



St George North Anglican Church

1 Samuel Bible Study Series

Part 2 (studies 5-9)

July – September 2014

Overview

Israel is a nation in crisis. For too long every person did what was right in their own eyes (see the book of Judges).

Israel had an identity problem – who were they? And what future was there when set adrift in a sea of stronger nations with powerful kings and mighty armies? **Who is your king Israel?**

1 Samuel to 2 Kings is one of the great narratives of the Bible. As we delve into the story of Israel around 1050AD we will be reminded of Yahweh's faithfulness. We will also be reminded that He cares for the humble and is not like the kings of the world. What he sets out to do he accomplishes despite the rebellion of his children.

This is Israel's history but it is also the story of all humanity – inept leadership, abuse of power, self-interest, irresponsibility, abuse of the humble, nepotism and corruption. More importantly, YHWH is at the centre of achieving his purposes in David's family and ultimately in Jesus.

This series combines a sermon series, bible study series and reading program with the hope that we might thoroughly enjoy and grow from this wonderful part of the Bible. Our prayer is that we see afresh how desperately we all need to answer 'Who is your King?' with: Jesus!

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Leading this series in 1 Samuel

Latest version of these Studies

The latest version of this study guide is available from www.snac.org.au under SNAC -> Resources.

Using these studies for your group

The studies have been written to help you delve into the text of 1 Samuel, to ask what it means in that historical and biblical context and then to ask what it means in the light of Jesus for us.

You may be tempted to simply print and read out the questions but I would encourage you to take the time to prepare for your study in advance.

These questions serve as a guide but they are no substitute for your own preparation and thinking through the passages. In some of these studies there is far more material than you will need but in others it may run short.

As you prepare, keep the people in your group in mind and ask yourself: how can this part of God's Word push each of them along in maturity in Jesus? What applications are suited to this group of people from this part of the Bible? What questions will this group naturally have of this piece of text?

Commentaries

Group leaders may find additional commentaries to be useful as they prepare for the weekly studies. The following commentaries are recommended:

- "1 and 2 Samuel – Hope for the Helpless" by Andrew Reid
- "1 Samuel – Looking for a leader" by John Woodhouse

Program/schedule

Sunday	Passage to cover	Service Readings (Preachers may change readings but must notify the readers)	SUNDAY TOPIC/NOTES	Bible-study: passages	Bible-study subject	Reading program prior to following Sunday
13/07/2014	<i>Preacher's choice</i>	<i>Preacher's choice</i>	<i>KHC Celebration</i>	(various)	Israel's leadership crisis	<i>1 Samuel 1-2:11</i>
20/07/2014	1 Sam 1 & 2:11 Luke 1:26-38	1 Sam 1 & 2:11; Luke 1:26-38	Help for the helpless Hannah	1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-56	Hannah's Song	1 Samuel 2:11-5:12
27/07/2014	1 Samuel 2:12-4:1a	1 Samuel 3; Acts 13:16-23	Eli to Samuel: Passing the baton God's way	1 Samuel 4&5	Israel and the ark: FAIL	1 Samuel 6:1-8:22
3/08/2014	1 Samuel 8	1 Samuel 8; Mark 15:6-20	Israel wants a king	1 Samuel 6&7	God and the ark: SUCCESS	1 Samuel 9:1-12:25
10/08/2014	1 Samuel 9&10	1 Samuel 9; Matthew 16:21-28	Saul the king	1 Samuel 11&12	Saul's kingship	1 Samuel 13:1-16:23
17/08/2014	1 Samuel 13-15	1 Samuel 13; Hebrews 10:1-10	Saul fails as king	1 Samuel 16	David anointed	1 Samuel 17:1-19:24
24/08/2014	1 Samuel 17	1 Samuel 17:1-27; Hebrews 11:1-2 & 32-40	David versus Goliath	1 Samuel 18-19	David's success is Saul's paranoia	1 Samuel 20:1-23:29
31/08/2014	1 Samuel 20-21	1 Samuel 21; Matthew 12:1-8	David flees	1 Samuel 22-23	Saul pursues	1 Samuel 24:1-30:31
7/09/2014	1 Sam 24-26	1 Sam 24; Matthew 5:1-12	Saul versus David: portrait of two kings	1 Sam 27-30	David in exile	1 Samuel 31:1-2 Samuel 2:11
14/09/2014	1 Samuel 31 & 2 Sam 1-2	1 Samuel 31; Acts 13:26-41	Saul's death & David's response	n/a	<i>Social / Prayer / Topical</i>	Keep reading!

