

## 1 Samuel 1:1-20

The books of 1 & 2 Samuel begin with the unique circumstances of Samuel's family and birth. It is the end of the era for judges in Israel and the transitional period prior to the monarchy. At that time, the national and spiritual life of Israel was centered in Shiloh. Sadly, it was a time when corrupt religious leaders failed to model holiness and the people were lacking spiritual leadership. God was ready to intervene in Israel's history by first intervening in the life of a pious, suffering woman.

1. Who were the main characters presented in this opening chapter? Describe their character and actions.
2. What were the many difficulties Hannah experienced? How did this cause her grief?
3. What did Hannah ask the Lord to do? What tension do you notice between Hannah's cry and her devotion to the Lord (vv. 10-11)?





4. What vows or promises have you made in life? How is God honored when these are fulfilled (cf. Deut. 23:21-23)? Conversely, how is he dishonored when these are not fulfilled (cf. Lev. 19:12)?

5. How did Hannah demonstrate submission to God? How does her example challenge you?

6. In what areas of your life do you need to dedicate to the Lord? How difficult is it for you to fully surrender these things to God?

**PRAYER TO THE POINT:** Praise God for hearing our prayers! Ask God to help you deepen your trust in him as you surrender every area of your life to Christ. Ask God to help you daily submit to his will and to joyfully worship him.

## 1 Samuel 2:1-11

Hannah's act of dedicating Samuel to the Lord also elicited a prayer of thanksgiving for what the Lord had done. Hannah voiced that God has power to answer prayer and reverse one's fortunes. He alone is great and worthy of praise. It must be noted that a similar prayer was expressed centuries later when Mary was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus (Luke 1:46-55). In both cases, we see women of humility exalting God for his greatness and grace.

1. Hannah's psalm is a result of seeing her experience as something allowed by God. Describe the elements of her prayer. What did she say about God's character, purpose, and the way he works?
2. Why did Hannah mention "enemies" in her psalm (vv. 1, 10)?
3. How did she realize a broader picture of God's grace in light of her own specific situation?















## 1 Samuel 4:1-11

When dealing with the aftermath of a bad decision, some have replied, “Well, it seemed good at the time.” More often than not, the plan didn’t even look good on paper. Why? Usually, assumptions are made without considering the cost or questioning motives. Now look at Israel’s predicament when battling the Philistines. Sadly, they did not inquire about God’s will, yet God’s will was being played out.

1. What superstitious action was employed by the leaders of Israel following their defeat (vv. 2-5)? Why did the leaders act this way? What would have been a better option?
2. How did the Philistines respond to Israel’s second battle plan (vv. 5-9)?
3. What was the result of Israel’s foolish action (vv. 10-11)?



## 1 Samuel 4:12-22

In looking at last week's text (1 Samuel 4:1-11), we saw things go from bad to worse. The rest of the chapter reveals that things went from worse to worst! One could rightly say that Eli's house and all Israel hit rock bottom. Death and despair...it's not a happy sight. Life is certainly about choices and we reap what we sow.

1. What four-fold message did the Benjaminite runner give to Eli and inhabitants of Shiloh (vv. 12-17)?
2. What was Eli's primary concern when knowing bad news was imminent? How did this affect him (v. 18)?
3. Why did Eli and the townspeople react the way they did? What did the loss of the ark of God mean to them?



## 1 Samuel 5

As we saw in 1 Samuel 4, Israel was having a string of devastating losses. They hit rock bottom and now seemed spiritually, politically, and emotionally ruined. Yet all seemed good on the victor's side as they proudly took the spoils of war. Unfortunately for the Philistines, their celebration would be short-lived.

1. Where did the Philistines transport the ark of God and what did they do with it (vv. 1-2)? What did they assume about it? What surprise did they encounter the very next day (v. 3)?
2. What is the symbolism of Dagon's posture and predicament (vv. 3-5)? What spiritual reality was being highlighted?
3. How were the Philistines of Ashdod affected by the ark's presence and how did they assess their terrible situation (vv. 6-8a)?



## 1 Samuel 6:1-7:2

The Philistines were probably overjoyed when they conquered Israel on the battlefield, but now they encountered the power and destructiveness of Yahweh and wanted nothing to do with this devastation. Though they saw the actions of God, they couldn't quite figure out how best to respond. All they knew was that they needed to get the ark out of Philistia.

1. How long was the heavy hand of the Lord upon the Philistines? What did they do to remove God's wrath from their presence (6:1-12)?
2. Even when the Philistines knew God was punishing them, why do you think they still failed to turn to him (cf. Rev. 9:20-21)? How does this occur with people today?
3. How did the Israelites of Beth-Shemesh respond to seeing the ark return (6:13-16)? Yet what tragedy befell some of them (6:19-20)? Why did this happen (cf. Num. 4:20; 2 Sam. 6:6-7)?















