

Behold, Your King!

Kingdom Expectations, Part One: 1 Samuel
Winter-Summer 2025



An Anchored Study Guide

1 Samuel: Behold Your King

Daily Study Introduction

Welcome to our study booklet through the phenomenal book of Samuel. I pray you'll be encouraged by the sovereign greatness of our God, the evil of our own sinful hearts, and the glorious revelations of Christ our King.

Now, here's a brief introduction with a few tips for how to get the most out of this booklet:

First, don't lose this booklet! The weight of Samuel's message grows as you work through its pages and reflect on the lessons you've already learned each week. Think about how great it will be by this summer—or whenever we finish 1 Samuel—to look back over these pages and see all sorts of notes and observations in a variety of colored pens. The glorious weight of the book's message will only increase... but only if you don't lose this booklet. 😊

Second, each day, read the designated passage in 1 Samuel listed under each study guide's title and answer a question for that day. You can choose to do one question a day—encouraged—or all the questions in one day—also encouraged, but not as encouraged.

A few final tips: Each question will be preceded by a reference to help guide you in knowing where to look for answers if necessary. Finally, leave a little room to add insights you gain from others. 😊 We'll be going over each passage weekly in Sunday School, and I know we will all learn from one another.

Can't wait to begin with all of you,

David

Beginner's Guide to 1 Samuel

What Kind of Book Is It?

What Is the Main Theme?

Who Wrote It?

Who Was It Originally Written For?

Why Was It Written?

How Was It Written?

If 1-2 Samuel Was a Picture...

“But These Kinds of People, Lord?”

1 Samuel 1:1-2:11

1:1-14, Hannah seems surrounded by people who—whether intentionally or not—add bitterness to her life. Peninnah acts out of malice, Elkanah bumbles with good intentions, and Eli demonstrates spiritual blindness.

What were Peninnah’s “real-world reasons” for her bitterness? Why wasn’t a full house of children enough for her?

How did her bitterness show itself?

1:12-14, Though Eli wasn’t physically blind yet (cf. 4:15), his spiritual blindness is already evident.

What “real-world reasons” contributed to Eli’s spiritual blindness (see 2:29; 3:13)?

1:15-28, Hannah’s face changes from sadness to peace. Look closely at the sequence of events leading up to this transformation (v.18b)

Why was her face sad to begin with?

Who was the surprising instrument of God’s peace in her life (v. 17)?

What encouragement can we draw from this, moving from lesser to greater (see Rom 8:33-34; Heb 7:25)?

2:1-11, Hannah’s thanksgiving song goes beyond her own situation (see 2:10). It’s like the “opening credits” of 1-2 Samuel—those scenes we often skip now with a click of a button—foreshadowing the themes of the entire book (see also 2 Samuel 22:1-23:7 for the “end credits”).

If you watched the “opening credits” of a movie, what might the music reveal?

The book of 1-2 Samuel lays out **KINGDOM EXPECTATIONS** for Israel’s king and the kingdom itself. It sets a precedent for how God will act toward His Anointed King throughout redemptive history—and, by extension, toward the people under the King’s rule. As we prepare to dig into this book, let’s prepare our hearts not only for the lessons it teaches but also for living with right kingdom values shaped by these kingdom expectations (see also *The Beatitudes—Inner Attitudes—of Christ’s True Kingdom Citizens* in Matt. 5:3-12):

- Who will be silenced in the end (2:3)?

- Whose ways will be dismayed (2:10)?

- Who will be exalted, and who will be humbled?

- How does this connect with Jesus’ first & second coming?

How God Defends His Name

1 Samuel 2:12-36

Have you ever worried, “What if my church leaders are secretly or openly evil? How will God defend His name then?”

2:12-26, List the evils of Eli’s sons:

How are they illustrations of Hannah’s song of *KINGDOM EXPECTATIONS* (see 2:1-11 Study)?

2:22-26, In God’s view—the only view that truly matters, by the way—Eli refused to rebuke his sons (see 3:13).

What does this say about the “rebuke” recorded here?

How could Eli have used his authority to stop them if he really wanted to?

What then were Eli’s motives in such insincere rebukes (see 2:29-30)?

2:11, 18-21, 26, Despite the arrogant sin of Eli's sons, God's purposes continue to quietly advance against this wicked priest and his "sons of worthlessness" (v. 12).

How do we see God's purposes "quietly advancing"?

What can God's timelines teach you about patience?

2:27-36, Who is the "faithful priest" God promises to raise up? This priest will "walk before" God's Anointed always (v. 35). Is this really Samuel (Is Samuel ever talked about like a priest)? Can you identify where the Bible speaks of another priesthood raised up to stand before the Anointed during His Millennial reign?

2:25, The recalcitrant (*look it up!*) response of Eli's sons shows the kind of judgment Yahweh sometimes chooses to use.

How do you know you are in "Hophni-and-Phinehas-Sized Trouble"?

The Blessing and Burden of God's Word

1 Samuel 3

3:1, Why is the rarity of God's Word seen as a form of judgment in the Bible (see Amos 8:11-12 or 1 Sam 28:15; or consider the context of who this book was written to originally)?

Didn't they have the Law of Moses? What was the real problem? What was Israel's (assumed) attitude towards this problem?

How might such a complacent condition be found in you? And how should your awareness of such an attitude terrify you?

3:2-10, Why is Samuel so slow to recognize God's voice? How is he in contrast to Eli in this way?

3:2-10, Instead of trying to imagine how these verses might apply to you (e.g., “Maybe if I stay up all night God will speak to me”), consider what they teach about your God:

Think of at least two truths they reveal about God and His character:

1.

2.

3?

3:11-18, Perhaps so few are devoted to the Word of God because its message is so hard to stomach.

How was Samuel, in his delivery of the message God revealed to him, a contrast to Eli?

How might you be tempted to believe the opening of your Bible to be a light and simple thing? And how should we tune our ears every time God’s Word is opened before us?

Where Has All the Glory Gone?

1 Samuel 4

4:1-4, How was Israel choosing to think about the following in this chapter?

a) Their Problem:

b) Their God:

4:4, Perhaps they thought their God could be limited to a box. But how is the Ark of God described? Why do you think it is given such a long title?

4:5-9, The words spoken by the Philistines are deeply ironic (see 1 Sam. 2:3). Why are their words ironic? Why did God not defend His honor this time (v. 10)?

4:10-11, How does God respond to the Israelites' attempt to "twist His arm" into helping them?

4:12-22, Eli's daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, proclaims, "The glory has departed." In her conclusion, she is both right and wrong.

How is she **right**?

How is she **wrong** (*hint*: it's in next week's chapter)?

Deeper Reflection: What factors in your life make you most susceptible to "boxing God in" in your thinking? Reflect on how you perceive God when you feel angry or anxious.

No God Beside You

1 Samuel 5:1-7:2

Review: What did you learn last week about why God sometimes departs from His people and allows their defeat?

How was their treatment of the Ark of God a reflection of their attitude toward Him?

5:1-12, A fun secondary title for this section could be *The Most Glorious One in Hand-to-Hand Combat!* 😊 What is your favorite part of this chapter?

This chapter is more than just a good laugh—it carries a serious message for faith. How is the account of the Ark and Dagon meant to reform the faith of God's people?

6:1-16, But wait, could it be that God is also calling for true faith among the Philistines?

What is God saying to these Philistine lords out of the mouths of cows?

6:19-7:2, At first glance, this seems harsh. Why is God harder on His own people than the Philistines (especially since the worshipers of Dagon likely didn't treat the Ark in a "kosher" manner)?

a) What was the great sin of the men of Beth-shemesh (v.19)?

b) Why is Yahweh often more severe with His own people (see 1 Pet 4:17; Amos 3:2; Rom 2:9)?

The Security of True Repentance

1 Samuel 7

7:1-2, Why does this chapter begin with Israel lamenting over Yahweh? Considering God's opinion in verse 3, what kind of lamenting might this be?

7:3-9, What kinds of prayers does God want to hear from His people? Namely, what kinds of situations might God allow to reform your prayer life?

7:7, What made this situation so dangerous in the Philistines' view? After all, Israel might have just been having a family reunion here!

7:10-12, Reflect on how God has led His people so far in 1 Samuel. How might we agree with Samuel that "God leads His dear children along" (v. 12)?

7:12, Does faith rely solely on new information? Why is remembering the past often critical to living faithfully in the future?

7:13-17, Let's revisit verse 9. What does this chapter teach about the significance of having a priest intercede on our behalf before God?

How might the hardest times press your gaze upon Jesus, your High Priest, all the more? How is this view of Him "security"?

When Idols Look Like Good Things

1 Samuel 8

8:1-6, What was the background behind Israel's request for a king? (see 1 Sam 12:12ff)

8:5-6, Was wanting a king a good or bad thing? Argue for both sides:

a) A good thing (see Deut 17:14-20):

b) A sinful rebellion (see 1 Sam 12:12):

Reflection:

When do good things or gifts from God become idols in your life?
What's the heart issue here?

8:7-22, Imagine you're Israel, handing Samuel a list of ideal qualifications and skills for a king. What would that list include?

Contrast this with the kind of king Israel actually needed (see Deut 17:14-20; 1 Sam 2:1-11):

8:9, How might God's refusal to answer all our requests actually be a kindness at times?

Reflection:

What prayer, according to Ps 37:4-5, can we pray to align our desires with God's will, ensuring that He both gives us what we want and that we want what He gives?

8:19-20, Israel is warned about the consequences of having a king. Why isn't education enough to change their hearts? In what areas of your life might education not be enough to overcome the desires of your heart?

Lost Donkeys & People

1 Samuel 9-10

9:1-10:27, Who's looking for what in these chapters?

9:1-2, Compare your list of Israel's ideal qualifications for a king (from the previous chapter) with Saul himself.

How does his impressive first impression measure up?

Why is God giving them what they want instead of what they need?

9:3-21, How do we see God's providence in how He brings Saul into the picture?

9:16-17, SIGNIFICANT: What are God's purposes in raising up Saul?

(Does this remind you of another book in which God raises up imperfect people for His saving purposes?)

10:17-24, This scene is a bit humorous—what is Israel incapable of doing on their own?

What spiritual lesson does Israel learn by needing God's help to find their lost king?

Do you see any hints a character flaws in Saul in this?

12:6-12, But what if we were to look at all this another way? What is the great "sticky and stubborn love" revealed in this chapter about Israel's God?

Gladness in a “Savior-King”

1 Samuel 11

Project: Read through and highlight all the references to “save” or “salvation” in the chapter, and underline the results of salvation.

Main Point: It is always God’s mercy to bring great salvation through any king for the gladness of His people in His salvation.

11:1-8, Remember "Hide-and-Seek Saul" from chapter 10. What has changed to bring about this new boldness in him? Did he suddenly attend a finishing school in Gibeah?¹ What is his “secret sauce”?

11:9-11, Don’t be mistaken—Saul’s transformation wasn’t mystical or due to some secret recipe. The Spirit of God strengthened him and “turned him into another man” as he acted in faith on God’s promises (*see* 1 Sam 10:6-13).

Here’s the question: For *what purpose* did the Spirit of God come upon Saul? Consider God’s specific promise to him (*see* 1 Sam 9:16-17).

¹ If I had to guess a name for said school, it would be *Uncle Benny’s Finishing School for Those Tired of Their Left-Handed Dominance and Other Vices* (cf. Judges 20:16).

What evidence (fruit) of the Spirit of God is seen in:

a) Saul?

b) The nation as a whole?

11:7-8, This will be significant in the coming chapters. How many people mustered around Saul's leadership at this point in his rule?

11:12-15, Why were the people "exceedingly glad" (v. 15)?

Sinners in the Hand of a Sinless God

1 Samuel 12

Introduction: Reflect on a time when you became truly aware of your sinfulness in a particular area.

What was the area, and how did God humble you?

How might you describe that moment—even through a difficult person or situation—as a “grace” from God?

12:1-5, Why does Samuel first establish his innocence as a judge and prophet before issuing judgment on Israel?

12:6-11, What is the purpose of this history lesson? What point is Samuel making?

12:6-17, Why was Israel’s request for a king sinful? What kind of king were they seeking?

12:18-19, Have you ever been scared by a natural disaster, like an earthquake or thunderstorm? How do natural disasters *always* humble humanity despite their technological advancements?

Why is Israel so troubled by this storm, especially considering it occurred during harvest season?

12:20-22, If the assurance in this passage comes through an intercessor praying for Israel, how much more assurance do we have in Christ interceding for us (see Luke 22:32; John 17:9, 15; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25)?

12:23, Reflect specifically on what it would mean for Samuel to cease praying for the people. How does this give greater assurance of Christ praying for us?

What a Little Pressure Can Reveal

1 Samuel 13:1-15

13:1-5, Do the math:

How many individual Philistine horsemen and chariots were there against each individual Israelite? (Note: this doesn't include the Philistine foot soldiers, who were "like the sand of the seashore.")

[_____ *Chariots*] ÷ =

[_____ *Horsies*] ÷ =

Wait. How many soldiers did Saul originally have (*see* 1 Sam 11:8)? Where have all the soldiers gone?

13:6-7, Why were all Israel—and their king—so terrified of the Philistines? Imagine yourself as a regular Israelite foot soldier:

a) What is your "armament situation" (*see* 13:19-22)?

b) What is your "foot soldier-friendship situation"?

2:1-11, Big Picture Memory: What does Israel—and we as readers—need to remember when they are at their most desperate point?

13:8-14, What were Saul's "real-world" problems or excuses for his actions?

What important departure from faith did Saul reveal in his response?

13:15, What does the simple geographical note in this verse reveal about Saul's deeper, ongoing issue?

a) What type of assurance did Saul **overvalue**?

b) What type of assurance did Saul **undervalue**?

A Tale of Two Halves (and Hearts)

1 Samuel 13:15-14:52

13:15-23, What was the very practical reason a majority of the Israelite army was in hiding in caves, thickets, cliffs, cellars, pits, behind Aunt Miriam's oversized knitting basket, up a convenient tree with suspiciously low-hanging branches, inside a barrel labeled 'No Soldiers Here,' in the Fire Swamp (watching out for those ROUSes, of course), or pretending to be statues in the town square? (see 13:6-7)

14:1-7, Who was Jonathan hanging out with? Who was Saul with?

How did these associations shape or solidify their character?

14:6, Jonathan's "perhaps" is one of my favorite expressions of faith in God (similar to Elihu's "What if"—see Winter Retreat message).

Why is this a statement of Faith by Jonathan?

Why is this different from brash foolishness?

In what way is “perhaps” an expression of humility on Jonathan’s part?

14:8-23, What impact does Jonathan’s bold faith have on those around him?

14:24-46, How does Saul sabotage his own victory? And can you guess why this chapter is called *The Tale of Two Halves (and Hearts)*?

14:47-52, Why is Saul’s kingdom and reign summarized here? (*Hint*: where do such lists normally occur? See 1 Kings 11:41-43; 14:19-20, 29-31, etc.)

To Obey Is Always Better

1 Samuel 15

15:1-9, If we were to guess at the unbeliever's opinions of Yahweh, as if reading Amazon product reviews about Him, what might some of His "one-star reviews" be—especially regarding His conquest policy against enemies like the Amalekites?

Dig Into the Backstory: What did the Amalekites do to deserve this judgment? (See Ex 17:8-16; Deut 25:17-19.)

Using the verses provided, list at least two of the Bible's **greater priorities and concerns** regarding God and his ways? (See Deut 32:4; 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 19:9; 145:8-9; Rev 15:3-4.)

1.

2.

15:10-11, Why was Samuel so sad? Who was Samuel angry at?

15:12-35, What can we see in Saul's response and view of his own sin?

- **15:13**

- **15:15**

- **15:20-21**
- **15:24**
- **15:30**
- **15:35**

***What Are Saul's
True Priorities?***

15:11, 35, What does this chapter reveal about how God feels about sin?

15:28-29, This chapter also teaches that God doesn't change. How do the two truths of God's "regret" and His unchanging nature combine to deepen our worship of Him?

15:35, Saul never appreciated the gladness of assurance that comes from obeying God's Word. Notice how he is the only one in this chapter not grieving—his time will come, but it will be too late. Let us then weep for those who will not weep for themselves. What has Saul lost (see 1 Sam 11)?

Two Anointed Side by Side

1 Samuel 16

Who Says We Don't Do Coloring Pages at Anchored?

Read through the chapter and highlight the words for “see/sight” and “chose/chosen” with two different colors.

16:1-5, Why is Samuel nervous about going to Bethlehem, and why are its elders shaking in their sandals?

16:6-13, Remember 1 Samuel 13:14—now whose turn is it to pick a king? What do you think 13:14 means? I've provided two very different options. Pick the one you think and be ready to argue your case.

a) Is God choosing David because of his good character?

b) Or is God choosing David based on His sovereign will?

How might each of these choices affect the way you interpret the rest of the book, especially when David fails morally and his heart doesn't seem so upright (see 2 Sam 11-12)?

16:14-23, What is the potential significance of David also being Saul's choice here?

16:14, Why is this evil spirit terrorizing Saul? What do Saul and his servants know about this spirit? And what stands out to you about how they seek to solve Saul's spirit-problem?

How God's Anointed Sees, Hears, & Responds

1 Samuel 17

Let's Start Off with Some Big Picture Observations...

- o Circle all the references to “reproach” or similar words (mock, despise, etc.) with one color.
- o Underline all references to “fear” with a different color.
- o List all of Goliath’s armaments and draw a box—using a different color—around each personal reference or description of him. (*Examples: v.4 “Goliath...who’s height,” v. 23, “the champion, the Philistine,” v. 32, “this Philistine”).*)

Two More Observations:

Goliath’s formal name disappears after v. ____.

David’s first words in the Bible come at v. ____.

17:1-24, How should 16:7 shape how we view these impressive verses?

What do you already know about proud words? (See 2:3; 10)

Why is Israel “dismayed” and “greatly afraid” here? (See 2:10)

17:23, 25-27, What does David’s first recorded statement in Scripture reveal about his faith?

17:28-30, It may surprise you that David’s own brothers don’t believe in him. (I know a carpenter’s son from Nazareth who isn’t surprised by this; see John 7:4). Why do you think Eliab even needs to be in the narrative—it’s not like the author was hurting in his word count. I’d argue Eliab has a critical part to play. What two other characters, very close by, does Eliab mirror?

1. _____ . 2. _____ .

17:31-39, The secret of David’s faith is revealed here—strength of faith grows through smaller situations requiring faithfulness. How did his shepherding grow his faith? And don’t give *fluffy answers* like, “He learned to trust God more.” Duh! What specifically was his calling by God as a shepherd that required faith in God for His grace and help to perform?

Count the Contrast, 17:40-54:

How many words are used to record the pre-battle “face off”:

_____ (vv. 41-47)?

How many words are used for the battle: _____ (vv. 48-49)?

Obviously, this isn’t how Peter Jackson would have done it—Hebrews have different priorities than Hollywood. What does this show us about how Yahweh’s anointed sees and hears—and, by extension, how the Ultimate Anointed One’s people should see, hear, and respond?

All Enemies Visible & Invisible

1 Samuel 18-19

18:1-5, What is the royal significance of Johnathan's treatment of David? *Why would you do that?*

18:6-30, Can you track a progress in Saul's hostility towards David in these verses?

- **16:21-22**
- **18:8-9**
- **18:11-12**
- **18:14-15**
- **18:28-29**

What is the main reason Saul's hostility towards David increases?

Why is David so naïve regarding Saul's hostility on 1 Samuel 18?

What does **1 Samuel 18** teach us about the kinds of enemies Yahweh sometimes delivers His servants from?

19:1-24, Remember this: hidden enmity always goes public eventually. But who does Yahweh enlist to guard His anointed one?

Which form of “protection” is most impressive to you, and why?

What encouragement can be found in the creativity of Yahweh’s protection? What concerns?

2 Sam 22:1, “But what about you?” (— Russell) Will Yahweh do for you what He did for David? The Ultimate Anointed’s people may not share all the specific protections of the Anointed, but they share the same **Protection Principle** (Dale Ralph Davis, 202). God will protect you until your time and work are done. How might this protection coverage be a source of encouragement and exhortation for you?

Critical Covenant Comforts

1 Samuel 20

20:1-23, David and Jonathan’s friendship might be one of the most famous pictures of biblical friendship (see Chris Johnson’s sermon on “Friendship” from Camp Stead). Their bond was forged in trials and through covenant. What was the covenant they made with each other? Notice how it is reaffirmed as often as they get a chance (see 18:1-5; 23:16-18).

20:12-17, Both David and Jonathan promise—under pain of death—to act towards one another with steadfast, stubborn loyalty (Heb. *Hesed*). Remember that huge biblical word? What can we learn about its quality and character from this chapter alone?

20:24-34, The kings of the earth always rage against Yahweh and His anointed (see Ps. 2). In worldly wisdom, Jonathan's loyalty to David makes absolutely no sense. What will such loyalty cost Jonathan on this earth and in human relationships?

How does Jonathan's costly loyalty parallel our own loyalty to the Lord Jesus, God's Ultimate Anointed?

Something to Think About: Unlike our situation, Jonathan continues to show loyalty to Saul also (see 1 Sam. 31). We'll develop *why* he does this over the rest of the book of 1 Samuel.

20:35-42, Returning to David... Despite his outer circumstances, David can leave Jonathan "in peace" (v. 42). How can David experience peace in such a hostile world?

How can we, as subjects of the Ultimate Anointed One, also "go in peace" in all our going?

Provisions and Protections of Yahweh's Anointed

1 Samuel 21-22

21:1-9, David's "story" to Ahimelech is weak—"You didn't have time to grab...your sword?" His deceit raises ethical questions and makes us wonder about the man after God's own heart. But despite his weaknesses, what provisions does David find from God in this moment?

How does the Ultimate Anointed One—Jesus Christ—model perfect confidence in His Father's daily provision (see Matt 6:25-34)?

21:10-15, David's escape to Gath is a case of "out of the frying pan and into the fire" (see 17:4). How does this decision show the intense pressure David was under?

Where God Deepens His Truth in Us: If you're wondering why David *needed* to go to "Gath," read Psalms 34 or 56 and reflect. What do these psalms show us David learned *through* Gath?

22:1-5, David takes his family to Moab for safety. Why Moab of all places (see Ruth 4:16-17)? How can reflecting on this encourage you to be glad in your God who is sometimes doing things with purposes for comfort centuries in the making?

22:6-23, David's deceit with Ahimelech was rooted in fear, but Saul's treatment of the priesthood is far worse. Notice though: How does Saul's hostility toward the priesthood become an unintentional "gift" to David (see 23:4, 10-12)?

22:6-8, Saul is unraveling, consumed by bloodthirsty paranoia rooted in envy and rebellion. How is he losing control?

22:9-10, Doeg's actions place him among Scripture's most unlikeable characters. Consider these perspectives:

a) How might his actions be sinfully & demonically motivated?

b) How might they also be "from the Lord" (see Lam 3:38; 1 Sam 2:30-34)?

22:5, 22-23, For David, God's Word was a treasure, even when it was hard to hear (v. 5). How could it be better to be under God's Word and in danger than "safe in Moab"?

God's Supply Is Hidden at the Center

1 Samuel 23

Big Picture Observations: The more you study this chapter, the more its beautiful structure reveals itself. Yes, that's right—this is a Tate Trovato Honorary Chiasm. (For those unfamiliar with a "chiasm," think of the beautiful symmetry of a ham sandwich: the "meat" is at the center, and everything else builds toward it. And if you don't know who Tate Trovato is... Abby Trovato will gladly explain the joke.)

