

The Book of Samuel

Lesson 2

Samuel and Saul

Lesson Guide



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HOW TO USE THIS LESSON GUIDE

This lesson guide is designed for use in conjunction with the associated video. If you do not have access to the video, the lesson guide will also work with the audio and/or manuscript versions of the lesson. Additionally, the video and lesson guide are intended to be used in a learning community, but they also can be used for individual study if necessary.

- **Before you watch the lesson**
 - **Prepare** — Complete any recommended readings.
 - **Schedule viewing** — The Notes section of the lesson guide has been divided into segments that correspond to the video. Using the time codes found in parentheses beside each major division, determine where to begin and end your viewing session. IIM lessons are densely packed with information, so you may also want to schedule breaks. Breaks should be scheduled at major divisions.
- **While you are watching the lesson**
 - **Take notes** — The Notes section of the lesson guide contains a basic outline of the lesson, including the time codes for the beginning of each segment and key notes to guide you through the information. Many of the main ideas are already summarized, but make sure to supplement these with your own notes. You should also add supporting details that will help you to remember, describe, and defend the main ideas.
 - **Record comments and questions** — As you watch the video, you may have comments and/or questions on what you are learning. Use the margins to record your comments and questions so that you can share these with the group following the viewing session.
 - **Pause/replay portions of the lesson** — You may find it helpful to pause or replay the video at certain points in order to write additional notes, review difficult concepts, or discuss points of interest.
- **After you watch the lesson**
 - **Complete Review Questions** — Review Questions are based on the basic content of the lesson. You should answer Review Questions in the space provided. These questions should be completed individually rather than in a group.
 - **Answer/discuss Application Questions** — Application Questions are questions relating the content of the lesson to Christian living, theology, and ministry. Application questions are appropriate for written assignments or as topics for group discussions. For written assignments, it is recommended that answers not exceed one page in length.

Notes

I. Introduction (0:20)

The author of Samuel explained how Israel's transition to kingship culminated in God's covenant with David so that Israel would put their hopes for the kingdom of God in the righteous rule of David's house.

II. Samuel's Prelude to Kingship, 1 Samuel 1-7 (3:42)

Samuel was a Levite from the northern regions of Israel who would lead Israel into the age of kingship.

A. Structure and Content (4:57)

Main themes of 1 Samuel 1–7:

- God's kingdom
- God's covenant

1. Samuel's Earlier Years, 1 Samuel 1:1-2:11 (7:27)

- **Birth and Dedication, 1 Samuel 1:1-28; 2:11**

Elkanah had two wives: Peninnah (had several children) and Hannah (was barren).

Hannah promised God that if he gave her a son, she would give him to the Lord's service.

Hannah conceived and bore a son and named him Samuel.

Hannah gave Samuel to the Lord's service as Eli's personal servant at the Tabernacle.

- **Hannah's Praise, 1 Samuel 2:1-10**

Hannah's song provides a rough table of contents for the entire book of Samuel:

- Hannah's Personal Experience (2:1)
- Nation of Israel (2:2-8)
- God's Glorious King (2:9-10)

Hannah affirmed that God would judge the earth by blessing a future king of Israel with strength and victory.

Hannah's enthusiasm for a future king reflected earlier revelations from God to his people:

- Genesis 17:6 – “kings shall come from you”
- Genesis 35:11 – “kings shall come from your own body”
- Genesis 49:10 – the “scepter shall not depart from Judah”
- Deuteronomy 17:14-20 – regulations for kingship
- Judges 21:25 – “there was no king in Israel”
- 1 Samuel 2:35 – “shall go in and out before [God's] anointed [king] forever”

2. **Transition in Leadership, 1 Samuel 2:12-7:17 (19:33)**

The author of Samuel explained the transition in leadership from Eli and his sons to Samuel with a series of four contrasts.

- **Divine Evaluations, 1 Samuel 2:12-21**

“The sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord” (2:12).

God's ongoing approval of Samuel was just the opposite of his severe condemnation of Eli's sons (2:21).

- **Divine and Public Evaluations, 1 Samuel 2:22-26**

The people of the Lord were complaining about Eli's sons (2:24).

“[Eli's sons] would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the Lord to put them to death” (2:25).

Both God and the faithful people of Israel approved of Samuel's Levitical service (2:26).

- **God's Responses, 1 Samuel 2:27–4:1**

God had rejected Eli's family and was removing them from his service (2:31).

The Lord was with Samuel and raised him up as his prophet in the eyes of all Israel (3:19-20).

- **Conflicts with Philistines, 1 Samuel 4:1–7:17**

- Israel's defeat (4:1-22)

The sins of Eli's sons had grown so great that the Philistines routed Israel and took possession of the ark.

