

1 SAMUEL (1-31)

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Name and Contents:

1. Samuel gets its name from one of its prominent characters (1 Sam.10:25; 1Cr.29:29).
2. Both the books of Samuel and Kings continue the historical story of the nation of Israel from about the year 1095 - 586 B.C. Samuel and Kings record the rise, glory, and fall of the nation of Israel as a monarchy.
3. 1 Samuel covers about 115 years beginning with the birth of Samuel, a judge, priest, and prophet. After him comes the first king of Israel named Saul who is succeeded by King David.

Outline:

Samuel's Career (1-7)

Saul's Career (8-15)

David's Career (16-31), the early years

Samuel, Man of Prayer (1-7):

1. Samuel is born into a spiritual family (1:3, 9-11, 20, 28). Samuel becomes the nation's leading prophet (3:19-21).
2. Israel is defeated by the Philistines and tries to treat God as though he can be contained in a box (4:1-3, 22).
3. God brings about revival in Israel through Samuel (7:1-5).

Saul, a Half-hearted Foolish King (8-15):

1. Israel seeks to be like the other nations and chooses Saul as their king (8:5; 9:2).
2. Samuel is rejected but he continues his ministry (12:19-25).
3. Saul is rejected as king for seeking to be a king like the other nations, an absolute monarch submitting to no one not even God (13:8-14).

David, the King After God's Heart (16-31):

1. David is chosen as God's leader and he is filled with God's Spirit (16:1,13).
2. David grows in faith to meet Goliath and to make God known (17:37, 44-47).
3. Even though David has been chosen as king before Saul is removed, he retains a high regard for God's anointed (24:6; 26:9-11).

Application:

1. God often works through a minority of faithful believers rather than through a majority of professing believers. Seek to be one of the faithful few that truly dedicate their lives to the Lord in faithfulness to his covenant. Through your faithfulness, God will bless your family and can bless your community and nation.
2. Evaluate your prayer life to ensure that you are never treating God as though he is a good luck charm to respond to your whims. God cannot be maneuvered by man. He only does his holy will and we need to evaluate whether or not we are praying according to God's holy will.
3. Instead of praying for revival, pray that God would raise up spiritual leaders who will be faithful to communicate with both God and man. Pray that God would qualify and equip you to be one of those spiritual leaders. Until we have godly leadership, God's people will not put away their false gods and serve God only according to his word.
4. Whenever we are rejected by our friends let us determine to commit ourselves to serving them and praying for them (cf. 1 Pet. 3:8,9). We must realize the people God has put within our sphere of ministry are ours to minister to and we are sinning if we do not pray for them and serve them even if they reject us.
5. Saul's failure as a leader was a result of his own half-hearted attempt at obedience to God. If a man sells you one acre in the middle of a thousand-acre tract of land, by law he must give you a right of way to go over his one thousand acres in order to get to your one acre. In the same way, when we reserve one part of our heart for Satan, he has the right of way over many other areas of our lives. We will fail as leaders if we do not determine to surrender wholly and completely to God. When we seek to elect leaders in our church or in our nation, we must seek those who are completely surrendered to Christ.
6. In order to be effective for God like David we must seek to be filled with God's spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18). We must drink from God's word and seek his sovereign control in everything we do every day if we are going to be strong enough to slay Goliath and make God known to those around us.