

Seven Bible Studies 2017

History

March 14: 1 Samuel 1-5 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 1 Samuel 1-5

To recap history so far, the Israelites left slavery of Egypt and made it into the Promised Land in the book of Joshua. They did well under Joshua, but in the book of Judges, they failed miserably. Now we're diving into the book of 1 Samuel which focuses on three main individuals — Samuel, Saul, and King David.

First, the book starts off with a woman named Hannah who was grieving about not being able to have a child. After petitioning and presenting her request to God in prayer (see Philippians 4:6), she promises to raise a child who would serve God.

God grants her the ability to have a child and she has a boy who she names Samuel, which means "God has heard."

The second chapter is Hannah's song which is a poem exalting God and how He is proud of the humble and that He will raise up a king.

The end of the second chapter talks about how Eli's sons were "scoundrels" (according to the NIV) and the prophecy on the demise of Eli's house including that Hophni and Phinehas will die on the same day.

Chapter three is on God calling Samuel. He tells him the house of Eli will fall and Samuel warns Eli of the disaster to come. This leads to chapter four where perhaps the most devastating thing in Israelite's history (up to this point) occurs— the Philistines capture the Ark of the Covenant. The news of the death of 30,000-foot soldiers including Hophni and Phinehas and the capture of the ark was too much to bear for Eli. At 98-years-old, he falls over dead. Phinehas's pregnant wife, also couldn't handle the news and dies in labor.

Chapter 5 is an interesting story on the power God shows. As referenced in Chapter 4, the Philistines knew of the ark and how the God of Israel helped them in many battles. But after capturing the ark, they weren't sure what to do with it. They put it in the house of the idol Dagon... but the following morning, Dagon's face had fallen on the ground before the ark of the Lord. They put him back in his place, but next day Dagon fell before the ark again with his hands and head broken off and only his body remaining. Needless to say, this scared the Philistines and knew they had to do something with the ark. They tried moving it to Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron but with each place they moved it, bad things happened to their people.

It was so bad, the leaders of the Philistines gathered together and decided it would just be best to return the ark to the children of Israel.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Nick! Great job highlighting these 5 chapters. Hannah has been a source of encouragement to me - and so many other women. She teaches pouring your soul out before the Lord. Pain & sorrow finds refuge in prayer.

March 21: 1 Samuel 6-10 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 1 Samuel 6-10

Chp 6:

Philistines return the ark of the covenant to the Israelites by putting it on a cart with two cows that walk the trail to Beth Shemesh. With the suggestions of priests and diviners, they sent it back with gifts of five gold tumors and five gold rats which represent the plagues the ark brought on each Philistine city. The Israelites made a sacrifice to God since the ark is returned but the chapter concludes with 70 Israelites being struck down because they looked into the ark.

Chp 7:

The ark is moved from Beth Shemesh to Kiriath Jearim and stays there 20yrs. Samuel convinces the children of Israel to turn away from their idols and to serve God only (which they do for the rest his life).

Chp. 8:

When Samuel was old, his sons were selfish and accepted bribes. Instead of allowing them to rule, the elders of Israel pressed Samuel to appoint a king.

Chp 9-10:

Samuel meets a tall, handsome man who stood a head over everyone named Saul. God told Samuel to appoint him king and in chapter 10, we're told how Saul is insecure about becoming king. His uncle asks him what Samuel talked to him about but all he mentioned was the donkeys. Then when Samuel summons the people of Israel to announce the new king, Saul is hiding in the supplies.

Kind of a funny start for the person we know Saul ends up becoming.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

I have always thought it significant when Samuel tells Saul "you will be changed into another man" From the luggage incident forward there are clues to the fact that Saul just did not have the "Stuff" God's Spirit is what made the difference. After God took that away from Saul because of his flagrant and repeated disregard for righteousness, what remained was the burdened shell of the mere and severely limited man of poor character.

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thanks Nick!

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Nick! Excellent paragraph summaries from these chapters. Moses anticipated a time when people would ask for a king, contrary to the Lord's ideal for them. So Moses gives guidance in Deut. 17:14-20. -Appoint a king who God chooses - Among your own brothers -

King must not become greedy or take many wives -Each day the King is to write for himself a scroll copy of the law so it is with him and read all the days of his life so he will learn to revere the Lord and follow this law and decrees.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Saul's self deprecating words are a good reminder of the setup for the story we had in Judges 19-22, when the tribe of Benjamin was decimated a few generations earlier.

1 Samuel 9:21 (NIV)

21 Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite, from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?"

Samuel's instructions to Saul include the prelude to Saul's first great failure as king.

1 Samuel 10:8 (NIV)

8 "Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."