## 1 Samuel 10:9-27

The three signs that Samuel prophesied to Saul had come to pass. Saul was probably wondering how his week got turned upside down as he returned home after searching for his donkeys. He wasn't the only one searching for something - Israel was also searching for their desired king. God would point them in the direction of his choice for their longing.

1. What happened when Saul met the group of prophets (vv. 10-13)? Why did this occur? What is meant by the question in verse 11?
2. What kind of transformation did Saul have (v. 9)? How did he become a different person? How did this prepare him for what God ordained?
3. When speaking to his uncle, why did Saul conceal his private encounter with Samuel (vv. 14-16)?







## 1 Samuel 11:12-15

Saul's accession to the throne had three steps: designation (10:17-27), demonstration (11:1-11), and confirmation (11:12-15). In today's passage, we'll look at how Saul was finally confirmed as Israel's first king. It wasn't without a bit of controversy, though. We see how the new king dealt with his critics and how this would impact the community.

1. Why was there discord in Israel after their victory over the Ammonites (v. 12; cf. 10:27)? What worldly action did people seek and to whom did they complain?
2. What did Saul say in response to this (v. 13)? How did he help them gain a better perspective?
3. What does this indicate about his character and leadership at this point in his life?











## 1 Samuel 13:15-22

It's much easier to praise God and focus on him when times are pleasant. This is certainly not the case in 1 Samuel 13 in regards to Saul and Israel. Israel needs rescuing and it doesn't look like the king will accomplish it this time. Things went from bad to worse with no hope in sight.

1. What was the result of Saul's disobedience (vv. 15-18; cf. 10:5-8)? What were the Philistines doing that created havoc and fear?
2. Why was Israel so dependent upon the Philistines (vv. 19-22)? How did the Philistines keep them subjugated and always at a disadvantage?
3. How dire and hopeless was Israel's situation? How do you think this affected their psyche?







## 1 Samuel 14:24-46

Jonathan's bold faith in God to fight against the Philistines provided the momentum Israel needed to witness God at work. Unexplainably, Israel routed the Philistines in the most mismatched contest. Of course, it wasn't the disaster predicted by both sides - "the Lord saved Israel that day" (v. 29). Despite this truth, Saul acted to the contrary and decided to take control.

1. What rash oath did Saul make and how did it affect his army (vv. 24-28)? How has Saul "troubled the land" (v. 29)?
2. In this whole affair, who did the soldiers obey and who did they disobey? Why did they act this way?
3. Do you think Saul already knew the identity of the "guilty" one (v. 39)? What do you suppose about their relationship to God and to one another?















## 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Even though Saul has been rejected as king, God does not altogether discard kingship from Israel. His plans will not be thwarted. God's sovereign choice leads his prophet Samuel to anoint a seemingly unlikely candidate. We discover that the new king will be selected not by human standards, but by divine purpose.

1. How and why did Samuel mourn for Saul (v. 1; cf. 15:11, 35)?
2. What did the Lord command Samuel to do (vv. 1-3)? How did Samuel struggle yet eventually obey (vv. 2-5)?
3. How did Samuel naturally interpret who would possibly be the next king (vv. 6, 8-11)? What supernatural truth did God reveal to Samuel about this (v. 7)?























## 1 Samuel 19

Once again, Saul's hatred toward David hits new lows while the friendship between Jonathan and David is strengthened. Things are getting crazy in the king's court as Saul seeks various ways to destroy David. God cares for those he calls and this is seen in the way he protects David from the schemes of Saul.

1. This chapter has four sections that depict four times David was delivered from Saul (vv. 1-7; 8-10; 11-17; 18-24).

*How was David threatened?*

*How was David delivered?*

- a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d.
2. How did Jonathan intercede on David's behalf (vv. 1-7)? How does Saul respond?
  3. In what ways do Michal's actions resemble those of Rachel (vv. 11-17; cf. Gen. 31:19, 34-35)?



## 1 Samuel 20:1-23

It's official - David is now on the run. Saul has shown his true colors and will stop at nothing to kill David. Under such grievous circumstances, the covenant between Jonathan and David is renewed and reinforced. No matter what happens, they will be there for each other.

1. What was David trying to explain to Jonathan that was beyond Jonathan's understanding (vv. 1-3)?
2. Why do people who faithfully follow God experience open antagonism from others? Is that always a bad thing (cf. Matt. 5:10-12; Jas. 1:2-4)?
3. What extreme measures does David take in order to remain safe (vv. 1-11)? What purpose does David's ruse serve?



## 1 Samuel 20:24-42

Jonathan learns what the reader has already firmly grasped - Saul is out of control and bent on destroying David. While the narrative plays out in predicted ways, the twist involves the emotions of all three characters described. Their words matter and what they do reveals where they stand with God and one another.

1. Why is David's absence a big issue in Saul's mind (vv. 24-27)? How does Saul respond to the news (vv. 28-33)?
2. How is Jonathan stuck in the middle between his father and his friend? How is his situation a tricky one to navigate?
3. In this chapter, what incredible contrast exists between Jonathan and Saul doing God's will?



## 1 Samuel 21

David is on the run from Saul. As he arrives at various locations, he encounters people who wonder why he is there. The two particular conversations noted in chapter 21 show a change of behavior in David that reveals the stress of his predicament.

1. How do David's actions show a natural self-interest (vv. 1-9)? What do you think he was trying to accomplish?
2. How do you have a tendency to act on your own strength before turning to the Lord? When does this happen to you?
3. Why does David choose to flee to Gath? What is so puzzling about this decision (vv. 8-9; cf. 17:23)? How does the phrase "the enemy of my enemy is my friend" apply here?



## 1 Samuel 22

David is certainly resourceful as he travels to various locales while Saul is in hot pursuit. The tension rises as Saul confronts those he accuses of supporting David and we discover the dread of Saul's vengeance.

1. Who joins David while he is in exile (vv. 1-2)? Why would these individuals ally with David?
2. How does David show care for his family (vv. 1-5)? Why does he bring them to Moab (cf. Ruth 1:4; 4:13-17)?
3. What seems to be Saul's pressing concern (vv. 6-8)? How does he employ passive manipulation on those around him?



## 1 Samuel 23

As often as Saul pursues David and entraps him, Yahweh continues to protect his anointed king-in-waiting. We see an obvious contrast as David acts more like a king of Israel than Saul does. Clearly, God's presence with David makes all the difference.

1. Despite being on the run, David goes to battle against the Philistines (vv. 1-6). Why does he do it? How is God leading him even after victory was achieved (vv. 7-14)?
2. Why is it important for you to seek the Lord regarding decisions? How do you "inquire of the Lord?" How does it challenge you to trust God?
3. How does Jonathan encourage David (vv. 16-18)? How do his words mirror David's earlier words to Abiathar (cf. 22:23)?























## 1 Samuel 29

There is no doubt David is stuck between a rock and a hard place - not in a cave this time, but between his host and his homeland. David is playing a dangerous game that could have disastrous consequences. Herein we see the working out of divine sovereignty and human responsibility.

1. Where was David's allegiance (vv. 1-11; cf. 27:2-6, 12; Ps. 31:14)? How was David caught in the middle?
2. What appeal did Achish make to the other Philistine commanders (v. 3)? How did they respond (vv. 4-5)?
3. How did Achish validate David's honor (vv. 3, 6, 9)? What command did he give to David (vv. 7, 10-11)?



## 1 Samuel 30

David and his men take a three-day, 50-mile trek from Aphek to Ziklag (which also explains why David is absent from Saul's impending doom on Mount Gilboa). As the narrative continues, we are reminded of the stark contrasts that existed between David and Saul (note events of chapters 15 and 28).

1. What did David discover upon his return to Ziklag (vv. 1-6)? Was this a consequence that God allowed? Why?
2. How did David and his men react to what happened (vv. 4-6)? How was his leadership skill tested?
3. When and how do you seek God's counsel (vv. 7-8)? How have you been strengthened by the Lord during difficult times (v. 6; cf. Ezra 7:28; Dan. 10:18)?



## 1 Samuel 31

What was prophesied by Samuel in 28:19 comes to fruition in chapter 31, albeit in a different manner than we expect. It truly is a tragic ending literally and literarily! It does, though, set the stage for the new anointed leader, one who has been waiting to fulfill God's appointment (cf. II Samuel). That moment cannot arrive until the chaos subsides and Saul exits the scene.

1. How bad was Saul's situation (vv. 1-3)? What command did Saul give to his armor bearer (v. 4)? What two reasons does he give for this request? What actually transpired (vv. 4-5)?
2. How does Saul's second request for death (v. 9) expose the hypocrisy of his first request (v. 4)? What was his real rationale for assisted suicide? How was Saul eventually dishonored in death (vv. 7-10)?
3. How did the men of Jabesh Gilead pay tribute to Saul (vv. 11-13)? Why did these men risk their lives to honor their dead king (cf. 11:1-11; 2 Sam. 2:4-7)?