As you reread this chapter, complete the following section titles...

a) 23:1-5, Philistines Prompt _____

b) 23:6-14a, Keilah's _____

c) 23:14b, God's _____

- c) 23:15-18, Jonathan's _____

- b) 23:19-24, Ziphites' _____

- a) 23:25-29, Philistines Provide _____

(In case you're questioning my structure, David inspired it. Check out Ps 54:4—which happens to be this psalm's central verse)

23:1-13, It might be tempting to see only problems for Yahweh's anointed—especially when you're the one constantly on the run. But this chapter is written to emphasize David's marvelous privilege in all this. Can you spot his meaty privilege?

23:14-18, Even with this privilege, God’s people don’t always see it while they’re on the run. How is Jonathan shown to be a critical relationship in David’s life?

What lessons and cautions can this picture of friendship provide for our own closest relationships?

23:19-24, Before we roast the Ziphites—they were fellow Judeans, after all—consider their condition. What good reasons might they have had to give David up? (See 22:19-20)

23:25-29, What comfort can we draw from God’s creative providence by the end of this chapter?

The Sacred Place of Yahweh's Anointed

1 Samuel 24

Big Picture Note: 1 Samuel 24-26 form a thematic trilogy teaching the central message: *"Leave room for the wrath of God"* (see Romans 12:14-21). (See? *Watching Star Wars can have some spiritual benefits in your life.*)

24:1-7, What conviction grips David so deeply that he restrains his men with such intensity (see 2 Samuel 1:14)?

How have you seen David's reverence for Yahweh's anointed shape other decisions and convictions?

24:8-15, David's high view of the sacredness of being Yahweh's anointed is unmistakable. How might this conviction also serve as a source of assurance and comfort for David amidst his trials?

And what about for those people who are “in” the Lord’s Ultimate Anointed One (see Eph 1:3-14)? What assurances do we have?

Why is “*leaving room for the wrath of God*” a self-denying act of faith?

24:16-22, What were Saul’s conclusions about David?

What might be the author’s aim in highlighting Saul’s confession here (see 1 Samuel 16:21)?

24:15, David’s words aren’t soft, westernized platitudes. In fact, they carry a tone that can feel harsh, even imprecatory (*prayerful curses*).

Why do such prayers in the Bible clash with western sensibilities?

How might our faith grow deeper by learning to pray this way?

The Other Way God Protects You

1 Samuel 25

25:1, Why might Samuel's death be significant in the life of David?

25:2-12, How is the character of Nabal introduced, and what does this reveal about his—well—character?

25:13, What “practical pressures” might David have been under at this point that could explain his response here—though certainly not excusing it?

-
-
-

25:14-38, Who did Abigail's actions save David from becoming?
(*Hint*: See 1 Samuel 22:11-19)

25:26-31, How would bloodshed here be sinful for David, especially considering how bloody his sword has been throughout this book?

25:32-33, Don't you see it? Abigail is a messenger of God's grace—a Providential Roadblock in the way of David's heated will. How might God place similar people in your path? Why is it sometimes difficult to hear them? (*Notice*: Sometimes such messengers may appear "nameless," see 24:14-17; 2 Kings 5:13.)

25:39-44, Yes, God protects His anointed from shipwrecking His kingdom purposes. But what doesn't God protect David from here?

Main Point: God's development of His kingdom on earth is a grace of His involvement too. It wouldn't have even been safe in the best of hands (David or Samuel; see 1 Sam 16:6). But it should be remembered (44:43-44): just because God protects his servant from ultimate failure, he doesn't protect him from worldly folly.

God's Final Exam

1 Samuel 26

26:1-2, David has been tested again and again in his trust of Yahweh's promises. (Notice how this also contrasts Saul.) Now, it's time for the Final Exam. What lessons has David already learned that he will be tested on again here? (*Recall*: 1 Samuel 24-26 is a trilogy.)

- **24:3-4**, Just Because Your Enemy Is an Easy Target...?
- **25:36-38**, How Can God Strike Down Insulters...?
- **25:28-29**, How Safe Is the Place Yahweh's Anointed...?

26:3-22, A few big picture preparations here:

a) List all self-made protections Saul has in place here:

b) Underline all the references to Saul's "spear" in this chapter:

26:9-11, Here, David's response and his faith serve as a lesson for us. Faith doesn't have to know specifics to trust. In fact, sometimes the best thing for your faith is a little inspired imagination. How does David's imagination regarding God's judgment strengthen his faith?

26:13-20, Why is it so detestable for David to be cast out of the land?

Why does David need in-person worship? How might such values challenge our Western, individualized views on the issue?

26:21-25, In the end, how "safe" was Saul really with all his defenses (*see v.12*)?