March 28: 1 Samuel 11-15 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 1 Samuel 11-15

Leaving off last week, chapter 10 talked about Saul hiding with the supplies when Samuel was about to announce him as the new king. Chapter 11 is vastly different. The City of Jabesh Gilead is besieged by the Ammonites with the threat that they will gouge out the right eye of every person.

When Saul heard the news, it says "the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he burned with anger". He led an attack against the Ammonites with 330,000 men and crushed them.

The end of the chapter concludes with the Israelites having a great celebration about Saul becoming king... an 180-degree flip from chapter 10!

Chapter 12 is a farewell speech from Samuel. He is old and on the edge of death. His final requests are much like Joshua's— that they make God their king and to serve Him to the best of their abilities and avoid idols.

In chapter 13-15, Samuel rebukes Saul for not being faithful to God and Jonathan (Saul's son) acts rebelliously towards Saul. Samuel told Saul that God commanded him to completely destroy the Amalekites and everything they owned, but Saul disobeyed and spared the King Agag and the best of the livestock. Samuel once again confronts him and informs Saul that God is going to raise up a new king in place of him. This is the beginning of Saul's downfall.

The reading concludes with, "And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel."

But on the bright side, next week we are introduced to a new king who is considered a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

Comment:

Charles Fry:

Thank you Nick. These stories are rich, told briefly but full of nuggets of insight into human nature, and power, and the structure of Scripture. There is quite a contrast between Saul acting in the Spirit of the Lord, and Saul acting in the spirit of Saul.

A few footnotes on some of my favorite bits of this story:

Jabesh Gilead -- Saul was related to those folks, due to the war against the tribe of Benjamin, Judges 21:6ff. It is ironic that wives from Jabesh Gilead had been procured for the surviving men of Benjamin because Jabesh Gilead had not joined the assembly, and now no one from Israel was joining the battle to protect Jabesh Gilead. When Saul cut up the oxen and sent the pieces throughout Israel, that echoed the action of the Levite whose dead concubine precipitated the civil war, Judges 19:29.

It is also ironic that old Samuel lived through most of the reign of Saul, not quite as near death's door as some thought. Reminiscent of Isaac who thought he had a foot in the grave, and blessed his sons, only to live more than 20 years and see Jacob and family return home again.

The incident of Saul's presumption in 13:7-14 looks back to instructions in 10:8.

13:32-35 is also incredibly ironic. Zeal for one commandment, oblivious to the spirit of obedience.

Though not obvious in most translations, 14:41 seems to be the clearest example in the Bible of using the Urim and Thummim. If your English version has the word "perfect" or "right" that is the Hebrew word transliterated as "Thummim."

1 Samuel 14:41 (ESV)

41 Therefore Saul said, "O Lord God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O Lord, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped.

Another ironic comment, 15:23 points up the progression of how disobedience slips into a downward spiral, that Saul would eventually slide downslope into literally trafficking with a witch/fortune teller.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

1 Samuel is one of my favorite books! Action packed; great lessons. Looking forward, Lord willing, to more of your insight on these passages, Nick. Thanks for being faithful to the study! Next week's lesson will be especially good in my opinion. For tonight's reading I will ponder upon this verse, " But be sure to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things He has done for you!"

April 4: 1 Samuel 16-20 (Nick Hermon)

1 Samuel 16-20

What an action-packed reading! First, we start off with Samuel anointing David. God tells Samuel to go to the house of Jesse and that He'd tell him which one to choose as the new king. Samuel sees Eliab and thinks "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."

But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (Lesson to be learned right there!)

So seven sons pass by, but the youngest, David, is tending the sheep. They bring him in and Samuel anoints him in the presence of his brothers.

Meanwhile, a harmful spirit is tormenting Saul. His attendants tell him to bring in David to play the harp so he'd feel better. They do so and Saul grows fond of David; even promoting him to be one of his armor-bearers.

Chapter 17, we have the widely known story of David and Goliath.

Goliath is a massive individual from the enemy camp of the Philistines who issues a challenge to the Israelites— a fight to the death against their strongest warrior with the losers becoming subject to the winning side.

With Goliath standing ≈9'9", wearing 125lbs of bronze armor, wielding a spear with a 15lb iron point, nobody seemed to stand a chance in a one-on-one battle against him. He taunted the Israelites 40 days, but the whole army was fearful and nobody rose up to challenge him.

Jesse instructs David to take supplies to his three older brothers who were serving under Saul and when David hears Goliath taunting the Israelites, he questions why the Israelites will not stand up to the Philistine defying the army of God.