Study 1 – Leadership crisis in Israel

The objective of this study is to uncover the historical and theological background of Israel at the time of 1 Samuel. This study, more than others in this series, will involve investigation of multiple bible passages by the participants of your groups. Please adjust the amount and the way that you do your investigation in this study to suit the dynamics of your group. Please also allow plenty of time for prayer and don't forget to pray that our time in 1 Samuel will challenge us to serve the true King every day.

Find this study in part 1 of the notes.

Study 2 – Hannah's Song

In this study we will investigate Hannah's response to the Lord after he answered her prayer for a son.

Find this study in part 1 of the notes.

Study 3 – Israel and the ark: FAIL

In this study we will begin to look at a particular disaster in the history of Israel – the day God's people used the ark of God as if it was a weapon for battle. Today we will focus on the failure side from 1 Samuel 4 & 5. Next week we will look at the way God rescues the ark in chapter 6 & 7.

Please be aware that the ark narrative will be the focus for Bible Study whilst in the sermons at our various churches we will skip this narrative and focus on the kingship theme. Be sure to both attend your group and attend church so as not to miss any of the action!

Find this study in part 1 of the notes.

Study 4 – God and the ark: SUCCESS

In this study we see part two of the Ark narrative that we started last week. This time, rather than the Israelites losing the ark, we see God rescue the ark without the intervention of his people

Find this study in part 1 of the notes.

Study 5 - Saul's Kingship – 1 Samuel 11-12

In this study we see how the new King Saul will lead his people. In his first major test as a leader Saul wins the victory that Israel needs. However, the manner of Saul's leadership and victory raises serious questions about the viability of his leadership. Furthermore, Samuel speaking for God, lays out the consequences should Saul fail.

Getting started

A question that every leader must answer is this: "do the ends justify the means"?

For Christians, this question manifests in lots of ways. Discuss one or more of the following situations:

1. How hard should you push your friend to become a Christian?
2. If music appeals to our emotions, shouldn't we use background music in our church services to connect our message with people at an emotional level?
3. When we tell our stories about how we became a Christian, isn't it best if we give a detailed account of our former lives and the sin we turned from to show the power of God's forgiveness?

Read 1 Samuel 11:1-11

1. Before you focus on chapter 11, remind each other of Saul's anointing and the response of both the people and Saul after it happened at the end of chapter 10.
2. Summarise the awful situation that is going to be Saul's first leadership test. What does this situation suggest about the state of Israel at this time?
3. What might you expect Saul to be doing after having been anointed (hint: read Deut 17:14-22)? What was he actually doing?
4. What do you make of God's role in v6? Does this justify the way Saul motivates his troops in v7?
5. In Ephesians 4:26, Paul says 'in your anger do not sin'. As a Christian, what makes you angry? When have you failed to avoid sin in your anger and what advice do you have for yourself and others to avoid sin when next you face the same anger?

Read 1 Samuel 11:12-14

1. Verse 12 makes us think of the people who complained in 10:27. But who else in this passage had concerns about a King in Israel?
2. Where has Saul succeeded and where has he failed through this crisis?

Read 1 Samuel 12

1. Why does Samuel put himself on the line in v3?
2. We learn in 12:12 about one of the urgent reasons why the people demanded a king in chapter 8. Nahash was clearly a man to be feared (evidenced by his peace treaty terms in 11:2). Which kingship is really being reaffirmed in v13-15?
3. What is the purpose of the demonstration in v16ff?
4. What comfort is there for the sinful Israelites? And why?
5. What actions should the people take in response to God's kindness?
6. What comfort is there for sinful Christians? And why?
7. What actions should Christians take in response to God's kindness? Can you back this up with bible verses?
8. Thinking about the character of God in these chapters in Samuel, is it ever ok to sin so that good might result? (You may also like to read Paul's words in Romans 6:1-14).