Eli's sons died in battle, and Eli died after hearing of their deaths.

- God's Intervention (5:1–7:22)

The Philistines found the idol of their false god face down before the ark, and they were afflicted with tumors and a plague.

The Philistines returned the ark, but the Israelites violated God's regulations of worship and suffered under God's curses (7:2).

- Israel's Victory (7:3-17)

The author highlighted Samuel's faithful service as the reason for Israel's victory over the Philistines.

“The hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel” (7:13).

God had raised up Samuel, who introduced Israel to kingship and specifically to David as king.

B. Christian Application (35:09)

1. God's Covenants (36:03)

The author of Samuel was aware of six major divine covenants:

- with all people (Adam, Noah)
- with the nation of Israel (Abraham, Moses, David)
- with Israel and Judah after exile (new covenant)

The events of Samuel's prelude to kingship took place when God's covenant with Moses was in full effect.

When the book of Samuel was written, God had established his covenant with David.

Christians today live after God has established the new covenant in Christ:

- Every divine benevolence in the first division of Samuel is superseded by God's benevolence in Christ.
- God's requirement of human loyalty in Samuel's prelude to kingship applies to the new covenant age.
- God's curses for disobedience and blessings for obedience must be viewed through the lens of the New Testament.

2. **God's Kingdom (41:32)**

God himself directed Samuel's birth and exalted him to lead Israel to further God's kingdom.

Every Christian application of the first division of Samuel must take into account all three phases of Christ's kingdom:

- Inauguration

In the inauguration of Christ's kingdom, Jesus began to fulfill Samuel's prelude to kingship.

- Continuation

Throughout church history, Christ fulfills Samuel's prelude to kingship more and more.

- Consummation

Samuel's prelude to kingship calls us to look forward to what Christ will do at the consummation of his kingdom.

III. Saul's Failed Kingship, 1 Samuel 8–2 Samuel 1 (47:24)

A. Structure and Content (48:16)

These chapters are largely devoted to explaining why David's house should lead God's kingdom in Israel.

These events took place within the dynamics of God's covenant with Moses:

- God showed Israel benevolence during Saul's reign.
- God's required grateful human loyalty, concerning Moses' laws for worship and kingship.
- Saul's violations of Moses' laws led to severe curses from God., but David's obedience to these laws led to God's blessings.

God himself rejected Saul and his family in favor of David and his house.

1. Saul's Earlier Years, 1 Samuel 8:1–15:35 (50:28)**• Establishment of Saul, 1 Samuel 8:1–12:25**

- Initial Warning and Commission (8:1-22)

The elders of Israel asked for a king to rule over them.

Following God's instructions, Samuel issued a lengthy warning about kingship (8:11-17).

- Acknowledgment and Confirmation (9:1–10:16)

God confirmed Saul as king and commanded Samuel to anoint Saul in a private ceremony (10:1).

- National Acknowledgment and Confirmation (10:17–11:13)

God enabled Saul to unite the tribes of Israel and lead them to victory, and Israel gave Saul their full support.

- Final Warnings and Fulfillment (11:14–12:25)

Samuel called on Israel to acknowledge God's benevolence toward them.

Samuel also warned them to respond to God's kindness with grateful loyalty to God (12:24, 25).

- **Rejection of Saul, 1 Samuel 13:1–15:35**

Saul violated God’s regulations for worship and his commands, so God rejected Saul and his descendants from Israel’s throne.

- Earlier Rejection (1 Samuel 13:1–14:52)

In Israel’s initial attack against the Philistines:

- Saul sent God’s people into battle while he remained at a safe distance.
- Saul claimed his son Jonathan’s victory for himself.

In Israel’s preparations for a Philistine counterattack:

- Saul panicked and presented burnt offerings to God in direct defiance of Samuel’s directives.
- Samuel announced God’s words of judgment because Saul had violated the worship of God (13:14).

In Israel’s ensuing battle with the Philistines:

- Saul abused his royal authority and violated the worship of God.
- Saul declared a curse on any soldier who stopped to eat, leading to a serious violation of worship.
- Saul ordered Jonathan’s death (because he’d eaten honey), but the soldiers ransomed him.

The author summarized the battles during Saul’s reign and added, “There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul” (14:47-52).

- Final Rejection (1 Samuel 11:1-35)

God had commanded the total annihilation of the Amalekites, but Saul didn't follow God's command (15:9).

Samuel announced to Saul that, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you" (15:28).

Although Saul feigned repentance and sought forgiveness, God's rejection of him was final.

2. Transition in Leadership, 1 Sam 16:1–2 Sam 1:27 (1:08:29)

God himself reversed the conditions of Saul and David by pouring out curses on Saul for his rebellion and blessings on David for his humble service.

