



Week 9 1 and 2 Samuel

Every Sunday evening at [Bible Explorer](#) we will explore the question

'What does this book from the Bible mean for us today?'

Introduction

1 and 2 Samuel – describe the founding of the State of Israel from the closure of the time of the Judges to the establishment of a United Kingdom 1000BC. Through historical narrative, archives and poetry the books focus on three key figures in the history of the Kingdom of God, a King Maker, and the first two Kings. Samuel – man of God prophetic and priestly leader, Saul – anointed King by Samuel whose reign begins with wonder and promise yet ends in fear and terror and David the specially chosen king who establishes the 'holy city' – Jerusalem.

SAMUEL

Two main themes: "Samuel went back to Ramah" – his Home : "The Lord is King!"

In the New Testament Samuel is spoken of as the last of the Judges by St Paul in Acts 13:20. He is designated the first of the Prophets by Peter in Acts 3:24 and is among the Hebrews 11 list of great OT men of faith. In the Old Testament he is Eli's successor to the Priesthood and Jeremiah considered him to be the greatest figure since Moses. (Jer.15:1)

What is it about this guy that is so special? Special Childhood and Adolescence 1Samuel Chs 1 – 4. Godly parents living in Ramah. Father Elkanah a pious Ephraimite with 2 wives –Penninah and Hannah. Samuel was the son Hannah prayed for when at Shiloh for the annual sacrifice and dedicated to the Lord for all his life. After weaning him at about 3 years, Hannah took him to Eli at Shiloh and for many years only saw him once a year, when she brought a little coat for him to wear – each one a size bigger! 1Sam 2 vv 20-21, 26 Reminds me of Luke 2:52 After Jesus had stayed behind at the temple.

Called by the Lord about age 12 Or 13: Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli and one night heard his name "Samuel!"The message was an uncomfortable one for him to convey to Eli, but he did it faithfully. Soon one still so young was already respected as a Prophet – one called by God: *1Sam 3:19-4:1a "The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and He let none of his words fall to the ground And Samuel's words came to all Israel."*



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So we have a young man who right from the beginning of his life was being taught that the Lord is everything is to be revered above all else and in all circumstances.
Or: "The Lord is King"

1 Samuel Chs 4,5 and 6 - This was a miserable time for Israelites. The Philistines were oppressing them. Eli's family dead. Priesthood discredited and Shiloh empty. The Ark captured by Philistines but returned to Kiriath-jearim and stayed there for 20 years. Samson probably judging during this time at Hebron & pulled the temple of Dagon apart at end of this period. Samuel went back to Ramah during this time, married and had at least 2 sons. He seems to have founded and supervised a community of Seers who spoke out the Word of the Lord at Naioth, which was very near home and he started judging at Mizpah.

1 Samuel Ch 7 - 20 years on, Samuel is probably in his forties and the people are at last recognising their poverty of spirit and circumstance. Samuel steps up to the plate and calls the people to National repentance and a Re-dedication ceremony at Mizpah. The people poured out (precious) water before the Lord to symbolise separation from sin; fasted, confessed and repented and Samuel prayed for them. Samuel designated Israel's Intercessor and Leader from here on. 1 Sam 7 v3 Call to "... rid themselves of foreign gods and idols and commit themselves to the Lord and serve Him only....." At subsequent threat of attack by Philistines, Samuel offers a whole burnt offering to the Lord of a suckling lamb – which is the work of a Priest – and a combination of his prayers and the Lord's thunderous intervention routed the enemy.

Samuel is always very conscious of God's part in these affairs, (The Lord is King!) and of the necessity of recognising His overall command of His people so he sets up a memorial stone at Mizpah/Shen and called it Ebenezer – "Stone of Help."

Next 20 years there was relative peace with the neighbours and Samuel concentrated on his calling as a Judge : 1 Sam 7:15-17 "....Samuel continued as judge *But he always went back to Ramah where his home was and there he also judged Israel and built an altar to the Lord.*"

Samuel's home at Ramah seems to me to be very important to him. His family friends and colleagues there must have given him strength and stability.