Pray

Prepare for next Sunday by reading 1 Samuel 13:1-16:23

Study 6 - David anointed – 1 Samuel 16

Saul's leadership has failed. Once again the question of leadership in Israel is under scrutiny. This time God himself selects a king.

Getting started

If the content our movies and television is anything to go by, humanity has a messiah complex. List out a few 'messiah' fictional saviours in our culture (eg. Superman, Batman, Neo in the Matrix, Jack Bauer in 24 etc). Who is your favourite?

Why do you think we love shows with hero saviours?

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13

1. Samuel is mourning for Saul. Why? (Summarise recent events in 1 Samuel)
2. What is God asking when he tells Samuel to 'fill his horn'?
3. What is the difference between verses 16:1 and 8:22?
4. What is the basis of God's choice for a king? (Compare with Jeremiah 17:10 if time permits)
5. Does v12 suggest that God's choice isn't much different to the way the people chose?
6. Does 15:28 suggest God's choice is based on merit? If so, what merit?
7. What is the connection between the 'anointing' and the 'Spirit of the LORD'?
8. For Christians, the Spirit is also connected to an anointing. What are the characteristics of God's ultimate anointed one and how do they compare to both Saul & David? (eg. Mark 10, Phil 2)

9. The gift of God's Spirit was taken from Saul and given to David. Yet, for Christians, all have the privilege of God's Spirit living in them. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 and reflect upon the benefits of having God's Spirit in you today.

Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23

There is a very direct result for Saul in losing the Spirit of God. What is it?

Does Saul know about God's anointing of David at this point?

In what way does David become Saul's saviour?

Think it through

How can you use our human love of the 'hero' or 'saviour figure' to explain the gospel? In answering this question it would be good to think about:

1. What kind of saviours does the world choose and why?
2. What does this say about our basic problem with God?
3. How is God's saviour different to the world's saviours?
4. When Marvel's Avengers 2 and DC Comic's 'Superman versus Batman' come out in cinemas soon – what line will you have ready to start a conversation about the true saviour with your friend?

See who can come up with the best opening line!

Pray

Prepare for next Sunday by reading 1 Samuel 17:1-19:24

Study 7 - David's success is Saul's paranoia – 1 Samuel 18-19

In this study we stand as outsiders watching a train-wreck in progress. Saul's leadership is self-destructing. He rages against the Lord's anointed – David – but try as he might the Lord is watching over his chosen one.

Getting started

In this chapter David will escape difficulty after difficulty. It reminds us of Jesus' life where he was pursued throughout his ministry.

List out the groups who wished to see Jesus dead, some of the things they tried and their reasons?

So far....

1. Remind each other of the story so far and what conclusions would you draw about David versus Saul from the David versus Goliath battle?

Read chapter 18 & 19

(read the entire narrative to get a sense of the action and challenges for David)

2. What strange things stand out? What things are hard to understand?
3. David is under constant attack by Saul in these chapters. Why does Saul dislike David and how does it relate to the events of chapter 17?
4. Make a list of the ways that Saul tries to bring David down in chapters 18 & 19. In each case:
 - ⇒ What was Saul's intention?
 - ⇒ How did it fail?
 - ⇒ Who was loyal to David?
 - ⇒ How did David's actions compare with Saul's?

5. Throughout the narrative it appears that Saul is the one with the power & control. He is initiating his attacks upon David. However, the underlying spiritual reality tells a different story. What is the underlying spiritual story? List out the verses that support your case.

6. As we have noted, Jesus was pursued to his death by earthly forces. Much as Saul could not see the plans of God beyond his own self interest, the religious rulers of Jesus day missed the point of Jesus ministry. However, the Apostle Peter exposed the spiritual reality of those events. Read Peter's sermon in Acts 2:14-40.

