

To Be Like the Nations

Israel could have been a unique nation. They were supposed to be a unique nation. They were God's special, chosen people, and His law was given to guide them. Had they chosen to do so, they could have lived in accordance to the Law without a monarch ruling over them. Sadly, this isn't what the people wanted. As Samuel grew older, the people decided they wanted a change. They wanted a king. What was truly sad was the reasons they wanted a king. They didn't request a king because they felt it would be good to have strong, godly leadership. No, their desires were much more base. They told Samuel, "...there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles." (1 Sam. 8:19-20). How pathetic. The people were rejecting God as their one true king in favor of a man. Hadn't God judged them? Hadn't God fought their battles for them? Of course He had. What it really boiled down to, was, the people wanted to be like the other nations. Other nations had kings, and Israel didn't like being different.



God has always called His children to be different, not simply for the sake of being odd, but for the purpose of holiness. Christians are sanctified, that is, set apart. We are set apart for holy living, and holy living looks vastly different than worldly living. While there is always a temptation to blend in and look like the world, we should remember that doing so is tantamount to rejecting God. In our speech, manner of living, dress, worship, and all things, we don't need to look like the world. If we are different, that's ok, because we're called to be God's special people (Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). Choose to live like God's special child, and reject the temptation to "be like the nations."

Questions:

1. What did Eli think when he saw Hannah praying? _____

2. How does the Bible describe Samuel's growth? Can you think of others who are described in similar terms? _____

3. How did Eli react to the message Samuel was given concerning Eli? _____

4. Why do you think the presence of the Ark did not help Israel win the battle against the Philistines in chapter 4? _____

5. What was the name of the false Philistine god the ark was set before? _____
6. What cities were included in Samuel's circuit? _____
7. What tribe was Saul from? _____
8. What was Saul looking for when he went to see Samuel? _____
9. Where was Saul hiding when the people were looking for him to make him king? _____
10. Where was Saul's home when he first became king? _____

"That You May Grow Thereby..."

A weekly Bible reading plan



1 Samuel 1-10 "Give Us a King!"

Overview

This week we return to the Old Testament and to the historical narrative of the Hebrew people. The last historical books we read were Judges and Ruth. Now we come to First and Second Samuel, which pick up towards the end of the period of the Judges. The books of Samuel record a major transition for the Israelites—the transition to a monarchy. This transition saw the last of the judges and the beginning of the constant role of the prophet. Samuel was both. First Samuel opens with the unique story of Samuel's birth and upbringing. He was an answered prayer to his mother Hannah, and keeping to her word Hannah gave her son to the Lord for a lifetime of service to Him. While Israel floundered under the guidance of worthless leadership, Samuel would grow up to be a righteous leader and effective judge. Unfortunately, his sons were not as righteous, and in his elder years the people decided they wanted a king. Saul was chosen as king, and Israel moved into the period of monarchy—a change that altered their course forever. The books of Samuel show us how this happened, but more importantly reveal that God is the one true King!

Suggested Reading Schedule

Monday: 1 Samuel 1-2
Tuesday: 1 Samuel 3-4
Wednesday: 1 Samuel 5-6
Thursday: 1 Samuel 7-8
Friday: 1 Samuel 9-10

Outline

First Samuel essentially tells the stories of three men: Samuel, Saul, and David.

Samuel (1—7)

- Samuel's Birth (1-2)
- God Calls Samuel (3)
- The Ark & the Philistines (4-6)
- Samuel's Judgeship (7)

Saul (8—15)

- The Demand for a King (8)
- Saul Chosen and Anointed (9-10)
- Saul's Reign & Rejection (13-15)

David (16—31)

- Introduction of David (16)
- David's & Goliath (17)
- David on the Run from Saul (18-26)
- David in Philistia (27-31)

*"Your servant
is
listening!"*

In 1 Samuel 3, we find the account of God calling Samuel to begin speaking through him as a prophet. Samuel was just a young boy, and while laying down to bed one night, he heard the Lord call him, but he thought it was Eli. He ran to Eli and said, "Here I am!" Confused, Eli let Samuel know he hadn't been summoned, and told the boy to go lie down. This happened a second and a third time, and finally Eli realized what was taking place. Eli knew it was the Lord calling to Samuel, and the old man gave Samuel this great advice: *"Go, lie down, and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant hears.'"* What wonderful advice! Today, we shouldn't lay in bed waiting for God to speak to us as He did Samuel. But we can go to His Word to humbly read and study it, and there hear the voice of God. We should approach the Bible with the attitude, "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears!"

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