- **Background of Hostility, 1 Samuel 16:1-23**

- David and God's Spirit (16:1-13)

When Samuel anointed David as king, "the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward" (16:13).

The Lord was with David (16:18; 18:12, 14, 28).

- Saul and an Evil Spirit (16:14-23)

“The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful [or evil] spirit ... tormented him” (16:14).

The evil spirit tormenting Saul would leave when David played the lyre.

- **Escalation of Hostility, 17:1–23:28**

- Initial Hostility (1 Samuel 17:1–18:9)

Saul and his army were afraid of Goliath, but God blessed David with courage and faith (17:45-47).

David’s victory over Goliath brought the blessing of support from others, which infuriated Saul (18:8, 9).

- Indirect Hostility (1 Samuel 18:10–19:17)

- Saul sent David on raids hoping David would die in these attacks (18:10-16).
- Saul sought David’s death through the Philistines (18:17-30).

- Saul ordered David's murder through Jonathan and the servants of his court (19:1-8).

- Saul sought David's life through messengers or assassins (19:9-17).

- Direct Hostility (1 Samuel 19:18–23:28)
 - Saul came against David and Samuel in Ramah (19:18-24).

 - Saul's hostility came against David and Jonathan in Gibeah (20:1-42).

 - Several episodes focus on Saul's aggression against David and the priests at the Tabernacle (21:1–23:13).

 - Saul had several interconnected aggressions against David in the wilderness (23:14-28).

- De-escalation of Hostility (1 Samuel 23:29–27:12)

David's integrity led Saul to let David live in peace.

- At Engedi, David could have killed Saul, but he only cut off a corner of Saul's robe (23:29–24:22).

- After Samuel's burial, David's actions with Abigail confirmed his innocence once again (25:1-44).

- In the Wilderness of Ziph, David again refused to harm Saul (26:1-25).

- David fled from Saul to the land of the Philistines, and Saul stopped pursuing him (27:1-12).

- Aftermath of Hostility (1 Samuel 28:1–2 Samuel 1:27)

David and Saul prepared for battle with the Philistines (28:1–31:13):

- David deceived Achish, the Philistine king.
- Saul commanded a medium to summon Samuel's spirit, and God condemned Saul to die in battle.

David and Saul engaged in battle with the Philistines (29:1–31:13).

- David's victories (29:1–30:31)
- Saul's death (31:1-13)
- David's righteous reaction after battle (2 Samuel 1:1-27)

David maintained his integrity as Saul's humble servant right up to the end.

B. Christian Application (1:44:33)**1. God's Covenants (1:45:26)**

Saul's failed kingship took place when Israel's interactions with God were governed primarily by God's covenant with Moses.

The original audience was to apply the book in the light of all that God had revealed about the centrality of David's house.

We live under the new covenant in Christ, which realigns the dynamics of God's covenants toward Jesus as the Son of David:

- divine benevolence – we recognize God's greater benevolence in Christ
- human loyalty – Jesus was flawlessly devoted to the worship of God as David's perfect son
- curses and blessings – Christ bore the eternal curses for all who trust in him, and he receives immeasurable blessings for his obedience to God.

2. **God's Kingdom (1:51:38)**

We must put our hopes exclusively in David's perfectly righteous descendant, Jesus, who alone fulfills the hopes for God's kingdom.

- Inauguration

Jesus' miracles, death, resurrection and ascension proved that he is the only king who will bring God's kingdom to earth.

- Continuation

Christ, David's righteous son, has continually proven that God ordained him to extend the kingdom to all the earth.

- Consummation

At the consummation, it will be clear to every creature that Christ is the only one chosen to rule over creation (Philippians 2:10, 11).

IV. **Conclusion (1:56:16)**

9. How did Jesus prove that he was David's perfect son in his inauguration? How is he establishing God's kingdom in the continuation? How will he finalize his royal authority at the consummation?