What was the true spiritual story of Jesus life?

7. Reflect upon your own life as a Christian. What part does the spiritual reality of our lives play in the way you live day by day? (Time permitting: read Ephesians 6:10-20; Psalm 2)

Pray

Prepare for next Sunday by reading 1 Samuel 20:1-23:29

Study 8 - Saul pursues David – 1 Samuel 22-23

In this study we see Saul continue to pursue David. David is outcast and trusts God whilst Saul manages to reach new lows.

Getting started

What are the signs that a Christian person is starting to go off the tracks with their faith?

How do you know when they have given up altogether?

Read Chapter 22

Why might David feel he could go to Moab and get his parents shelter there? (Hint: think about his family history)

What do you think of Saul's emotional state at this time? (v7-8)

In what ways does David show his trust in God in this chapter?

In what ways does Saul show he no longer trusts God in this chapter?

Ahimelech was placed in a difficult position and it cost him his life. Speaking the truth in love to a brother or sister who has wandered away is a difficult thing to do.

⇒ What would motivate us to do such a thing?

⇒ And, do you think that we as a church are good at speaking the truth in love to each other even when it hurts?

Read Chapter 23:1-14

What is David's primary agenda and what is Saul's primary agenda in chapter 23?

What is noticeably different about the way each sought to achieve their agenda?

Which of David & Saul is acting more like the kind of leader the Lord wanted in Israel – and why?

Read Chapter 23:15-29

This final section of our study would make an excellent movie scene – especially if filmed from the top of the hill.

How does Saul seem to understand his situation? (v21ff)

Based on what we have read, summarise the state of the Israelite society at this time.

Division amongst God's people is always a terrible thing. As Christians, we are called to act in unity with one another. However, there are some types of behaviour amongst Christians that can never be tolerated. How do we decide where the line is between these two poles? What New Testament passages would you use to justify your position?

Pray

Prepare for next Sunday by reading 1 Samuel 24:1-30:31

Study 9 - David in exile – 1 Samuel 27-30

In this last study we will reflect upon the life of Saul and his time as King. We will read a larger section of the text and try to draw some big picture conclusions from the book of 1 Samuel.

Getting started

Have you seen the movie “Life is beautiful”? Set in world war II, it recounts the sad story of a Jewish man falling in love and having a child only to suffer terribly under Hitler’s policies. Yet, somehow in all this, he finds a way to protect his son a little and provide ‘beautiful’ ways to see life.

Sadly, however, life is not always beautiful and many people don’t find a way to see it as ‘beautiful’ in the midst of their own troubles.

Using what we have read and learnt in 1 Samuel:

- ⇒ Put yourself in Saul’s shoes. What is your life story? How do you feel?

- ⇒ Now put yourself in David’s shoes. What is your life story? How do you feel?

Read chapter 27

What do you make of David’s plan? Is it right for him to do this under God? If so, why?

Read chapter 28

This is a strange episode to our modern ears but it provides great insights.

- ⇒ What things strike you about the story?
- ⇒ Was Saul right to turn to this medium? (cf. Leviticus 19:28)
- ⇒ What is Samuel’s reponse to Saul’s question in v15? Is there anything new in this?

Read chapter 29-31

What things surprise you in this final narrative?

Imagine you were one of David’s loyal band of soldiers and you heard about Saul’s death. How would you feel?

Read 2 Samuel 1

What stands out about David?

Think it through

How would you assess Samuel having read the story of his life? How did he foreshadow Jesus?

How would you assess David as the new King of Israel, and a foreshadow of Jesus, so far?

Using the promises to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 as the measuring stick, when David took over as King, how was the nation of Israel fairing?

1 Samuel has been asking a question about 'leadership' amongst God's people. What lessons of 1 Samuel and leadership could you apply to the church today?

What is the same and what is different (and how) for the *average every day Israelite under David's kingship* versus *an average every day Christian under Jesus' kingship*?

Pray

Read

Don't stop reading now – 1 Samuel is best read as a part of the whole story from 1 Samuel until the end of 2 Kings.

So keep reading!