News of this spreads to Saul, who calls for David. David tells Saul he will fight Goliath and Saul is skeptical of the idea. David makes the pitch to Saul that as a shepherd he has killed both a lion and bear to rescue sheep and that Goliath would be no different. Saul agrees.

As David steps forward from the camp, Goliath is offended they chose such a young boy and that he only has a staff, sling, and bag. After taunting, Goliath rushes at him and David takes out one of the five stones from his bag and slings it into Goliath's forehead. Goliath falls face-down and David takes Goliath's sword and cuts off Goliath's head. All the Philistines flee in fear of the death of their hero.

Chp. 18

Saul hears people singing that he's slain thousands, but David has slain tens of thousands... so Saul begins to grow jealous/scared of David and plans to kill him. Interestingly enough, Saul's daughter Michal is in love with David and Saul thinks this is an perfect opportunity to kill him. He tells David in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage, he has to kill a bunch of

Philistines which David does. This makes Saul even more scared of him since he knew God is on his side.

Chp 19

Jonathan, Saul's son warns David that Saul is out to kill him and while David is playing the harp, Saul tries to pin David to the wall with a spear, but he escapes and Michal (now David's wife) tells him he needs to run for his life because they will kill him in the morning if he stays.

Michal pulls off the trick many kids try today by stuffing the blankets and Saul becomes angry.

He gets word that David ran to Samuel so he sent troops not once or twice but THREE times because the troops he sent saw the prophets and the Spirit of God came on them so they started prophesying too. Finally, Saul goes there himself and the Spirit of God comes on him too so even he strips naked and starts prophesying all day & night.

Chp 20

Jonathan and David devise a plan to see if Saul has is willing to accept David back. Jonathan tells Saul David has gone to a sacrifice during the feast he was supposed to be at. This makes Saul very angry and he even throws a spear at his son Jonathan (he must have really bad aim because he's missed a couple times now!). So the next morning, Jonathan goes out and shoots his bow and arrow to warn David it's still not safe.

Comment:

Kelly Harvey:

Currently this is Colton's favorite part of the Bible. Great recap!

Comment:

Charles Fry:

These chapters are indeed loaded with drama, pathos, heroism, faith, and inspiration. Prophetic types and shadows abound, and roots are put down for the king and kingdom that will be.

David states two of the great purposes of his foray against the Philistine champion in 17:46b-47 (NASB), "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands."

Testimony to the world, and a reminder to Israel of something many, especially including Saul, had forgotten.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I think you hit the mark with your synopsis. When God is with us we have good aim.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thank you, Nick! Love, LoVe, LOVE these chapters! I appreciated you mentioning here & in your talk Sunday night how music calmed Saul. It is true in our lives today as well. I often ponder the almost unfathomable compliment the Lord singles out toward David: a man after

God's own heart. Two times David is honored with this title. 1 Sam 13 & in the book of Acts. Here the Apostle Paul is speaking before the men of Israel, and tells them of God's feelings toward King David. Paul wrote God, "raised up for them David as king, to whom also God gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will' " (Acts 13:22). To God the heart - a person's innermost motivation and attitude - is of prime importance: "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2). Eliab's regal appearance didn't qualify him. David's heart did.

April 11: 1 Samuel 21-25 (Nick Hermon)

1 Samuel 21-25

HISTORY: Saul's hunt for David and the trust David puts in God

In escape from Saul, David comes across the priest Ahimelek and tells him he is on a secret mission from Saul. He eats the consecrated bread and is given the sword of Goliath. He goes to the king of Gath (the tribe of Goliath) and the servants of the king tell him that he is the David who people sing has slain tens of thousands.

This makes David nervous so he "acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard." (That would have been a site!)

And the king replies, "Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here...?"

Chp 22

David leaves Gath and escapes to the cave of Adullam. His household and those in distress (about four hundred men) meet him there and David takes them to the king of Moab for protection.

Then Saul receives word of Ahimelek's assistance in David's escape. He orders his officials to kill the priests, but they refuse and Doeg kills eighty-five priests and those in the town of Nob. One of Ahimelek's sons escapes and warns David.

Chp 23-24 consist of a wild goose-chase with Saul in pursuit of David. Saul goes to relieve himself in one of the caves David is hiding in and instead of killing him, David cuts off a piece of his robe without him noticing. David announces himself to Saul and lets him know that he could have killed him.

Chp 25

Samuel finally dies and all Israel mourned for him and we have the story of Nabal- a foolish and selfish man who rudely refuses to help David and his men. David angrily plans to kill all the men, but Nabal's wife Abigail is an "intelligent and beautiful woman" who brings a plethora of supplies to David and apologizes profusely over her feeble-minded husband. David spares the family of Nabal, but God strikes Nabal down dead ten days later.

