

Week 21

1 Samuel / ¹א ²שמואל / She mu el

The books of 1 and 2nd Samuel were originally one book, when the Greek version of the OT was written it became two separate books. The Hebrews categorize 1 and 2nd Samuel within the genre of the *former prophets*. We think of it as *history*, the smart people call it Deuteronomic history. This is where we meet not only Samuel (God's king maker and prophet), but also Saul (the people's choice) and David (God's choice).

1 Samuel covers about 100 years (1,100 – 1,000), but it kicks off about 500 years of monarchy in Israel. At the beginning, the spiritual state of the tribes of Jacob is not healthy. This state is expected, since it follows on the heels of the Book of Judges. 1 Samuel begins where Judges leaves us. "Everyone did what was right in their own heart."³ **David makes a difference; 1 Samuel reminds us we can make a difference.**

David has more chapters associated with him either as the subject of a book (1 and 2nd Samuel) or as author (half of the Psalms) than any other person in scripture, save Jesus. He is mentioned just under 1,100 times in scripture, for reference Moses shows up just under than 850 times. Because of David's obvious prominence in scripture we will spend more than 1 week on 1 Samuel

I love that David is clearly not perfect, nor is anyone in scripture other than Jesus. **David is obviously a mixed bag; 1 Samuel reminds us God uses flawed people – I would argue that's all he has to work with.** David is also unexpected, he is the youngest and a backwoods shepherd, but he has a heart for God. **1 Samuel reminds us we should care more about the internals (character) of our leaders than the externals (appearances).** God uses real people who really do wondrous things and really do stupid things. Regardless of his sins, David is called by God "a man after his own heart" (13:14, Acts 13:22).

Sunday, Mar 13

1 Samuel 1 – Hannah

For Reflection: Hannah only shows up in chapter 1 and 2 of 1 Samuel, but she makes the most of those two chapters. She is one in a pretty obvious train of women who were barren and had a child because of the intervention of God.⁴ When has God remembered you? (vs 19-20).

Lagniappe: James 5:13

¹ Nobody is sure what this name means. The ending – *el* is a reference to God. I thought the beginning might be based on *shema*- hear, and *el* – God – Which could be rendered God hears. But nobody is sure, and I couldn't find my awesome solution mentioned as an option so it is not likely an awesome solution.

² This is the letter aleph in the Hebrew alphabet which corresponds with our A and also serves as the number 1

³ Judges 21:25

⁴ Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, the mother of Samson, and Elizabeth

- Monday, Mar 14** 1 Samuel 3 – Samuel
For Reflection: *Is the word of the LORD rare in our days? (Verse 1) What has God called you to be and do? Are you listening?*
Lagniappe: Genesis 22:11, 46:2; Exodus 3:4; Isaiah 6:8; Acts 9:4
- Tuesday, Mar 15** 1 Samuel 8 – Rejection of God as King
For Reflection: *When is the last time you had a better idea than God? What was the outcome? We can never really know what might have been, if we obeyed. Notice they wanted to be like the other nations (vs 14). Envy is a powerful force. How does envy impact you?*
Lagniappe Matthew 2:2, Mark 15:4, Luke 23:7, John 19:3, Matthew 27:37, Revelation 17:14. Maybe God did provide a better King, but still we didn't much like him.
- Wednesday, Mar 16** 1 Samuel 9:1-2, 10:17-24 - Appearances can be deceiving
For Reflection: Saul had the appearance of a king, and started in noble fashion, but lacked the character of a king and it ended badly. *In what areas of your life (or times in your life) are/were appearances (externals), more important than character (Internals)? What can you do to prioritize the internals?*
Lagniappe: (Prov. 4:23 NIV) Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.
- Thursday, Mar 17** 1 Samuel 10:1-8; 13:8-15; 15:1-35⁵ – Saul's failure
For Reflection: Chapter 13 & 15 recount Saul's major breaks with Samuel and God⁶. *When have you been furthest from God, and what grace/circumstance/relationship caused you to return?*
Lagniappe: Luke 15:11-31

⁵ Chapter 15 recounts an example of herem that we noticed in the book of Joshua (week 15). I'll reiterate, I don't understand herem. I would like to think it is just a pronouncement that makes war profiteering an impossibility, but it is also, and probably primarily, about ensuring future faithfulness.

⁶ Often when people read this part of 1 Samuel they feel Saul got a bad deal. This compassion for Saul is built on misunderstandings of grace and forgiveness – the only thing God removed from Saul was the hope of a dynasty. Grace does not give us rights it gives us a restored relationship with God. (e.g. I don't have a right to be a pastor simply because I desire it. As for forgiveness, forgiveness doesn't entail or demand future trust. Lastly, positions of leadership and trust carry higher expectations and should. (see James 3:1)

Friday, Mar 18

1 Samuel 16:1-13 – A Heart God Can Work With

For Reflection: Verse 7 is a verse worthy of memorizing. *Do you see people as God does? How do you care for or guard your heart?*

Lagniappe: I know we are double dipping here, but this verse is so tasty... that I wanted seconds. (Prov. 4:23 NIV) Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Saturday, Mar 19

1 Samuel 17 – Conquering Giants

For Reflection: I love this chapter. Verse 26 is one of those verses that I don't have to memorize because it instantly became part of my soul and instantly attracted me to David. Here's what I like: David sees other things than Goliath's height. David knows he's not alone, God and his angel armies are with him. Verse 39: David rejects Saul's armor for practical reasons, not reasons of bravado. Verse 40: 5 smooth stones – God doesn't need the newest tech. Verse 51 he runs at a giant / tilting at windmills / Don Quixote-ish. Lots to feed the soul in this chapter. *By what name is your giant called? What sin, what narrative, what belief keeps you from trusting God?*

Lagniappe: Isaiah 50:7 and Luke 9:51 David set his face toward his giant.