

BOOK-A-MONTH CLUB

~ June ~

1 and 2 Samuel

with Jeff Phillips

Background:

1 and 2 Samuel serves as a historical narrative that dives deep into the history of the Israelite nation. We pick up the story after the Exodus has already taken place. Israel over the generations is transforming from a nomadic tribal people who are constantly wandering to a sedentary nation with permanent homes and dwellings. They are yet strangers in a land that was forcibly taken by Joshua and the armies of Israel. While they may have conquered the land they are still far from welcomed into it.

Israel up to this point was primarily lead by Judges and Priests. There was no official hierarchy that resembled any of the other neighboring nations. It is during this time that we see a transition of leadership from the Priestly model; men who served as Priest, Judge, General, and President; to the more commonly found Kingship. During this time of transition we see the beauties of God's craftsmanship and presence in the life of his people, while at the same time witnessing some of the blunders of famous Israelite leaders. In this narrative it not only gives us a sense of our Hebraic roots but also serves as great lessons for modern life.

In this month we will attempt to go through both books which I believe really fit together as one continual narrative. In order to do this I feel the most appropriate way would be to study the main characters found within this wonderful story. We will follow the lives of Hannah, Samuel, Eli, Saul, and David and see how they fared in God's eyes and what we might find remarkably familiar about them in our own lives.

I. Hannah 1 Samuel 1-2:11

- A. To truly grasp the story of Hannah we must put her in her cultural setting as a woman in Israel.
 - i. Women were viewed as property.
 - ii. Children validated the existence of a woman, specifically if she could produce a male heir.
- B. Can you relate to Hannah's desire?
- C. The Lord "remembered her" in 1:19
 - i. Does it sometimes feel like the Lord has forgotten you?
 - ii. Does your prayer life resemble the prayer of Hannah before Eli at times?
- D. What was the deal Hannah made with God?
 - i. Is God a "deal maker"?
 - ii. Where else in the Bible does it seem that God negotiates with his people?
- E. If you made a "deal" or covenant with God, how hard would it be to follow up with it?
- F. Hannah's Prayer of Praise!!
 - i. 2:1-5
 - 1. Who is the subject of these statements, Peninnah or God?
 - 2. Both. Can you boast over your enemies while praising God at the same time?
 - ii. 6-10
 - 1. God is the subject of the action and always on the move in the lives of humanity.

II. Eli 1 Samuel 2:12-4

- A. Describe the differences that you see between Samuel and Eli's Sons?
- B. The Call of Samuel
 - i. Is it possible that "visions were rare" 3:1 because of the un-Godly leadership by Eli and his sons?
 - ii. Did Eli's response to Samuel's calling and the message from God surprise you?
 - 1. There seems to be sense of understanding on Eli's part that he knew what the message was and that the judgment was coming.
 - 2. Despite his inability to be a good Father and strong leader you see in Eli elements of faith. He never argued, disagreed, nor complained about the harsh nature of the punishment. God is God. Even in poor leadership we see elements of faith.
- C. What was Eli's punishment?
 - i. The loss of the Priesthood
 - 1. This was a familial right that was akin to the reign of a King. In essence, the poor leadership and unethical actions of his sons has dethroned Eli's family from the position and leadership.
 - 2. If you fail to recognize the blessings and positions that God has give you, you may find yourself losing that blessing. As my Mother would say, "move it or lose it"!

ii. His sons would die.

D. Is this punishment because he was a bad Priest or because he was a bad Father?

E. Fulfillment of the prophecy. Chapter 4.

i. God has not been the focus of Eli's life and now that Israel finds themselves in a desperate position against the Philistines Eli uses the proverbial "God Card" by bringing up the Ark of the Covenant to rally the troops and invite the presence of God.

ii. God can not be used merely as convenience.

iii. When Eli hears the Ark has been captured he falls over and dies.