How "safe" is David, despite being hunted day and night by Saul?

What Saul Can Still Do to You

1 Samuel 27

27:1, Now this doesn't seem to make sense. Why is David fleeing now—after all that (1 Sam 24-26)?

27:2-4, What are David's "real-life" concerns to worry about now?

27:5-12, List all the characters in this chapter.

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It seems like everyone is here who should be here, right? Wait a minute—someone significant is missing. Can you spot who's not here?

Can you also spot the significance of this absence to the character David displays in this chapter—especially in his tactical decisions?

27:8-12, David's raid policy is actually quite countercultural (see 1 Samuel 30:2). But is it in the same way the conquest was? Why does David see the need to both flee to Achish and perform this scorched earth, cover-up raiding policy?

Bottom Line Question: What does this chapter—arguably a poor showing for someone with such high marks in God's training school (1 Samuel 24-26)—teach us about what Saul can still do to you? In other words, how might growing worldly concerns (v.3)—not all bad things always (see 1 Cor 7:33-34)—especially challenge your faith as you grow older and bear more responsibilities?

This chapter tells us about the True Hero of 1-2 Samuel, doesn't it? How does God's electing grace and steadfast love encourage our hearts toward obedience that comes from faith?

Night

1 Samuel 28

28:1-5, Take special note of the geographical location markers in 1 Samuel 27-29...

Here, in v. 4, the Philistines are at [*Your Answer:* _____] gathering against Israel.

In 27:1, when we catch back up to David, the Philistines are back at [*Your Answer:* _____].

Where does the episode of 1 Samuel 28 fit into the chronology of the battle? Notice anything unusual (not on your handy map—that thing is useless)?

28:4-6, If you didn't catch it on your own—because your handy booklet map is completely impotent at this most critical juncture!—the narrator leaves David at 28:2 and fast-forwards to the night before the battle in 28:4. Then, the narrator rewinds us to David still in Philistine territory at Aphek (29:1).

What might be the author's literary purpose for structuring the narrative this way?

28:7-14, You know what this Study Guide needs? A good, old-fashioned Sunday Night Hangout Debate! ☺

What do you think: Is this...

a) the real Samuel appearing to Saul, or

b) another demonic spirit sent to terrorize him (see 16:14)?

28:9, Why does God warn His people about practices like seeking to speak to the dead (see Deuteronomy 18:9-14)? Is it condemned because it's a foolish waste of time or because it's an easy way for people to take advantage of others?

Why do you think Saul's men seemed to have no problem finding this medium?

28:15-19, What is the message for Saul?

28:15-25, What does this chapter teach us about the horror of being abandoned by God and without His Word?

Wait—how was Saul without God's Word? (See 1 Samuel 13:13-14; 15:19-23; cf. Proverbs 28:9.)

Final Thought: It's almost as if this whole chapter is squeezed in here to give David some perspective on his tough situation. What perspective might that be?

Listening to Yourself Instead of Talking to Yourself

1 Samuel 29-30

28:1-2, Well, well, well, how the turn-tables. How do David's tactics now put him in a tight spot when the author finally fast-forwards back to David (29:1)?

29:1-11, Once again, notice the absence of Yahweh in David's thoughts, speech, and decision-making. While the author's silence here is striking, we must remember that in biblical narrative silence often speaks volumes.

Remarkably, even though God is absent from David's mind, He still rescues David—through a real Hebrew earworm of a jingle that made its way as far as Aphek (v. 5)!

What are the wonders and cautions to take away from Yahweh's faithfulness to His fumbling servant?

30:1-6, The timing here is striking. This can't be luck—it has Sovereign fingerprints all over it.

What might God have to show David—and you—through all this?

30:6, *“Strengthened himself in Yahweh his God”*

a) What does this **not mean** David did?

b) What **does** this mean?

30:7-8, Can you “Spot It”? What’s the difference between David in 1 Samuel 27:1-28:1 and David in 1 Samuel 30?

Bonos: Can you spot the difference in your life when you are speaking to yourself rather than just listening to yourself? How?

30:9-15, To reuse the well-worn phrase, “One man’s [*useless Egyptian slave*] is another man’s [*necessary providence of God*].” What do you think about this little providence of God? How necessary was it to David’s need and mission?

30:16-31, This is the final section on David in the first half of *1-2 Samuel*, and it almost feels like an introduction to 2 Samuel. What do we learn about the **wisdom** and **graciousness** of Yahweh’s anointed here? How might this be highlighted through the contrast between him and the other characters in this chapter?

When God's Kingdom Seems to Be Losing

1 Samuel 31

31:1-3, We know our author has the power to fast-forward and rewind wherever he wills (see 28:4; 29:1). So why then does he show up late for this critical battle in the life of Saul? Why does it feel like he almost wants us to miss it?