When David hears of Nabal's death, he requests Abigail to become his wife who agrees. David also marries Ahinoam and his first wife Michal is given away by Saul to another husband.

Next week will be the final chapter five chapters in 1 Samuel so I hope to do another video overview like I did with the Book of Ruth.

Comment:

Steven Wright:
Thanks brother! Looking forward to next week!

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:
Yes! Thank you, Nick! So looking forward to your video. 😍

Comment:

Charles Fry:
I saw this video a couple of weeks ago, and offer it as an addendum here. The tour guide has some good thoughts, and gives a glimpse of the sort of caves David retreated into at Adullam.
<https://www.facebook.com/211088945658734/videos/993500820750872/>

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:
Psalm 34 is definitely an excellent read linking back to 1 Samuel 21.

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
I like the conversation in 23:11-12. David and the god of Laconia.

11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant.”

And the Lord said, “He will.”

12 Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?”

And the Lord said, “They will.”

Comment:

Kevin Crittenden:
So why did David go to Achish? What did he want?

Replies:

Charles Fry:
I think he thought he could be unnoticed, just a stranger among the Philistines. A refugee seeking asylum. He was wrong though, it was a potentially fatal error in judgment.

Kevin Crittenden:
I guess that Goliath's sword on David's person would have been a dead giveaway because, as David said "There is none like it." Given the large size and weight of Goliath's other accoutrements, I'm thinking the sword must have been rather large as well. It would stand out.

April 18: 1 Samuel 26-31 (Nick Hermon)

HISTORY: 1 Samuel 26-31

Once again, we are reminded why David is a “man after God’s own heart”. As Saul is in pursuit of David in the wilderness, David’s spies report to him that Saul is pitched in the trenches. In the middle of the night, David, Ahimelech, and Abishai sneak into the camp while Saul is asleep and instead of killing Saul, David takes his spear (possibly the same one he’s thrown at him multiple times!). When Saul wakes up, David once again announces to him that he had the opportunity to kill him, yet chose not to.

In chp. 27, David decides to align himself with the Philistines in an attempt to escape from Saul. With 600 hundred men, he dwells in the land of Gath under the rule of Achish. This works for a year and four months.

Then in chp 28 the Philistines gathered together to wage war on Israel. Saul, fearful for his kingdom, enquires of God but receives no answer and turns to the witch of Endor. She calls upon Samuel who informs him that he and his sons will fall to the Philistines.

Chp 29-30, the leaders of the Philistines inform David they don’t want him involved in the battle and he returns home... which had been attacked and burned down. As with every major decision he makes, he enquires of God what to do and God tells him to pursue the Amalekites.

The last chapter in 1 Samuel is on the tragic death of Saul and his sons. The archers from the Philistines severely wound Saul and Saul told his armorbearer to kill him so he does not fall into the hands of his enemy. The armorbearer refuses and Saul falls on his own sword killing himself. The armor bearer does the same and all the men (including Jonathan) died together the same day.

This concludes the book of 1st Samuel. I was hoping to make a video, but the week snuck up on me quicker than expected. Lord willing, I’ll post a video review with next week’s 2nd Samuel post.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

I get the impression the "witch of Endor" was surprised to actually see Samuel. Also, pretty depressing message for Saul. "Tomorrow you will be dead!"

Replies:

Steven Wright:

Right, because, God made it so, THAT time, for his purposes which hinges upon that truly depressing message!

Comment:

Butch O’Neal:

Thanks, Nick! I certainly understand time sneaking up on one.

Kevin Crittenden:

I find it interesting that Saul enquired of the Lord in 28:6 but did not get an answer. So what does he do? He goes to a medium! Did Saul think that God would speak through such a person?

Replies:

Ginger Hermon:

Finding God's will any "Witch" way you can. :-P In all seriousness, it's mysterious but the medium conveyed to Saul the impending battle which would bring death. His hopes for a dynasty would end in a devastating defeat at the mercy of the Philistines, the very people he had struggled with all his reign. As Samuel warned this came as a result of Saul's unfaithfulness to the Lord.

Comment:

Charles Fry:

1 Samuel 15:23 (NKJV)

23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,
And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
He also has rejected you from being king."

Saul had continued the downward trajectory Samuel described years before.

Comment:

Ginger Hermon:

Thanks, Nick. I look forward, Lord willing, to the video! 1 Samuel was action packed.

Comment:

Marc Hermon:

Every time I read about Endor I want to go watch, "Return of the Jedi" or "Lord of the Rings"

Replies:

Kevin Crittenden:

Do you think she originated Endorphins?

Comment:

Steven Wright:

Thank you Nick! Keep up the good work! Looking forward to the video!