

# First Samuel

The Book of First Samuel describes the transition of leadership from judges to kings. Three characters are prominent in this book: **Samuel**, the last judge; **Saul**, the first king of Israel; and **David**, who is anointed in this book, but does not officially become king until 2 Samuel.

First Samuel covers the approximately 94-year period from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul (about 1105 B.C. to 1011 B.C.).

The simplest way to divide this book is into two parts: 1) Samuel, the Last Judge (1-7); 2) Saul, the First King (8-31). David will first enter the picture in ch. 16.

You could also break it down into three parts: 1) Samuel and the Last Days of the Judges (1-7); The Kingdom of Saul Until His Rejection (8-15); The Decline of Saul's Kingdom (16-31)

## Lesson 1

## 1 Samuel 1-3

### Birth of Samuel (ch. 1)

1. Who were Samuel's parents?
2. What was Hannah's prayer to the Lord? What vow did she make in connection with this prayer?
3. Was Hannah's prayer answered miraculously?
4. Did Hannah fulfill her vow? If so, when?
5. Why did Hannah's family go to Shiloh each year? See also Exodus 34:23 and Deuteronomy 16:16.

### Prayer of Hannah (2:1-10); Judgment on the House of Eli (2:11-36)

6. What were the sins of Eli's sons? (vv. 12-17, 22). On the sin described in vv. 12-17, see Leviticus 7:28-36 for what the law of Moses taught concerning this.
7. Did Samuel's parents lose touch with him after leaving him with Eli?
8. What punishment was to come upon the family of Eli?

### Call of Samuel (3:1-9); God's Announcement to Samuel (3:10-14); Effects of the Announcement (3:15-18); Samuel Recognized as New Leader of Israel (3:19-21)

9. Who did Samuel first think was calling him?

10. What announcement did God make to Samuel?
11. What had Eli failed to do in regard to his sons?
12. When Samuel revealed to Eli what God told him, what was Eli's reaction? What does this show about Eli's character?
13. What does the expression, "let none of his words fall to the ground," mean? (v. 19).
14. Where did God reveal Himself to Samuel?

## Lesson 2

## 1 Samuel 4-7

### First Battle of Ebenezer (ch. 4)

1. What was the result of Israel's first encounter with the Philistines?
2. Why did Israel think the presence of the ark of the covenant would help them? See Exodus 25:10-22, especially vv. 21-22, for help.
3. What order was given to the men in the Philistine army? (v. 9).
4. List the results of this second encounter between Israel and the Philistines.
5. What caused Eli's death?

### The Lord Demonstrates His Power over the Philistines and their god Dagon (ch. 5)

6. What did the Philistines do with the ark of the covenant?
7. What happened to Dagon? What was the significance of this?
8. What other problems did God cause for the Philistines?

### Return of the Ark (6:1-7:2)

9. How long was the ark in the country of the Philistines?

10. What did the Philistines send back with the ark?
11. How were some milk cows used to find out if God was behind the plague on the Philistines?
12. What happened to the men of Beth Shemesh who looked into the ark of the Lord?

Second Battle of Ebenezer (7:3-17)

13. Why did Israel receive God's help on this occasion?
14. What were the results of this battle?
15. How long did Samuel judge Israel? Where was his home?

### **Lesson 3**

### **1 Samuel 8-10**

The Request for a King (ch. 8)

1. Give the names of Samuel's two sons. What kind of men were they?
2. What reasons did the Israelites give for wanting a king? (4-5, 19-20).
3. For some background to this chapter, read Deuteronomy 17:14-20. After reading this passage, would you say that God was completely opposed to the idea of a king reigning over Israel?
4. Why was God displeased with Israel's request for a king? List several points.
5. What does Samuel tell the people they could expect of a king? (10-18).

Meeting of Samuel and Saul (ch. 9)

6. What were some outstanding features of Saul?
7. What circumstances led Saul to seek out Samuel?
8. How did Samuel know that Saul was the man God had selected to be the king?

The Appointment of Saul (ch. 10)

9. Three signs were given to Saul to show that his appointment was from God. What were the three signs?
10. What is the difference between what takes place in v. 1 and what takes place in vv. 17-27? Read carefully.
11. How did the people receive Saul?
12. Did everyone accept Saul?

**Lesson 4****1 Samuel 11-12**Battle of Jabesh Gilead (ch. 11)

1. How did this war with the Ammonites get started?
2. What had Saul done after his appointment as king? (vv. 4-5).
3. Did the Ammonite threat have anything to do with Israel's request for a king? (12:12).
4. How did Saul gather an army together? Do you remember anything similar to this in an earlier book?
5. What did some want to do with those who spoke against Saul? What was Saul's reaction to their plan?
6. Explain the significance of what takes place in vv. 14-15. Had Saul not already been made king? Think.

