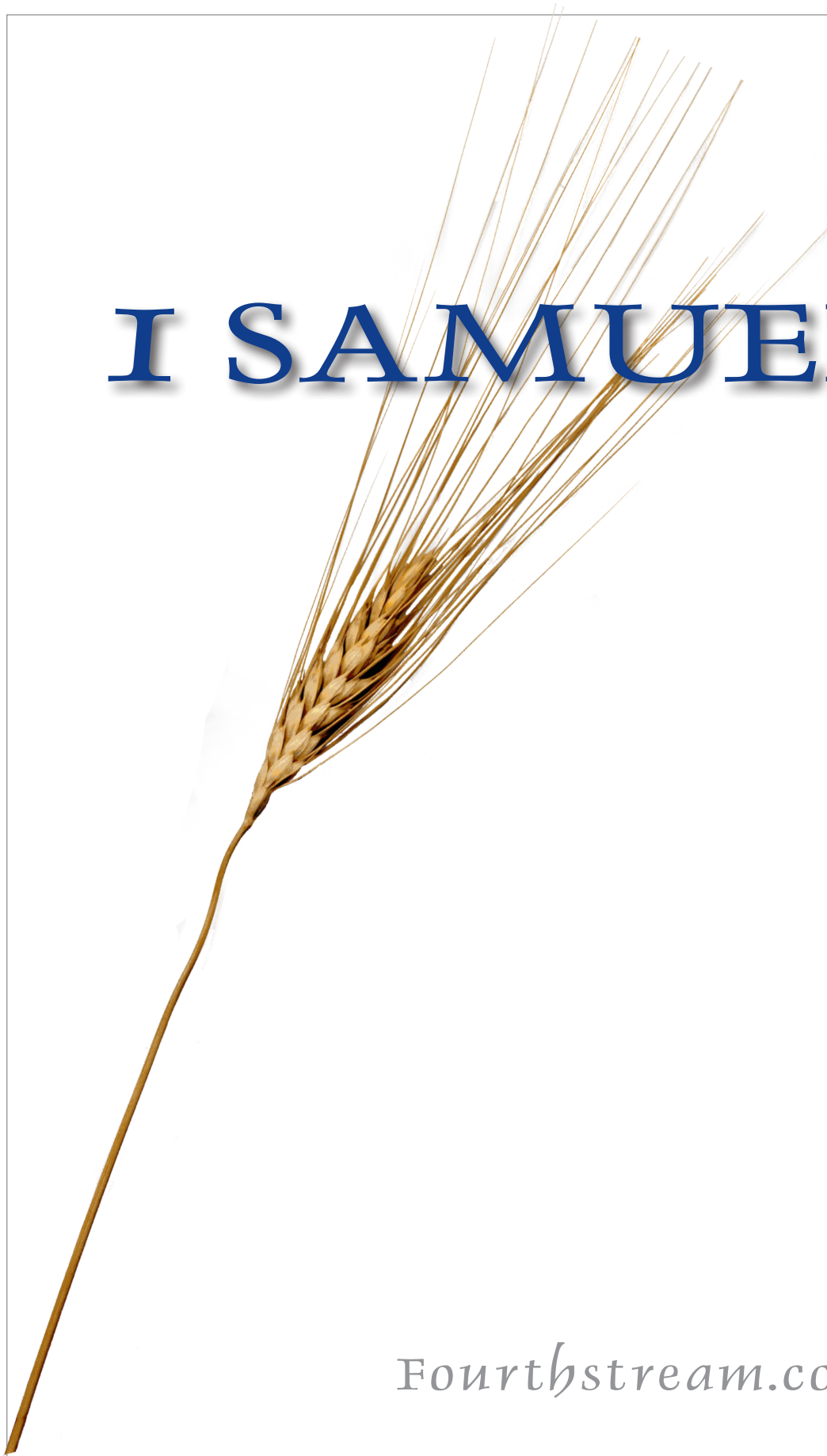


I SAMUEL



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Welcome to the book of 1 Samuel!

