>
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## **Background**

The book of 1 Samuel follows on from Judges.

Israel are in the promised land, but have failed to fully conquer it. Because of their disobedience, foreigners are still dwelling among them and causing them trouble (Judges 2:1-3).

There is no centralized leadership. Rather God has raised up leaders as required in times of crisis.

The book of Judges recounts a descending spiral: Israel turns from God, is oppressed by enemies, calls out to God for help and is delivered through a judge, only to turn away from God once more.

Israel needs leadership that will draw them wholeheartedly back to their God. The book of 1 Samuel takes us on a quest to find that leader.

## **Study 1: Eli & Sons**

### **Read 1 Samuel 1:3**

1. Who are we introduced to, where are they and what are they doing?

### **Read 1 Samuel 2:12**

2. What are we told about Eli's sons?
3. These men are priests who are sons of a priest. How is it possible that they do not know the Lord?
4. How do **Romans 1:21, 25, 28** help us understand what this means?

### **Read Leviticus 3:1-5; 7: 28-36**

5. What was the priests' job?
6. What were their rights as provided by God?

### **Read 1 Samuel 2:13-17**

7. How were Eli's sons treating the Israelites?
8. How does God feel about this?

**Read 1 Samuel 2:22-25**

9. What else do we learn about Hophni and Phinehas?

10. What do we learn about Eli?

**11. *The warning in verse 25a is very serious. Is this still true for us today? (See also Romans 8:31-34 and Hebrews 10:26-27.)***

**Read 1 Samuel 2:27-36**

12. What has God done?

13. What have Eli and his sons done?

14. Why is Eli included in this judgement? (See also **1 Samuel 3:13**)

15. What will God do to  
i. Eli's family?

ii. Israel?

**16. *What implications are there here for the leaders of God's people today?***

## **Study 2: A Son is Born**

### **Read 1 Samuel 1:1-8**

1. What do we learn about the members of this household?
  - a. Elkanah
  - b. Peninnah
  - c. Hannah
2. How does Hannah feel about her situation?

### **Read 1 Samuel 1:9-11**

3. What does Hannah do about her situation?
4. What vow does she make on her son's behalf? (See Numbers 6:1-8)

***5. Have you ever felt so desperate about a situation? What did you do?***

### **Read 1 Samuel 1:12-18**

6. What assumption does Eli make?
7. Why do you think Hannah defends herself?
8. Does Eli's blessing matter? What difference does it make to Hannah?

***9. Have you ever been in a situation where the prayers of God's people have been a great comfort and encouragement?***

**Read 1 Samuel 1:19-28**

10. What does it mean for the Lord to remember? (See also Genesis 30:22, Exodus 2:24-25)

11. What is your impression of Elkanah and Hannah?

***12. Have you ever made a vow to the Lord? Did you keep it?***

13. Given God's track record in giving boys to barren women (Sarah, Rachel, Manoah's wife), what expectations might we have of Samuel?

14. The next barren woman we meet in the bible is Elizabeth (See Luke 1:5-17). What role did her son, John, have in God's salvation plan? (See Luke 1:67-80.)

### **Study 3: The God Who Knows, The God Who Calls**

1. The time has come for Hannah to leave her precious son at the Tabernacle with Eli the priest. If it were you, how would you pray?

#### **Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10**

2. What does Hannah pray about her experience?
3. What does she pray about Israel's experience?
4. What does she pray about God's character?