Renewal of the Kingdom at Gilgal (ch. 12)

7. What does Samuel tell the people about himself? (vv. 1-5).
8. What was the reason for Israel's troubles in the past? Clue: It is a one word answer.
9. Had God ever failed them when they turned to Him? List some of the specific things He had done for them (vv. 8-11).

10. What conditions would Israel have to meet to secure their future as a nation? (vv. 13-15).
11. Did Israel's evil request for a king mean that God would now turn His back on them?
12. What part would Samuel play in the nation's future?

## Lesson 5

## 1 Samuel 13-15

### Saul's First Act of Disobedience (13:1-15a)

1. What was the sin of Saul? (vv. 8-14). You may want to refer back to 1 Samuel 10:8.
2. What reasons did Saul give for his actions? (vv. 11-12).
3. How did this sin of Saul show his unfitness to be a king?
4. How was Saul's sin punished?

### Battle of Michmash (13:15b-14:46); Summary of Saul's Reign (14:47-52)

5. Who supplied the real leadership in this battle against the Philistines?
6. What curse did Saul put the people under? How was the foolishness of the curse shown? To answer this second question, see vv. 29-30 and then vv. 31-35.
7. How was Jonathan's life put in danger? What saved his life?
8. With whom did Saul build his army up? (v. 52).

## *SAUL'S REBELLION IN THE AMALEKITE WAR (CH. 15)*

### God's Order to Saul (15:1-3); Saul's Disobedience (15:4-23); Rejection of Saul (15:24-35)

9. What order was given to Saul?
10. What exactly is meant in v. 2? See Exodus 17:8-16.
11. How did Saul disobey the Lord?

12. Did Saul act as though he had done wrong?
13. When Samuel confronted Saul with the accusation, who did Saul try to blame?
14. According to v. 22, can anything really take the place of obedience?
15. Was Saul's confession genuine? Support your answer.

## Lesson 6

## 1 Samuel 16-17

### Anointing of David (16:1-13); Saul and David Brought Together (16:14-23)

1. Answer the following questions about David.
  - a. Who was his father?
  - b. Where was David from?
  - c. What tribal territory was this city in?
  - d. How is David described? (v. 12).
  - e. What was his "occupation"?
2. For what two reasons was Samuel sent to Bethlehem?
3. Explain the Lord's statement in v. 7. Does this mean that the man of God's choice could not be a handsome man?
4. What happened when Samuel anointed David?
5. What departed from Saul and what came upon him?
6. List the characteristics of David found in v. 18.
7. How did David help Saul's condition?

8. How did Saul feel toward David?

David and Goliath (ch. 17)

9. What description is given of Goliath and his armor? (vv. 4-7).
10. What challenge did Goliath issue to the Israelites?
11. Did David show any signs of being scared of Goliath?
12. What in David's past experience convinced him that he could defeat Goliath?
13. What effect did David think his victory over Goliath would have on the other nations? (vv. 46-47).
14. What weapon did David take into battle?
15. What effect did Goliath's death have on the Philistines?

## **Lesson 7**

## **1 Samuel 18-20**

David and Jonathan (18:1-4); David's Growing Fame (18:5-7); Saul's Reaction (18:8-16); Saul Plots Against David (18:17-30)

1. What were Jonathan's feelings toward David?
2. What were the women singing that displeased Saul?
3. How did Saul try to kill David?
4. After that failed, what did Saul then plan to do about David?

Jonathan's Intercession for David (19:1-7); Hostility Resumed (19:8-10); Escape With the Help of Michal (19:11-17); Escape at Ramah (19:18-24)

5. Who alerted David that Saul planned to kill him?
6. What was the result of Jonathan's talk with Saul?

7. How did Michal help David escape from Saul?
8. Who did David go to see in Ramah?
9. What prevented Saul from taking David at Ramah?

Friendship of David and Jonathan (ch. 20)

10. What questions did David ask Jonathan about Saul's efforts to kill him? (v. 1).
11. What favor did David ask of Jonathan?
12. What signal would Jonathan use to let David know what to do?
13. Does Saul realize that David will be the next king? See v. 31.
14. Describe the scene when Jonathan and David say good-bye.