Application Questions

1. What experience do you have with kingship in your culture? How would you explain the themes of divine and human kingship in the book of Samuel to those in your church or ministry?
2. Describe a time that you, like Hannah, cried out to God for something. Did he answer your prayer in the way you expected? How did you respond?
3. Throughout the book of Samuel, God reversed the conditions of the wicked and the humble. What hope does God's reversing power offer us today — For ourselves? For our nation? For the world? Your answer can include both God's power in our lives today and the hope that we have that God will make all things new when Christ returns.
4. Eli's sons abused their priestly authority and God sentenced them to death for their disobedience. Do you believe that there is a greater responsibility to obedience for ministry leaders and pastors? Why or why not?
5. Eli's sons used the ark of God as a talisman to "protect" them. What kinds of things do we use as talismans today? How can you help those in your church or ministry to correct this practice?
6. God warned Israel that an earthly king would abuse them. How should Christians living under the new covenant submit to authorities that are ungodly and even hostile to Christ's followers?
7. Why was God so angry with Saul for offering unauthorized sacrifices before battle? Since we no longer offer physical sacrifices today, what can we learn from God's judgment of Saul?
8. David had every reason to desire vengeance against Saul, but even after Saul's death, David honored him as God's anointed. How does David's example shape our understanding of the biblical claim that vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deuteronomy 32:35)? How can Christians today pursue justice without pursuing vengeance?
9. David succeeded as king because God blessed him as he honored and obeyed God. Does God continue to bless those who honor and obey him in the church today? Does this undermine the biblical truth that believers are justified by faith alone? Support your answer with Scripture.
10. At Jesus' return, every tongue will confess that he is Lord, even those who refuse his authority over them. How does the preaching of the gospel bring peace to those who are currently in rebellion against God? How should this inspire you to share your faith with the lost?
11. What is the most significant thing you learned in this lesson?

Glossary

Abiathar – Priest and son of Ahimelech who escaped the murder of the priests at Nob and joined David and his men; remained loyal to David throughout his reign

Abigail – Wife of Nabal who intervened after her husband rejected David's request for sustenance and insulted his messengers; married David after God killed Nabal

Achish – Philistine king of Gath with whom David sought protection from Saul

Ahimelech – High priest at Nob and father of Abiathar; killed by Saul for assisting David

Amalekites – People descended from Amalek (a grandson of Esau) who attacked the Israelites without provocation after they escaped Egypt; one of Israel's most relentless enemies that was finally destroyed by David and his men

ark of the covenant – A box made (as per God's command to Moses) of acacia wood and overlaid with gold where the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments were kept; also called the ark of God

Babylonian exile – Deportation and exile of ancient Israelites to Babylon from approx. 586 B.C. to 538/9 B.C.

cave of Adullam – Cave where David hid while fleeing from Saul

consummation – Third and final stage of inaugurated eschatology when Christ will return and fulfill God's ultimate purpose for all of history

continuation – Second or middle stage of inaugurated eschatology; the period of the kingdom of God after Christ's first advent but before the final victory

covenant – A binding legal agreement made between two people or groups of people, or between God and a person or group of people

Dagon – Philistine deity that was often portrayed as part man and part fish

David – Second Old Testament king of Israel who received the promise that his descendant would sit on the throne and reign forever

Eli – Jewish priest at the tabernacle in Shiloh who blessed Hannah and raised up Samuel to succeed him; father of two wicked sons, Hophni and Phineas

Elkanah – The prophet Samuel's father and husband of Hannah and Peninnah

ephod – A sacred garment made of fine linen that was worn by priests in ancient Israel

Gibeah – Saul's capital city and birthplace in the territory of Benjamin; town where the Levite's concubine was killed (Judges 19-21)

Goliath – Great Philistine warrior who challenged Israel to fight him and was killed by young David

Hannah – Wife of Elkanah who prayed to God for a child and became the mother of Samuel

inauguration – First stage in inaugurated eschatology; refers to Christ's first coming and the ministries of his apostles and prophets

Jonathan – King Saul's eldest son and David's close friend who died in a battle with the Philistines; father of Mephibosheth

Levites – Those from the tribe of Levi; served as priests for the nation of Israel

Michal – King Saul's younger daughter and David's first wife

Moses – Old Testament prophet and deliverer who led the Israelites out of Egypt; man with whom God made a national "covenant of law" and who administered the Ten Commandments and the Book of the Covenant to the Israelites; also appeared with Elijah at Jesus' transfiguration

necromancy – Summoning the dead in order to communicate with them, a practice that was strictly forbidden by God (cf. Leviticus 20)

new covenant – The covenant of fulfillment in Christ; first mentioned in Jeremiah 31:31

Nob – Home of the high priest Ahimelech where the priests, people and animals were all destroyed by Saul for helping David

Peninnah – One of Elkanah's wives who had several children and mistreated Hannah because of it

Philistines – A non-Semitic, warlike people, possibly from Crete, who were often at war with the Israelites in the Old Testament

Samuel – Prophet, priest and last judge of Israel; born in answer to Hannah's prayer; grew up under Eli the priest; led the Israelites from the period of the judges into the time of the monarchy

Saul – First king anointed by God to rule over the nation of Israel

Son of David – Messianic title that referred to David's long-awaited, righteous descendant who would save God's people; frequently applied to Jesus in the New Testament (especially in Matthew)

tabernacle – Movable tent in which the ark of the covenant was kept and in which God showed his special presence to Israel

Ziklag – Town given to David by the Philistine king Achish