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1 Samuel Ch 8 So now Samuel is getting old. He tried appointing his sons, Joel and Abijah, to be judges at Beersheba but they turned out to be dishonest and unrighteous Israel's elders came to him at Ramah and demanded that Samuel appoint a King to rule them – after the example of the surrounding Canaanites. They were looking to other people for their rôle-models instead of looking to the Lord. Samuel is devastated – by his sons' apostasy and the people's backsliding. He feels really depressed; and his answer is to go to the Lord, his King. He prays and God's answer is in vv 7-9: 1Sam8 vv 7

Message for us as individuals and a Church – “..it is God people are rejecting ...”
Samuel was allowed to warn them of the price they will pay in conscription, taxation and serfdom” if they have a King in the Canaanite model. Everything in him cried out “The Lord is your King! But they wouldn't listen – they wanted a King to lead them into the battles they saw looming and Samuel acquiesces because God tells him to and empowers him to find the new King in spite of Samuel's own feelings on the subject. vv 21f:

'Everyone go back to his town' Samuel will have gone back to Ramah and actually seems to have gone on retreat to his college of Seers to prepare himself for recognising God's choice as the first King of Israel. This is the beginning of a tremendous change in the way Israel was governed as a nation. Samuel was supervising a transition from a tribal confederacy to a centralised Monarchy. Samuel had in his mind the ultimate Godly model for Kingship which can be found in Deuteronomy 17 vv 14-20. How well his first and second candidates for the position matched up to that ideal is the subject for our next two speakers!

Samuel really was a Great Guy! Favoured and Spiritually advantaged by Godly Parents and upbringing. Finding rest and relaxation in his home life. Carrying out a huge number of leadership rôles with practically nothing ever said against him he seems to have made no mistakes, though knowing the sorrow and frustration of family and nation not listening to experienced Godly advice.

Always living in the knowledge that The Lord is King!



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SAUL * Anointed * Transformed * Mistaken *

1 Samuel 9 – 15

Anointed

Saul is introduced to us as “an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites— a head taller than any of the others.”

Samuel anoints Saul as leader of the people and gives him a series of signs that will add weight to his authority to anoint him.

Saul then goes back to the fields to plough – he has no place, no meetings, no state visits. He is the first King and there is no clear role as yet.

Transformed

God changes Saul from a man guided by his servant as he looks for his donkeys, from a man who hides behind the baggage, into a leader of a nation. The shy and uncertain man has become assertive and decisive. God has awakened seemingly dormant possibilities in Saul but these qualities which are required of a leader can only be good if the decisions are right.

Mistaken

Saul fails to wait for Samuel to come and lead worship as instructed. It seems that Saul made a wrong choice and the consequences of that decision were long lasting and far reaching.

Saul makes an oath in battle that the men would fast. He fails to ensure that all the men know and his son eats honey unwittingly causing God to appear absent from the decisions Saul is seeking help on in battle.

When Saul and his army fail to carry out God’s instruction to completely destroy the Amalekites for their past treatment of the Israelites God is grieved that he made Saul King over Israel (1 Sam 15:35)

For us today – to be anointed, transformed but not mistaken

It is a difficult balance for those in leadership and those under authority to maintain a line that operates under God’s authority. How do we discern God’s path for us? Saul’s sins seemed fairly insignificant when compared with David’s yet he was the first to be anointed King and as such was more restricted. We might feel this is not fair but the people had rejected God as their king and a standard needed to be set. Think back to the price of a seemingly small bite out of a piece of fruit in the Garden of Eden. When we are given new tasks and challenges because we have asked God for more then we must expect to have the bar set high in our execution of that. What might that mean for us as we work through expectations of our new building project?



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DAVID

Snapshot: When God rejected Saul from Kingship David was anointed at Bethlehem (1 Sam 16:1-13). He ministers to Saul's depression (1 Sam 16:14-23) but after David defeats Goliath he incurs Saul's jealousy 'Saul has slain his 1000s and David his 10,000's.' David flees and is pursued by Saul but David ends up sparing Saul's life (24 and 26). After Saul's death David becomes King first in Hebron and then over the 12 tribes ruling from Jerusalem. Here he places the Ark of the covenant and the vision for a Temple gathers pace.

The Dreadful Deed: David has a unique place as ancestor forerunner and foreshadower of Jesus – Son of David. However in 2 Sam 11: David has an affair with Bathsheba and murders her husband Uriah the Hittite. After Nathan's rebuke David repents deeply (2 Sam 12) but the deed was done and the seeds of lust and deceit sown mar David's dying days as evidenced in the tragedies of Absalom's rebellion and the scheming of Adonijah and Solomon.

Words for us today:

- God is working his purpose out right in the midst of the mess of sin and selfishness
- God can still use us even when we mess up big time!
- God forgives