## **Lesson 8**

## **1 Samuel 21-22**

David at Nob (21:1-9); David in Gath (21:10-15)

1. Why did David go to Nob? In addition to 21:1-9, see 22:10, 15. You should be able to pick out a couple of reasons.
2. What bread did the priest give to David? See also Exodus 25:30 and Leviticus 24:5-9
3. What did David get to arm himself?
4. In what country was the city of Gath? See 1 Samuel 17:4.
5. Why was David in danger in this city?
6. How did he escape danger?



David at the Cave of Adullam (22:1-2); David in Moab (22:3-5); Slaughter of the Priests (22:6-23)

7. Who gathered at the cave of Adullam with David?
8. Who told David to leave his stronghold?
9. How did Saul learn of David's whereabouts?
10. Why did Saul order that Ahimelech and the other priests be killed?
11. Did Saul's guards obey this order?
12. Who did kill the priests? How many were killed?
13. How did David learn about this slaughter and what was his reaction?
14. What assurance did David give Abiathar?

## **Lesson 9**

## **1 Samuel 23-25**

Rescue of Keilah (23:1-14); Renewal of the Covenant with Jonathan (23:15-18); David's Escape After Being Almost Trapped (23:19-29)

1. What did David do before attacking the Philistines?
2. What did Abiathar take with him to Keilah? Explain what this is. See Exodus 28:6-14.
3. What words of encouragement did Jonathan offer David?
4. Who told Saul where David was hiding?
5. How did David escape from Saul this time?

Saul and David in the Cave (24:1-7) David's Speech to Saul (24:8-15); Saul's Reaction (24:16-22)

6. What did David do to Saul that he regretted?

7. Why did David not take advantage of this opportunity to kill Saul?
8. How did David try to convince Saul that he was not trying to kill him?
9. What was Saul's reaction to David's speech?
10. What statement did Saul make about the kingdom?

Death of Samuel (25:1); Nabal and Abigail (25:2-42), David's Other Wives (25:43-44)

11. What was the reaction to Samuel's death?
12. How are Nabal and Abigail described?
13. What request did David make of Nabal? How did Nabal reply?
14. How did Abigail save the day?
15. What happened to Nabal? What became of Abigail?

## **Lesson 10**

## **1 Samuel 26-27**

Saul Spared Again (ch. 26)

1. Who revealed David's whereabouts for the second time?
2. Who went down with David into Saul's camp? What did he say to David when they saw Saul asleep?
3. What reason did David give for not killing Saul?
4. What confidence did David express in God? (v. 10).
5. What did David take from Saul?
6. With what did David charge Abner?

7. What questions did David ask Saul? (v. 18)
8. What promise did Saul make to David?

David Seeks Refuge in Gath (ch. 27)

9. What was David's state of mind when he decided to go to the land of the Philistines?
10. Who were Saul's traveling companions to Philistia?
11. Do you remember what happened when David tried to hide in Gath before? See 1 Samuel 21:10-15.
12. How long was David in the country of the Philistines?
13. How did David deceive King Achish about the raids he and his men went on?
14. Why did he "save neither man nor woman" in these raids?

## Lesson 11

## 1 Samuel 28-29

### *Saul's Last Days: Defeat and Death*

Philistine Preparation for War (28:1-2); The Medium of Endor (28:3-25)

1. What was Achish counting on David to do?
2. Did David give Achish a definite commitment to fight?
3. What was Saul's reaction when he saw the army of the Philistines?
4. What evidence is given that the Lord had departed from Saul?
5. What is a medium? What is God's attitude toward them? See Leviticus 19:31; 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Isaiah 8:19-20.
6. What was so ironic about Saul consulting a medium? (v. 3).

7. Did the medium really bring up Samuel? Read carefully.
8. Did Samuel have any comfort for Saul?

David's Escape from a Dilemma (ch. 29)

9. How did the princes of the Philistines feel about David and his men fighting in this battle?
10. So what did Achish say to David about fighting in this battle?

## **Lesson 12**

## **1 Samuel 30-31**

Amalekites Punished For Destroying Ziklag (ch. 30)

1. What did David and his men find when they returned to Ziklag?
2. What happened to David's two wives?
3. What did the people talk about doing to David?
4. In what way did David strengthen himself?
5. How did David find the Amalekite camp?
6. How successful were David and his men against the Amalekites?
7. Read carefully vv. 21-25. What practical lesson can be drawn from this incident?

Battle of Gilboa (ch. 31)

8. How did Saul meet his death? Who preceded him in death?
9. What did the Philistines do with Saul's armor and with his body?
10. Why did the people of Jabesh-Gilead have such strong feelings for Saul? See chapter 11.