31:2, There isn't a scene from Jonathan's life we can't learn from. Why is Jonathan here, with his forsaken father, still swinging a sword for a fallen kingdom (see 2 Samuel 1:23)?

31:3-10, Sometimes God's visible kingdom in this church age seems as triumphant as this Israelite army on Mount Gilboa. How does the author linger here long enough to show us the painfulness of this defeat? How does he want his readers to feel? Consider the effect this defeat should have on even the most godly in the land (see 2 Samuel 1:17-27).

31:8-10, But there are also headlines coming from a Hebrew hand. How can the author turn an Israelite loss into a subtle dig against the Philistines and their gods? ☺

31:11-13, Clearly, God is not defeated. His Word has not returned to Him void—God’s Word never fails (see 28:16-19). Let’s discuss the men of Jabesh-Gilead in closing. Why might these men be moved to fight for the remains of Saul (*see 1 Samuel 11 or possibly Judges 21:8-15 for ideas*)?

Final Reflection:

Consider the audience and the dating of authorship one last time. What would a nation, likely facing exile and judgment for disobedience to God’s Word (*and the apparent external defeat of God’s visible and earthly kingdom*), need to see and learn from Mount Gilboa?

Highlights from 1 Samuel

What was your favorite chapter in this study guide and why?

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Which application(s) has stuck with you most throughout the series?

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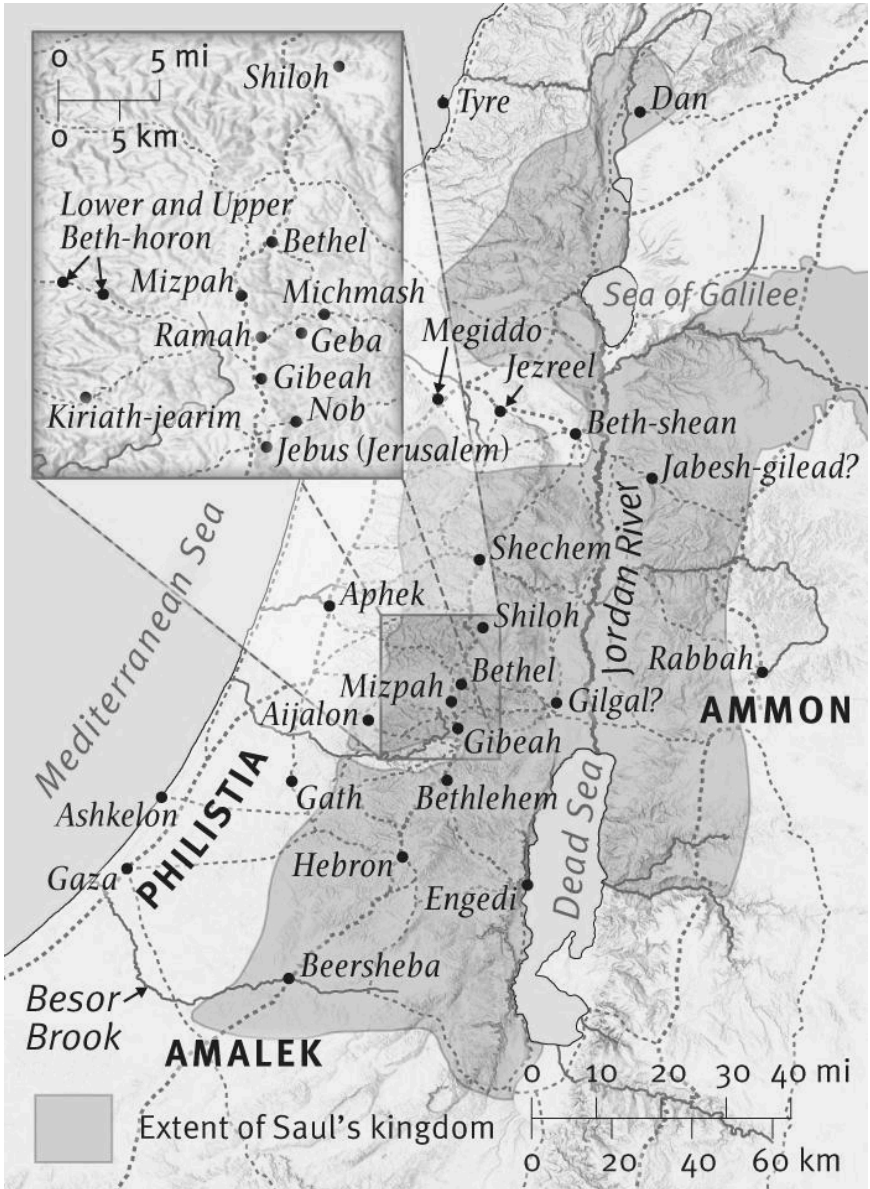
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What would you like to see more of in 2 *Samuel* through this study guide approach?

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