#### **Read Luke 1:46-55**

5. How does Mary's prayer echo Hannah's?

***6. How would our prayers be different if these were our model?***

#### **Read 1 Samuel 2:11; 18-21; 26**

7. What picture are we given of Samuel?

## **Read 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1a**

8. Samuel has grown up serving in the tabernacle. In what sense does he still not know the Lord (v7)?
9. What can we say about Samuel's character from verses 2-10?
10. If your first encounter with the word of the Lord was this (v11-14), how would you feel?
11. In verses 15-18, how does Samuel respond to the word of the Lord? How does Eli help him respond properly?
12. Compare verses 3:19-4:1a with 3:1. What change has taken place for Israel? Who has brought about that change?
- 13. Reflect together on the ways God's word comes to us today. (See Hebrews 1:1-3; 1 Peter 3:10-11; Colossians 3:16.)**
- 14. Discuss how we can help one another respond properly to it.**

## **Study 4: The Heavy Hand of the LORD**

### **Read 1 Samuel 4:1-9**

1. What happens to the Israelites in the battle?
2. What question do they ask in verse 3? Why do you think they ask this?
3. Why do they send for the ark of the covenant of the LORD? What does it represent for them?
4. When the ark arrives what is Israel's response? Why?
5. When they hear of it, what is the Philistines' response? Why? What do they know of God?
6. What do you expect to happen next?

### **Read 1 Samuel 4:10-11**

7. What does happen in the next battle?
8. Given the significance of the ark (See Exodus 25:10-22, Numbers 7:89), and what we know of Hophni and Phinhas who accompanied it, should this be a surprise?

### **Read 1 Samuel 4:12-22**

9. What news is brought to Shiloh?
  
10. What are the responses of
  - a. The town?
  - b. Eli?
  - c. Phinehas' wife?
  
11. The Israelites have been slaughtered, their priests are dead and the ark of the LORD has been captured! What is God teaching Israel?
  
- 12. *"The glory has departed from Israel." Where do we see the glory of the Lord? (See John 1:14; John 17:1-5; Romans 8:17-18)***

### **Read 1 Samuel 5 (ref Map 1)**

13. Though funny to us, these events were not funny for the Philistines. What is God teaching them?

### **Read 1 Samuel 6:1-12**

14. What insight is shown by the Philistine priests and diviners in verses 3, 5 and 6?
  
15. What test do they set for God? Why?

**Read 1 Samuel 6:13-7:1**

16. How do the people of Beth Shimesh respond to the presence of the ark at first?

17. How do they respond later? Why?

***18. What do we learn about the character of God from this whole episode? How does he deal with his enemies? How does he deal with his people?***

***19. How are we able to face this holy God? (See 1 Corinthians 6:11.)***

***20. How can we encourage each other to keep responding properly to our holy God? (See Hebrews 12:28.)***

## **Study 5: The Leader Israel Needs; The Leader Israel Wants**

### **Read 1 Samuel 7:1-6**

1. How long was the ark of the covenant at Kiriath Jearim before the people of Israel sought the LORD?
2. What do you think Israel's spiritual state might have been during this time?
3. Once the people cried out to God, what did Samuel call on them to do?
4. Why was this necessary before they could hope for deliverance from their enemies?

***5. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8-10. Is this still the right response to God?***

### **Read 1 Samuel 7:7-17**

6. Apart from the outcome, what is different this time the Philistines attack?
7. Israel has Samuel as their prophet, priest and judge. How is life for this generation described?
- 8. What can we learn as God's people about the kind of leaders we need?***

**Read 1 Samuel 8:1-5**

9. What problem arises for Israel?
10. What is the proposed solution?
11. Why might this seem like a good plan?
12. Do *you* think this is a good plan? Why? (See also Deuteronomy 17:14-20; Judges 18:1, 19:1, 21:25 and Judges 8:22-23.)

**Read 1 Samuel 8:6-22**

13. Does Samuel think this is a good plan? Why?
14. Whose leadership are the people really questioning?
15. Why does God say "yes"?
- 16. Israel was feeling insecure, so they asked for a king like the nations. Can you think of a time when you have felt insecure and have sought a solution "like the nations"?***
- 17. How can we help each other to trust the leadership of our King Jesus?***

## **Study 6: Long Live the King**

### **Read 1 Samuel 9:1-10**

1. How are we introduced to Saul?
2. What qualities do we see?

### **Read 1 Samuel 9:11-24**

3. How do we see the Lord's hand at work?
4. What more do we learn about Saul?
5. In what ways does Samuel honour Saul?

### **Read 1 Samuel 9:25-10:16**

6. Look carefully at 10:1. Who has anointed Saul? Is God giving them exactly what they asked for?
7. Why do you think there are such elaborate signs?
8. Why do you think Saul doesn't tell his uncle everything?