1. Which upset Eli more, the message that his sons have died or that the Ark has been captured?

III. Samuel 1 Samuel 5-12

A. What similarities did Samuel and Eli have?

B. Why did Israel want a King?

C. If you were Samuel, would you take their desire personally?

D. Who were the Israelites truly rejecting?

i. Does God take it personally when we replace him in our lives for other Kings such as jobs, money, hobbies, etc...?

E. Read Dt. 17:14-20

i. The issue and the sin of Israel were not based on their request for a King. Having a King was God's desire for his people long before they requested it.

ii. The sin was not in the request but rather the motive behind the request.

F. Farewell to Samuel. 1 Samuel 12

i. Does Samuel seem jaded in his farewell speech?

ii. Did he say anything that was not true?

iii. 12:14 is the key for all nations, Churches, and families. The keys to having success and prosperity are if leaders will submit themselves to God and obey his commands.

iv. When confronted with the realization of sin, Israel asks Samuel to go and pray for them. Could you go to God on behalf of the very people who wanted to replace you?

v. Read 12:23 What does this verse imply about the importance of prayer in the life of a believer. Have you seen the prayer list in the bulletin lately?

IV. Saul

A. Anonymous Start. 1 Samuel 9-10

i. It is interesting to see the descriptors given to Saul and why he was chosen as the first King of Israel.

ii. Are there any traits that are missing?

1. His love for God and his commands!!

iii. Anonymous leadership is hardly leadership at all.

iv. A person can be named King but it maybe a responsibility they are not wanting. Hiding in the luggage is an auspicious start for the first King of Israel.

B. Rises to the Moment. 11-12

- i. Saul's confirmation as King is preempted by action.
 1. One may have a title or a claim but until those words or deeds have been followed up by action they are merely words.
- ii. What in your life has jumped started your faith into action?

C. Beginning of the end. 13-16

- i. Failure to humble yourself and fully submit to God forfeits leadership and blessings from God.

D. Jealousy and misguided faith. 17-28

- i. If people sang the song, "Saul has killed his thousands and David his tens of thousands" would you see how Saul could become jealous?
- ii. David was confident in the Lord and stepped up to the challenge and Saul had little confidence due to the fact that he had little faith.
- iii. Saul's son Jonathan was bold and compassionate in his leadership while his Father was not.
- iv. The threat that David posed to Saul was not merely of the political variety. David was everything that Saul inspired to be but never was able to courageously live up to. The source of the anger was not merely jealousy but also disappointment in himself.
- v. When desperate, people turn to the outrageous like Saul does in chapter 28.
- vi. When times are tough who do you turn to for direction and answers?

V. David. 2 Samuel

A. A nation divided

- i. An auspicious start! 1-4
- ii. By actions of honor and dignity, David wins the hearts of his adversaries. It is not by might or battle that most battles are won, it is by integrity and dealing with people in the right way.

B. Home!!! 5-9

- i. What does the manner in which David enters Jerusalem tell about his heart for God and worship? Do you reflect that attitude?
- ii. Did Mephibosheth deserve David's grace?
- iii. Did that grace make sense politically since he was in the line of Saul and the next rightful heir to the throne?
- iv. How does God's grace for you compare to the earthly senseless nature of David's gesture to Mephibosheth?

C. "Man after God's own heart." ?????? 11-20

- i. The Stages of David's sin.
 1. He "inquired" of Bathsheba
 2. He blatantly sinned
 3. He lied to cover his unfaithfulness.
 4. He murdered to hide it.

ii. Do David's stages of sin find any resemblance to how Satan works and tempts you?

D. Problems with the kids. 2 Samuel 13-19

- i. Despite the actions of his children, did David still love them?
- ii. Would you?

E. The End of a reign. 2 Samuel 20-24

- i. Pride is still rearing its ugly head in the life of David as he counts his fighting men.

The main difference in the life of David and Saul was not in the perfection of David's life. As we can see, his life was hardly perfect. The faith and the perfection of his heart in repentance is what we should aspire to follow. It is what brings David into close communion with his God and deservedly gives him the unofficial title of "man after God's own heart."