To begin your study of 1 Samuel, meditate upon the contents of the book reflected in the overview chart below. What are the major movements of the book? 1 Samuel begins with Israel's last judge (Samuel), continues with the people's choice for a king (Saul), and closes with God's choice of a king (David). A key verse is 8:6. This verse indicates Samuel's attitude (what is it?) toward the people's desire (what was it?). A theocracy is government where God is the ultimate authority. To submit in a monarchy means to have a man as a ruler or king. Read 13:1-7 with regard to "rulers" of the people.

1 SAMUEL		People's King	
Samuel the Judge		Reign of Saul	
	<i>Rise</i>	<i>Decline</i>	<i>Fall</i>
3:1,19; 7:15,16	15:9	15:22,23	16:3,12,13
1-7	8-16	16-31	

Give us a king to rule over us! 8:6

Also note the passages listed within the overview chart above. Take this opportunity to refer to and note each one, relating the section titles to the appropriate passage. What have you learned so far about 1 Samuel?

Open Your Heart as You Read!

Joshua opened with the charge to conquer and closed with a commitment to keeping God's commands. Judges opens with conditions of moral decay and closes with consequences of moral decline. Ruth opens with resolve and closes with reward. 1 Samuel begins with the call of Saul and closes with his casket and David's crowning.

Three characters provide instruction as we observe their contrasting lives. What do you learn from the life of Samuel? The life of Saul? The life of David? Just as Israel experienced cycles of sin, moral decay, and moral decline, so we too must be careful not to *do what is right in our own eyes*. Each compromise brought more misery to Saul. God's favor is experienced as we obey Him. The consequences of disobedience are reflected in 15:22,23.

AUTHOR

The author of the books of Samuel is unknown. It is likely, however, that many of Samuel's written records were employed in the book's composition (1 Samuel 10:25).

DATE

Internal evidence indicates that Samuel was written after the death of Solomon. Most conservative scholars date the books somewhat after the beginning of the divided kingdom, perhaps about 903 or 900 B.C.

OTHER BACKGROUND

1 and 2 Samuel get their title from the prophet Samuel, the key character of the opening chapters. Since he was the last of the judges, one of the greatest prophets, founder of the school of the prophets, and the one who anointed both Saul and David, it is not inappropriate that these books bear his name. The book of 1 Samuel describes the transition of leadership in Israel from the period of the Judges to that of the Kings. 1 Samuel describes events covering at least 60 years, from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul. The book centers around three persons: Samuel (1-7), Saul (8-15), and David (16-31).

Why study the book of I Samuel ?!

1. There are some interesting principles for parents, particularly for fathers, in this book. Two men, Eli and Samuel, were faithful in their jobs but unfaithful with their children. Their jobs or careers pulled them away from their responsibilities to their families. Someone has said that it is not men's jobs that pull them out of their homes, but their egos. Learn the lesson of the two fathers, Eli and Samuel. To be forewarned is to be forearmed as fathers.

2. In King Saul, we see a person God has given everything needed to be successful, but because of disobedience and pride, he ultimately failed his people and his God. Many Christ-followers today have tremendous God-given abilities that can be used for His honor. It is not uncommon to start off big as Saul did, then quickly fizzle out, as Saul did. We need to realize that our spiritual walk is not a sprint...it's a marathon! It takes endurance, self-discipline, and closeness to God. May we fully use the talents and gifts God has given us throughout our entire lives.

3. Saul, the people's king, could rule others but he could not rule himself. Such an epitaph could be written over the graves of many leaders. One thing many spiritual leaders often fail to learn is that when they try to be in control, they quickly get out of control, until they come under control, (God's)! This lesson runs throughout the life of King Saul, as we readily see in 1 Samuel.



1 Samuel Chapter Chart

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Samuel's Birth & Calling

Read Chapters 1-3

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		
3		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways was Samuel's birth supernatural?
2. What do we learn about Samuel from his parents?
3. What do we learn about the condition of Israel as we observe Eli and his sons?
4. What are the specifics of Hannah's praise?
5. What was the significance of the several night calls of God to Samuel?
6. How did Israel know that Samuel was speaking for God?

What about today?

1. What lessons for raising your own children can you glean from these three chapters?
2. As you consider Hannah's praise, what instruction do you receive?
3. Note 3:21. What reason is given for God's appearance?
4. What does it mean to have "none of your words fail?"