### **Read 1 Samuel 10:17-27**

9. What is Samuel's role?

10. What is your impression of Saul by now?

11. Describe the response of the people.

**Read 1 Samuel 11:1-15**

12. What do the words and actions of the people of Jabesh reveal about their regard for Saul, their king?

13. What does Saul do?

14. What does God do?

15. What do you think of Saul now?

***16. Through this unlikely man, God has defeated the enemy of his people, extended grace to former rebels and reaffirmed the rule of his kingdom. How well does this foreshadow God's work in your life through Jesus?***

***17. We can see God's hand at work in all the details of this story to bring about his purposes. God continues to bring about his purposes for his world (see Ephesians 1:9-11; Romans 8:28-30). What reassurance and comfort is this to you?***

## **Study 7: The Kingdom Renewed**

Samuel has been prophet, priest and judge for God's people Israel. He's not exactly retiring, but leadership is now being handed over to the king they asked for.

### **Read 1 Samuel 11:14-12:25**

1. What challenge does Samuel issue to the people in verse 3? Is there anything against him?
2. Samuel has invited the people to testify against him. In verse 7 he turns the tables and testifies against them! What is the purpose of the history lesson in verses 6-11?
3. What has this generation done (v12)?
4. Why is this foolish?
5. What choice now lies before them (v14-15)?
6. What is the purpose of the sign of the storm (v17)?

7. What is the people's response?
  
8. What do they need to do?
  
9. Why do they not need to be afraid (v22)? Is this surprising?
  
10. What will Samuel's ongoing role be?
  
11. What is the final warning?
  
12. Saul is barely mentioned in this narrative. Whose kingdom is being renewed?
  
- 13. Consider Jesus' kingdom. He is the Lord's anointed (Acts 2:36) who calls us to obedience (John 14:21). Do you need to renew his kingdom in your life?**

## **Study 8: A Foolish King**

When Samuel anointed Saul king, and God's spirit came upon him, he was supposed to go to Gibeah and deal with the Philistine outpost there, then go to Gilgal (1Samuel 10:5-8). He didn't.

### **Read 1 Samuel 13:1-15**

1. What is the situation? What are Saul's options?
2. Do you sympathise with Saul?
3. When challenged by Samuel ("What have you done?"), how does Saul seek to justify himself?
4. What makes Saul's actions "foolish"?
5. What are the consequences?
6. ***Can you think of a time in your life when fear has led to disobedience?***

### **Read 1 Samuel 13:16-22**

7. What insight do these verses give us into Israel's situation?

The Philistines have 3000 chariots, 6000 charioteers and innumerable soldiers. The Israelites have 600 men, no weapons and are mostly hiding in caves!

**Read 1 Samuel 14:6,11-23**

8. Who demonstrates leadership?
9. Where is his confidence (v6)?
10. Whose victory is it (v23)?

**Read 1 Samuel 15:1-6**

11. Who's in charge?
12. What is the instruction?
13. What do you expect Saul to do?

**Read 1 Samuel 15:7-10**

14. What did Saul do? What did he fail to do?
15. What is the Lord's response?
16. What is Samuel's response?

**Read 1 Samuel 15:12-34**

17. What is Samuel's accusation?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. Look at Saul's defense. Does he really think he has obeyed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
19. What admission does he make in verse 24?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
20. What is the consequence?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
21. How does this story leave you feeling?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 22. Discuss together how disobedience is really idolatry (v23).***
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 23. Jesus always obeyed his Father's voice (Philippians 2:5-11, John 14:23-24) and calls us to do the same (John 15:9-11). How can we help each other do this?***

## **Study 9: The Lord's Anointed**

1. Recall 1 Samuel 13:14, and 15:28. What do we already know about the next king?

### **Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13**

2. To get from Ramah to Bethlehem Samuel would have to go through Gibeah where Saul lived. How does this help us understand Samuel's objection?
3. What did Samuel see in Eliab?
4. How does God see? (v7)
5. What do we learn about David?
6. As he is anointed, what happens?

### **Read 1 Samuel 17:1-11**

7. What's the situation?
8. What is Israel's response?
9. Recall 1 Samuel 2:10. What has gone wrong?

### **Read 1 Samuel 17:17-19**

10. How did David come to be there?

### **Read 1 Samuel 17:24, 26, 32-37, 45-47**

11. How does David's response differ from Saul and all Israel? Why?

***12. Read 1 Corinthians 15:57 and Ephesians 2:8-9. What victory has Jesus won? How do we benefit?***

We fast-forward a few years. David has risen to prominence in Israel but is now on the run from King Saul (more on this in the next study). David and his men have set up a community in Ziklag, in the South-West of Israel, near Philistine territory.

### **Read 1 Samuel 30**

13. Reflect on David's character. What qualities do we see (ref verses 6, 7-8, 11-13, 24)?

14. What is his perspective on their victory? (v23)

*In his commentary on this chapter, John Woodhouse writes:*

*[David] was a man who found his strength in God. He listened to God's voice and eagerly obeyed. God gave him decisive victory over his enemies, enabling him to save his people. He rules in the knowledge of God's grace and therefore with equity and generosity. To be counted among the friends of this king was to be blessed. He was a king who gives.*

***15. Reflect together how good it is to be counted among the friends of King Jesus, great David's greater son.***

## **Study 10: Saul vs David**

### **Read 1 Samuel 18:5-16, 28-30**

1. Why is Saul jealous and afraid?

### **Read 1 Samuel 19:1a, 15; 23:7-8, 14; 24:1-2 (Ref Map 2)**

2. What does Saul do?

### **Read 1 Samuel 24**

3. What is David urged to do?

4. What does David do?

5. What does he say?

6. What change do we see in Saul from the start to the end of this episode?

7. What does Saul now know (v20)



## **Study 11: Best Friends Forever**

### **Read 1 Samuel 18:1-4**

1. David has just led the Israelites to victory over Goliath and the Philistines. We could reasonably expect to see rivalry and even hatred between Saul's son and heir and David. What do we find instead?
2. What is the significance of Jonathan giving David his robe and armour?

### **Read 1 Samuel 19:1-7**

3. Where does Jonathan place his allegiance? How does he express this?

### **Read 1 Samuel 20:1-23**

4. What is the threat?
5. What is the plan?
6. What does Jonathan want?
7. What covenant is made?

**Read 1 Samuel 20:24-42**

8. What is the outcome?
9. What truth does Saul speak (v31)?
10. What is Jonathan's response?

***11. Jonathan's love for David took him into conflict with his father. Do we love Jesus like that? (See Luke 14:26.)***

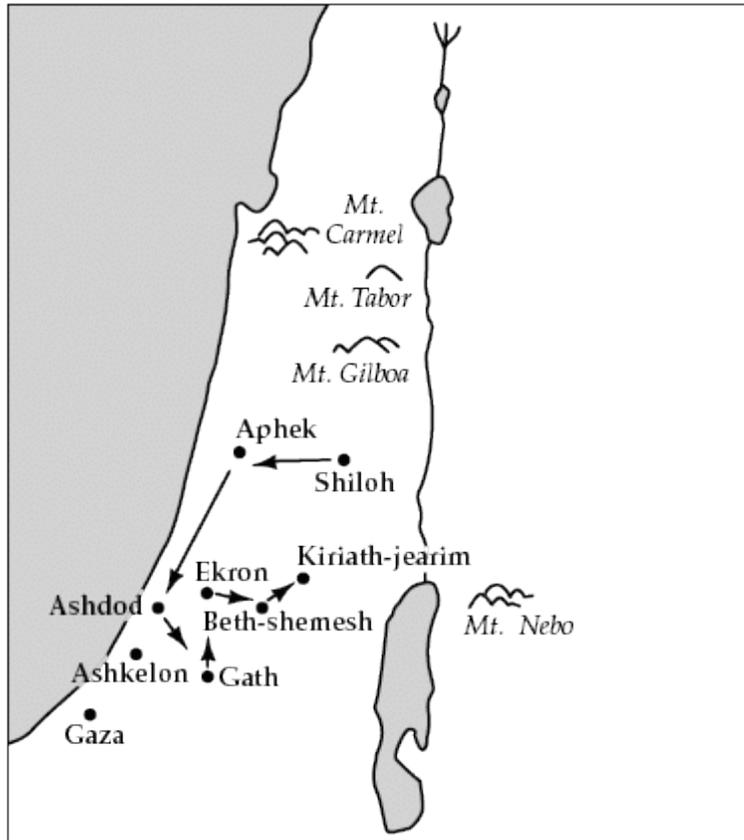
**Read 1 Samuel 23:15-18**

12. What does Jonathan do?
13. How do his words help David find strength in God?

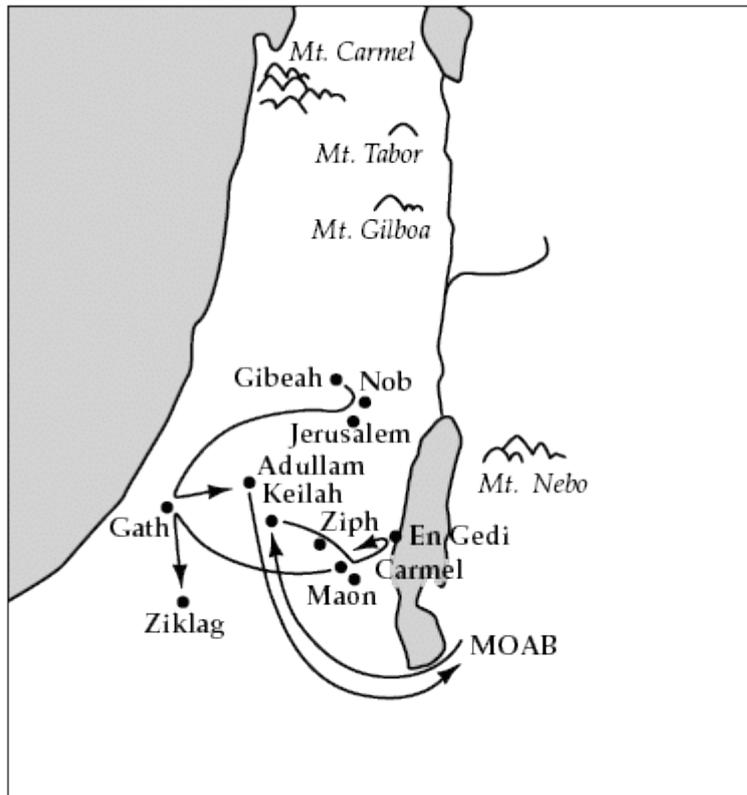
***14. Jonathan told David not to be afraid because God would not let his enemy prevail. Do we need to remind each other of this? (See Matthew 10:26-31)***

***15. Have you had friends who have helped you find strength in God? How can we be that kind of friend to others? (See 2 Corinthians 4:16-18)***

***16. In this series we've studied the leadership of Eli, Samuel, Saul and David. Share one way this series has helped you appreciate our King Jesus more.***



**MAP 1**



**MAP 2**