My thoughts about being chosen by God for a purpose:

Israel Challenged & Delivered

Read Chapters 4-7

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
4		
5		
6		
7		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What was Israel's attitude toward the ark of the covenant?
2. What do these first verses reveal about Israel's view of God?
3. How did God choose to display His power and holiness despite Israel's disobedience?
How is this power displayed to the Philistines? The Israelites?
4. What was the key to Israel's renewed pursuit of God?
5. How did God deliver Israel in this section? How was she challenged?

What about today?

1. Our attitude toward God must be one of fear (reverence), respect, and love.
2. As God views your heart today, how would it be like that of the Philistines?
3. In what way is your heart like the Israelites?
4. In what way is your heart like Samuel's (note 7:3-5)?

My thoughts about my own heart in relation to the examples in this section:

The Rise of Saul

Read Chapters 8-12

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What does Samuel say will be the eventual reaction of the people to having a king?
2. How do we see God's sovereignty through the anointing of Saul?
3. How did Saul feel about this choice?
4. How would you interpret Saul's conduct at this point?
5. What is the significance of Saul's "prophesying with the prophets?"
6. Note another historical review in chapter 12. It appears that periodic reflection and evaluation were healthy for Israel!

What about today?

1. In what ways do we as a nation and as believers establish our own kings?
2. Observe 12:24,25. In this context, to turn aside meant to do wickedness. To "do wickedness" meant to be swept away. The actions of Saul and David represent two possible choices in our walk with God.
3. Have you engaged in your own reflective "historical review" lately?

My thoughts about my emphasis on reflecting:

The Reign and Fall of Saul

Read Chapters 13-15

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
13		
14		
15		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What was Saul's sin?
2. What was Israel's sin?
3. What was Saul's failure with regard to the Amalekites?
4. What did this failure reveal in Saul's character?
5. What prominent lessons do we learn from the example of Jonathan?
6. Reread 15:35. What do we learn from these verses about the course and consequence of sin?

What about today?

1. Are there "bleating sheep" in your household?
2. God commands that the "spoils" of this world be completely put away from our hearts.
As we observed in Judges, taking banned items from battle can bring a snare!

My thoughts about "bleating sheep" in my own life:

Decline of Saul & Rise of David

Read Chapters 16-19

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
16		
17		
18		
19		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How do you imagine Saul's feelings in light of David being anointed by Samuel?
2. How would you feel if you were David?
3. Compare David's heart to Israel's attitude at this time.
4. What was the attitude of David's brothers toward him?
5. Contrast and compare Jonathan's attitude toward David, Saul toward David, and David's feelings about each.
6. What was the root of Saul's sin against David?

What about today?

1. Evaluate the authority figures in your life. Who are they and why do they fill that position?
2. How would you evaluate your response to them?

My thoughts about recognizing and submitting to the work of God's Spirit through the lives of others:

David Flees Before Saul

Read Chapters 19-26

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		
26		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Note the evil pursuit of David by King Saul. What do we observe about David's wisdom? His spiritual discernment?
2. What do we learn about the true intentions of Saul?
3. What specific principles do David and Saul teach us as examples of walking before God?
4. What is the central lesson from the story of Nabal and Abigail?
5. Why did David have more than one wife?
6. Why did David spare Saul's life so many times?

What about today?

1. Saul was a jealous man. He was half-hearted and impatient toward God. When God calls us He wants our whole heart.
2. Do you "inquire of the Lord" as you face your circumstances?
3. In what ways have you given God your "whole heart?"

My thoughts about my heart of spiritual discernment:

The Demise of Saul

Read Chapters 27-31

Chapter	Title	Key Verse
27		
28		
29		
30		
31		

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How did David deal with the overthrowing of Ziklag? How would you imagine his feelings? Notice that David took the time to consult the Lord!
2. What do you learn about the spirit-world from Saul's consultation of the medium at Endor?

What about today?

Again we are reminded, "Sin is crouching at the door, and its desire is for you, but you must master it (Genesis 4:7)." What principles can we learn about life and godliness from the pitiful example of Saul, the people's king?

My thoughts about the Spirit-world in relationship to my everyday life: