

The Account of Samuel's Parents 1 Samuel 1:1-18

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God works through all kinds of situations.
2. God works through all kinds of people.

Practical Application

1. Husbands, try to be sensitive to your wives' feelings.
2. Don't be surprised if people misread your actions.

Questions

1. What time period does the book of 1 Samuel cover?
2. What transitional role did Samuel have in the nation of Israel?
3. Is polygamy condoned in the Bible?
4. What was the spiritual state of the nation of Israel at this point in history?
5. What did Hannah vow to do if God would give her a son?

Answers

1. 1 Samuel takes us from the time of the Judges of Israel to the time of the kings.
2. Samuel is often referred to as the last judge in Israel and the first prophet in Israel.
3. No. From the beginning, God's design and direction for marriage was one man and one woman for life. However, polygamy was practiced and allowed in the Old Testament.
4. The fact that Israel did not fully drive out the Canaanites from the land during the Conquest under Joshua led to the dark days of the Judges. The course of the nation of Israel will be changed when Samuel turns the heart of the people back to the Lord.
5. She vowed to dedicate him to the service of the Lord.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review the unlikely set of circumstances which God worked through to accomplish His purpose in 1 Samuel 1. How have you seen God work through difficult circumstances in your life to bring about good?

2. Eli misread Hannah's fervent prayers and accused her of being drunk. Review the two pieces of advice when people misread your actions: Like Hannah, if you get a chance, you explain your actions. Don't be surprised that this happens.

Challenge

1. Husbands, think of ways to be especially sensitive to your wives' feelings this week

Answers

1. If the Lord would give her a son, she would present him to the Lord as a Nazirite.
2. Samuel means “heard of God.”
3. Sometimes God does not answer our prayers in the way we hope or expect; He will answer them His way.
4. As we continue to pray for our desires, the Lord continues to give us insight into His answer, and brings our heart in tune with His.
5. Yes, she “lent” Samuel to the Lord, as she vowed.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how God normally answers prayer. Don't expect some out-of-the-ordinary, dramatic way for God to answer your prayers. Normally God controls and times natural events and circumstances to bring about answers to our prayers. How have you seen this in your life?

2. How should you as parents pray for God's blessing on your children? The children of godly mothers are blessed in God's way.

Challenge

1. Don't be discouraged if God does not answer your prayers in your time and in your way. His way is best! James 5:16, “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

Hannah's Song of Praise **1 Samuel 2**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Hannah is an example of a faithful and dedicated servant.**

- 2. Eli is an example of an unfaithful and undisciplined servant.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't dishonor the Lord by failing to discipline your children.**

Questions

1. What is the contrast in this chapter?
2. Where else in Scripture do we see a song of praise similar to Hannah's?
3. How did Eli's sons break God's ceremonial and moral laws?
4. During what time period did these events take place?
5. What was the consequence for Eli's unfaithfulness and the sins of his sons?

Answers

1. There is a contrast between a faithful mother, Hannah, and an unfaithful father, Eli. There is also a contrast between the godly son, Samuel, and the ungodly sons, Hophni and Phineas.
2. In Mary's Magnificat, found in Luke 1
3. They broke God's ceremonial laws by:
 - a. Taking more of the meat of the sacrifices than they were allowed (Leviticus 7).
 - b. Taking the meat of the sacrifices before the fat had been burned (Leviticus 3),
 - c. They broke God's moral laws by despising the offering of the Lord and committing fornication.
4. This was in the dark days of the Judges, when the moral and spiritual condition of the nation of Israel was at a low. But even during this time, God had a godly remnant.
5. Eli learned that his sons, Hophni and Phineas, would die on the same day.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10. Hannah praises the Lord for His holiness and omniscience. Hannah praises the Lord for His power in all areas of life. Hannah praises the Lord for His perfect and sovereign judgments. Do your prayers contain these praises?

2. Eli's unfaithfulness and lack of discipline in his own life not only had negative effects on himself, but also his sons, and his descendants. Discuss the application for your life.

Challenge

1. Idle threats in disciplining your children actually dishonor the Lord. Have the strength of character to teach your children what is right, and you will both bring honor to the Lord.

The Lord Calls Samuel to the Office and Ministry of Prophet
1 Samuel 3

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God can commune with children.

2. God can work through children.

Practical Application

1. Have you ever prayed, “Speak Lord, for your servant is listening”?

Questions

1. What was Samuel’s unique role in the nation of Israel?
2. What is the basic difference between a prophet and a priest?
3. Were there prophets before Samuel?
4. What does 1 Samuel 3:1 mean when it says, “And the word of the LORD was rare in those days”?
5. What message did God give Samuel?

Answers

1. He is considered the last judge and the first prophet in Israel.
2. A prophet is one who speaks to the people for God, while a priest speaks to God for the people.
3. Yes, there were many men who spoke to the people for God before Samuel. But the office of prophet had not yet been established. Samuel was called by God to the prophetic office and began the great tradition of the prophets in Israel.
4. During the times of the judges the moral and spiritual conditions in Israel were so bad that people were not open to listening to the Lord and His Word.
5. God revealed His plans to punish Hophni and Phineas and remove Eli as high priest.

Discuss / Consider

1. God spoke to Samuel and gave him an important message that impacted the priesthood. What is your attitude about children and their spiritual capabilities? Does your attitude about children line up with Scripture?

2. As God worked through young Samuel in Old Testament days, so God can work through children today. Do you know a story where a Christian child has brought the whole family to the Lord?

Challenge

1. When you pray to the Lord to meet your needs and help you, also be willing to listen and obey.

The Ark of the Covenant is Captured **1 Samuel 4**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The Lord's people are defeated when they turn away from God.**

- 2. The Lord's people are defeated when they play games with God.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's not give the name "Ichabod" to any of our churches or children!**

Questions

1. Who were the Philistines?

2. Summarize the battles in 1 Samuel 4.

3. How did Eli the high priest die?

4. What should the Israelites have done before going into the battle with the Philistines?

5. What does the name "Ichabod" mean?

Answers

1. The Philistines were Israel's perennial enemy all during the days of Samuel, Saul, and David. They were people who had migrated to the land of Canaan from Crete and other islands and settled along the Mediterranean Coast – the Gaza Strip today.
2. Israel was defeated by the Philistines, and lost about 4,000 men in battle. Israel then regrouped and called for the Ark of the Covenant to be brought into the camp for the second battle. The Philistines defeated the Israelites in a second battle, in which 30,000 more died and the Ark was taken by the Philistines.
3. When he heard the news that the Ark had been taken and his sons were dead, he fell backwards and died of a broken neck.
4. They should have prayed to the Lord and sought his guidance about going to battle with the Philistines. Israel recognized Samuel as a prophet, but we don't read of Israel consulting him for council before this battle.
5. Ichabod means "no glory."

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss: The Lord's people are defeated when they turn away from God. Are you suffering defeat in your life right now? Is it possible that you have turned away from the Lord?

2. The Israelites tried to use the Ark of the Covenant as a good luck charm for their battle. God allowed His people to be defeated. Have you ever seen people play games with God, or done it yourself? What is the correct approach?

Challenge

1. Don't let the glory and blessing of the Lord depart from your fellowship and family. Make sure you and your children have a growing heart for the Lord.

Answers

1. In the previous chapter of 1 Samuel we saw Israel defeated and the Ark of God taken by the Philistines.
2. Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza
3. They put the Ark into the temple of their god, Dagon.
4. He was the false fish god or fertility god of the Philistines. The image of Dagon was a torso of a man with the tail of a fish.
5. During the night the image of Dagon fell over before the Ark of God. The Philistines propped Dagon up, but the next night it fell over again and was broken.

Discuss / Consider

1. Many people today try to be polytheists like the Philistines. While they might acknowledge the God of Israel and Jesus of Nazareth, He is just one of many gods they recognize. Why is this status not acceptable to God?

2. The Philistines tried to move the Ark of the Covenant to a location that would appease the God of Israel. Discuss the truth that our God is not appeased like the pagan gods. Salvation is not attained by appeasement, but by propitiation.

Challenge

1. Idols are things that prevent us from making God #1 in our lives. God has ways of having our idols fall over before Him. Don't prop up your idols.

The Ark of the Lord Returns to Israel
1 Samuel 6

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God shows mercy when people are ignorant of His laws.**

- 2. God holds people accountable when they are not ignorant of His laws.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's trust God to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think.**

Questions

1. Who was in possession of the Ark of the Covenant when this chapter begins?

2. Why were they so frantic to send the Ark back to Israel?

3. Why did the Philistines send the Ark back with an offering of molded golden tumors and rats?

4. What specific instructions had God given in His law as to how the Ark of the Covenant was to be handled and carried?

5. Were the people of Beth Shemesh ignorant of God's laws?

Answers

1. The Ark of the Covenant had been taken captive by the Philistines and put in the Temple of Dagon.
2. God showed His supremacy by causing the idol of Dagon to fall down before the Ark. Everywhere the Ark was moved for the next seven months, the Philistines were smitten with tumors.
3. The Philistines believed they could appease the angry gods by presenting an offering that represented their problem and showed how they were experiencing the judgment of the gods.
4. Only the priests and Levites were to be involved. The Ark must be carried on poles, and not handled by human hands. Anyone who disobeyed did so at the cost of their own life.
5. No. Beth Shemesh was a Levitical city, and the Levites were responsible to know God's laws and communicate them to others.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how God shows mercy when people are ignorant of His laws. Should this truth be used as an excuse for sin?

2. When we come into God's family we are expected to obey His Word. When we come to know His Word, then we are held accountable when we disobey His Word. Discuss how and why God must discipline His disobedient children.

Challenge

1. Samuel and other godly Israelites must have been amazed when the Ark of the Covenant was returned by itself without war. God is able to dramatically answer your prayers as well.

Israel Returns to the Lord Under Samuel's Leadership **1 Samuel 7**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God gives victory to His people when they return to Him.**

- 2. God restores losses to His people when they return to Him.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's follow Samuel's Ebenezer example.**

Questions

1. Where was the Ark of the Covenant taken after it returned from the Land of the Philistines?
2. What was Samuel's role in the nation of Israel at this time?
3. What does verse 2 mean when it says Israel lamented after the Lord?
4. What did the people of Israel have to do before revival could come?
5. What happened when the Philistines attacked the Israelites while they were gathered at Mizpah?
6. What does "Ebenezer" mean?

Answers

1. It was taken to the town of Kiriath Jearim and remained there for at least 100 years in the house of Abinadab.
2. He was a circuit riding judge who traveled to various cities judging the people.
3. They sought after the Lord for blessing and mourned the fact that they were not being blessed.
4. They had to rid themselves of their idols.
5. The Lord answered with a great thunder that confused the Philistines, and God gave Israel a great victory.
6. Stone of help

Discuss / Consider

1. The people of Israel lamented after the Lord, but revival could not come until they rid themselves of their idols. Is this possible in our lives as well? Idols are anything that comes between us and our full commitment and worship of the Lord.

2. Territory that had been lost to the Philistines was restored to Israel when they returned to the Lord. For us as believers, when we're not walking with the Lord we lose ground. But when we return to the Lord we can recover spiritual blessings that were lost. Can you give examples of this?

Challenge

1. As we see the Lord at work in our lives, we should set up "Ebenezers" to honor Him for His help.

Israel's Demand for a King
1 Samuel 8

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Believers cannot pass on their spirituality.

2. Believers can settle for God's permissive will.

Practical Application

1. Watch out for the "We want to be like other nations" syndrome.

Questions

1. What was the state of the priesthood at the time of Samuel?
2. Did Samuel's sons carry on his lineage?
3. Can you guarantee your child will grow up spiritually healthy and active?
4. What was God's perfect will for the people regarding a king?
5. Why did the people of Israel ask for a king?
6. What problems did Samuel foretell the people would face if they chose to have a king over them?

Answers

1. The priesthood was in sad shape. Eli was dead, and God had removed his sons, Hophni and Phineas. Samuel was not a priest, but he was a Levite and a Judge, who offered sacrifices on behalf of Israel.
2. No. Samuel had decided to spread his workload and had his two sons appointed as judges. He sent them to Beersheba in the southern part of Israel while he remained in the north. But Samuel's sons did not walk in their father's footsteps (verse 3).
3. No. Parents are responsible to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), but you cannot make your children spiritual. That is a matter of their individual walk with the Lord.
4. God's perfect will was not for Israel to have a king at this point. God was to be their king, but they had rejected the Lord from being king over them (verse 7).
5. Because Samuel was old and his sons did not walk in his ways, and because they wanted to be like the other nations.
6.
 - a. They would be taxed.
 - b. There would be a draft for military and domestic service.
 - c. The best of their crops would go to the king.
 - d. They would regret their choice of God's permissive will.

Discuss / Consider

1. Samuel's spirituality was not passed on to his sons. Perhaps this is because he was on the road a lot judging Israel, and thus did not give enough time to the spiritual welfare of his family. This is a problem that faces many men in the ministry today. Do you have a proper balance between your ministry and your God-given family responsibilities?

2. In God's permissive will He told Samuel to listen to the voice of the people and give them a king. Discuss other cases in the Bible where there is a clear distinction made between God's perfect will and His permissive will.

Challenge

1. Beware of wanting to be like other Christian families, ministries, or churches. The Lord may give you exactly what you request, but it may not be His perfect will. It is better to humbly walk step by step with the Lord and be guided in His perfect will and timing.

Answers

1. A theocracy is a government with direct rule by God. Israel was supposed to be a theocracy with God as king.
2. Saul was an impressive looking man. He was tall and handsome and descended from a military hero in Israel. Saul was the people's choice to be king, but he was not a man after God's own heart.
3. Through detailed circumstances that were all part of God's plan.
4. He was quite humble, saying he was no one special.
5. Yes (verse 20).

Discuss / Consider

1. God works through detailed events and circumstances – big and small – to accomplish His plan for our lives. Can you give examples of this from your life?

2. God revealed a number of details to Samuel about Saul, but He omitted several details that would have been easy to include. In the same way today, we don't know why God chooses to reveal some of the details of His will for our lives and chooses not to reveal other details. Can you give examples of this as well?

Challenge

1. While God is working to reveal His will in guiding our lives, He cares about little details as well! Praise the Lord that He does not forget about the lost donkeys!

Saul is Anointed as the First King of Israel
1 Samuel 10

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God will show His people the paths they should follow.**

- 2. God will show His people the leaders they should follow.**

Practical Application

- 1. Expect support and opposition if you are God's chosen leader.**

Questions

1. Describe how Saul met Samuel from the human perspective and from the divine perspective.
2. Why were people anointed with oil in Old Testament times?
3. Review the three signs God gave Saul through the prophet Samuel.
4. Was it God's perfect will for Israel to have a king?
5. How should elders and church leaders be chosen today?

Answers

1. From the human perspective, Saul was looking for his lost donkeys, but from the divine perspective, God was sending Saul to Samuel to be anointed as the first king of Israel.
2. To symbolize that the person was set apart for divine service
3.
 - a. Two men would meet him at Rachel's tomb and tell him the lost donkeys had been found.
 - b. Three men would meet Saul at the Oak of Tabor, carrying three young goats, three loaves of bread, and a jug of wine. They would give him two loaves of bread.
 - c. When Saul came to Gibeah, a group of prophets would meet him and the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him and he would prophesy.
4. No, God wanted to be their ruler. But God allowed them to have a king and even chose a king for them.
5. Elders and church leaders should not be chosen by popular vote. God raises up His chosen leaders and they will be known and shown by the work they are doing. It is the responsibility of God's people to recognize the leaders that God has raised up.

Discuss / Consider

1. The way the Lord lead Saul is generally the way He leads His people today. Not with shooting stars or voices from heaven, but through normal events that confirm the direction we are going as we seek to walk with the Lord, serve Him, and follow His plan for our lives. The three signs God gave Saul can be divided into three categories:
 - a. Circumstances

b Needs supplied

c Counsel of godly Believers How has God used these ways to show you the path that you should follow.

Challenge

1. Some valiant men supported King Saul, while other men opposed him. If God has called you to be a spiritual leader in some ministry, don't quit because there is opposition. Expect support and opposition if you are God's chosen leader.

Saul Defeats the Ammonites
1 Samuel 11

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The enemy will attack God's people where they are vulnerable.

2. The enemy will blind God's people if they compromise.

Practical Application

1. Let's be angry for God's sake.

Questions

1. Where was Jabesh Gilead?

2. Were the Ammonites the same as the Ammorites?

3. Why would the men of Jabesh Gilead be helpless without their right eyes?

4. Why was Saul so motivated to go and help Jabesh Gilead?

5. Why did God want all of His people to cross the Jordan and dwell in the heart of the Promised Land?

Answers

1. Jabesh Gilead was in the territory of the half tribe of Manasseh that had settled east of the Jordan River, 25 miles south of the Sea of Galilee.
2. No, they were both enemies of Israel, but the Ammonites were descended from Lot.
3. Most people were right-handed and held their shields in the left hand, which covered the left eye. Therefore, a warrior would be helpless to revolt if he did not have his right eye.
4. Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, which had almost been wiped out in civil war during the time of the judges. Four hundred maidens from Jabesh Gilead were given to the men of Benjamin who survived the war. Saul's lineage could have included a woman from Jabesh Gilead.
5. For unity and security

Discuss / Consider

1. Jabesh Gilead and the rest of the territories on the east side of the Jordan were vulnerable to enemy attack. They settled for less than God's perfect will by choosing to settle there. The Enemy will attack God's people where they are vulnerable today as well. Have you settled for less than God's perfect will in your life? Are you more vulnerable to the Enemy's attack? Read 1 Peter 5:8.

2. If the people of Jabesh Gilead had surrendered to the enemy, the result would be their literal blindness. Many people today are blinded to spiritual realities and the truth of God's Word. They are ineffective in spiritual battle because they have surrendered to the enemy in some area of their walk of faith. If you are in this group, don't compromise! Ask God to send help and victory.

Challenge

1. King Saul was filled with good and righteous anger when he heard of the threat of the Ammonites. We should be angry when we see God and His Word mocked and slandered. Let's be angry for God's sake.

Samuel's Farewell Address to Israel
1 Samuel 12

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God's people need to be reminded about the proof of God's faithfulness.

2. God's people need to be warned about the possibility of their own unfaithfulness.

Practical Application

1. Let's not sin by failing to pray for others.

2. Let's remember to remember!

Questions

1. Why did all the people gather at Gilgal?

2. Now that all the people affirmed Saul's kingship, what did Samuel do?

3. Did Samuel retire from ministry at this point?

4. What was the point of Samuel recounting history from the Exodus until the victory over the Ammonites?

5. Did God's faithfulness to His people end because they wrongly desired a king?

Answers

1. To confirm Saul as the king of all Israel
2. Samuel stepped down from his recognized position as judge in Israel. This chapter is his farewell address.
3. No, he continued to carry on his priestly and prophetic duties within Israel, but his administrative responsibilities as judge were relinquished.
4. To show that God was faithful and righteous in all His dealings with His people.
5. No, God continued to be faithful. He will never abandon His people.

Discuss / Consider

1. Samuel recounted the history of Israel to remind the people of God's righteous acts and faithfulness. Believers today need to be reminded of this as well. Briefly recount your history. Does it testify of 1 Corinthians 1:9?

2. Recall a time in your life that you were unfaithful to the Lord. How did God's discipline demonstrate His faithfulness to you? See Hebrews 12:7 and 1 Peter 4:17.

Challenge

1. We are a forgetful people, who quickly forget God's faithfulness to us. Set aside time this week to reflect on what God has done for you. "Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you." 1 Samuel 12:24

King Saul's Disobedience

1 Samuel 13

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Disobeying the Lord is never justified by circumstances.

2. Disobeying the Lord results in loss of status.

Practical Application

1. Give credit where credit is due.

Questions

1. How does archeology back up the teaching of 1 Samuel 13:19?
2. Should we be concerned by the two manuscript discrepancies in 1 Samuel 13?
3. Why were the men of Israel scared as they faced battle with the Philistines?
4. What did Saul decide to do in face of the discouraging circumstances?
5. What was the sad consequence of Saul's disobedience?

Answers

1. The archeological record confirms that until the time of David, the Philistines had a monopoly on iron technology.
2. No, these variations are relatively few in the Bible, and they do not affect doctrine.
3. The Israelites were hopelessly outnumbered, with no chariots or cavalry. Furthermore, all Israel had to use as weapons were their farm implements – pitchforks and pickaxes!
4. Saul did not wait for Samuel to come and offer sacrifices before the battle. He took matters into his own hands, and wrongly offered the sacrifices himself.
5. Saul's sons would not carry on his role as king of Israel. Instead, God would appoint as king a man after His own heart, David.

Discuss / Consider

1. Many Christians behave like Saul, cheating in their Christian lives because of the circumstances. But disobeying the Lord is never justified by circumstances. Discuss this principle. Can you think of any exceptions to the rule?

2. The consequence of Saul's disobedience was that his sons would not continue his dynasty as king of Israel. This was a sore consequence for Saul and all of his ancestors to follow. Discuss how your actions and decisions today can have a long-term effect on your family.

Challenge

1. Saul apparently took credit for Jonathon's victory over the Philistines. He often took credit where it was not his due. Is this your character? Watch out for your pride, give credit to others.

King Saul Makes Two Foolish Vows
1 Samuel 14:24-52

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Foolish decisions result in needless hardships.

2. Foolish decisions result in tragic situations.

Practical Application

1. Don't make decisions in the emotion of the moment.

Questions

1. What title was suggested for 1 Samuel 14?
2. Who was Abner?
3. What rash oath did Saul make on behalf of his soldiers?
4. What tragic situation occurred that night after the battle?
5. What foolish decision did Saul make next?
6. Did Jonathon die that night?

Answers

1. "Faith in contrast to Folly," the faith of Jonathon contrasted with the foolishness of Saul
2. Saul's uncle, and the commander of his army
3. That they would not eat any food until evening, when they had taken vengeance on their enemies
4. The people were so hungry they started ravenously slaughtering and eating the animals taken from the Philistines, without first draining the blood. This was a violation of the Mosaic Law.
5. Because God would not answer Saul as to whether to pursue the Philistines further, Saul wrongly assumed that someone had sinned by breaking his foolish fasting vow. He said that even if his son Jonathon had broken the fast, he would surely die.
6. No, God intervened and the people rescued Jonathon, protecting him from Saul.

Discuss / Consider

1. Foolish decisions result in needless hardships and tragic situations. Consider by yourself decisions that you have made regarding your family, church, and workplace. Did these decisions follow biblical principle of decision making? You can read about these principles in Dr. Dave's essay, The Seven C's of Decision Making.

Challenge

1. Even well-meaning decisions made in the emotion of the moment can have sad consequences. Don't make decisions in the emotion of the moment.

Saul's Partial Obedience in Failing to Destroy the Amalekites
1 Samuel 15

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Obedience is better than sacrifice.

2. Obedience is better than repentance.

Practical Application

1. Don't build monuments to yourself.

Questions

1. Why did the Lord call for total destruction of the Amalekites?
2. Did Saul follow God's command to utterly destroy the Amalekites?
3. How did Saul justify his selective obedience?
4. What was a result of Saul's disobedience?

Answers

1.
 - a. God did not want the idolatry and immorality of the Amalekites or any of the pagan peoples of the land to infiltrate and corrupt God's people through intermarriage or other cultural ties.
 - b. Because of the Amalekites' past sin of attacking Israel in the wilderness. This command of God was just and righteous punishment.
 - c. All of the battles against the enemies of God's people in the Old Testament picture the spiritual warfare of believers today.
2. No, he kept alive King Agag and all of the best animals in the flocks and herds.
3. He told Samuel that he planned to sacrifice the animals to the Lord. He also shifted the blame to the people.
4. Samuel told Saul again that God had rejected him from being king over Israel.

Discuss / Consider

1. To obey is better than sacrifice. This biblical truth is just as true today. Discuss how it can be lived out in a believer's life.

2. Obedience is better than repentance. Many Christian leaders who were once greatly used of God have been set aside from their position of leadership, because of disobedience. Even though many have repented and been restored to the Lord, the consequence of their disobedience limits their future ministry. Discuss this sad truth.

Challenge

1. Do you try to build monuments to yourself in the way you describe your good deeds to others? Self monuments are an indication of pride. Let God build your monuments.

The Lord Tells Samuel to Anoint David
1 Samuel 16:1-5

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. The Bible never condones lying and deceiving.**

- 2. The Bible sometimes condones secrecy and concealment.**

Practical Application

- 1. Remember, getting killed is not the worst thing that can happen!**

Questions

1. What test did King Saul fail in 1 Samuel 15?
2. What was the consequence of Saul's disobedience?
3. Why was Samuel afraid to go to Bethlehem?
4. What did God instruct Samuel to tell King Saul?
5. What are situational ethics?

Answers

1. Saul was given one last chance to obey the Lord, but he failed to utterly destroy the Amalekites as God instructed.
2. The kingdom of Israel would be taken from him and given to a better man.
3. Because if proud and disobedient King Saul heard that Samuel had anointed his successor as king, he would have Samuel killed.
4. That he was going to Bethlehem to offer sacrifice (which he did!).
5. Situational ethics teach that it is okay to lie in time of war or if you think it is the more loving thing to do.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the Bible's position on lying and deceiving. Consider Samuel here, the Hebrew midwives, and Rahab. The Bible teaches non-conflicting moral absolutes; to make the right choice you do not have to break one of God's moral laws or choose the lesser of two evils. Consider the example of Jesus.

2. Discuss how creative concealment can be used in order to obey the command of the Lord. For more information, refer to Dr. Dave's essay, *An Exercise in Ethics*

Challenge

1. Bringing God glory by doing the right thing is the highest priority. Remember, getting killed is not the worst thing that can happen!

David is Selected as the Next King of Israel
1 Samuel 16:6-23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. All human hearts are under the searching eye of God.

2. All evil spirits are under the sovereign control of God.

Practical Application

1. Listen to hymns in order to soothe your soul.

Questions

1. Why did Samuel travel to Bethlehem?
2. Why did the elders of the city tremble when they met Samuel?
3. What did anointing with oil symbolize in the Old Testament?
4. How did Saul first come to know David?
5. Do Satan and his angels have complete freedom on this earth?

Answers

1. The Lord sent him to secretly anoint one of the sons of Jesse as the next king of Israel.
2. Samuel was a circuit riding judge. The elders of Bethlehem thought that Samuel had come to their city to pronounce and execute judgment concerning some matter.
3. Kings and High priests were anointed to symbolize that this person was set apart for God's holy service.
4. David was called to be Saul's harp player. He made such a good impression on the king, that he was made Saul's armor bearer.
5. No, they are under the sovereign control of God and are only permitted to do what God allows.

Discuss / Consider

1. As humans we tend to be impressed by outward credentials, such as good looks or talent. God is not impressed with such outward appearances; He looks at the heart. If you are a parent, how can you teach your children to prioritize heart attitude over outward appearance?

2. While God is not the source of evil, He can use the evil of mankind or fallen angels to accomplish His purpose. Discuss this principle. Refer to Ephesians 1:11.

Challenge

1. Saul's soul was refreshed when David played his harp. Is your soul distressed by the pressures of life? Try listening to music that contains Scripture to calm your troubled soul.

Goliath Presents a Challenge to the Army of Israel
1 Samuel 17:1-30

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The enemy will always have his Goliaths.

2. The Lord will always have His Davids.

Practical Application

1. Let's fight the Goliaths and not our brothers!

Questions

1. Where is the Valley of Elah?
2. How tall was Goliath? How much did his armor weigh? How much did the head of his spear weigh?
3. What was Goliath's challenge to the Israelites?
4. What would be given to the man who defeated Goliath?
5. What do the battles in the Old Testament between God's people Israel and their enemies represent?
6. What does the number 40 represent in Scripture?

Answers

1. About 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem
2. He was 9' 9" tall. His armor weighed about 125 pounds and his spear about 16 pounds.
3. Goliath challenged the Israelites to send out a warrior for a contest, which would determine the outcome of the battle. This was a common strategy in the ancient world.
4. King Saul had promised to give the champion his daughter as a wife. Furthermore, he would be made wealthy and his family would be tax-free.
5. They generally illustrate some aspect of our spiritual warfare.
6. It is the number of testing.

Discuss / Consider

1. Secular science is one of Satan's "Goliaths" facing us in spiritual warfare today. Can you list some other giants of the Enemy?

2. David did not waste time arguing when his brother questioned his motives. Have fellow believers ever misread your motives? Did you focus on fighting the Goliath rather than your brothers?

Challenge

1. God raises up Davids to fight the spiritual battle against the enemy. Are you willing and prepared to fight?

Answers

1. One possible answer is that while Saul knew David as his harp player and armor bearer, now that he was about to become his son-in-law, Saul was asking about his lineage.
2. Goliath represents satanic forces opposed to God's people. David represents committed and courageous believers who are willing to step out in faith and fight the Goliaths.
3. He objected that David was an untrained youth. He insisted that David wear his armor into battle.
4. David became skilled in using a slingshot when he shepherded his sheep. David had killed a lion and bear while tending his sheep, which certainly gave David confidence and courage against Goliath.
5. That David ran toward Goliath is an illustration of staying on the offensive in spiritual warfare.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how David is ultimately a spiritual picture of Christ Himself who conquered Satan. A number of points were mentioned in the background section of this Talk.

2. What former experience do you have that God can use in spiritual warfare? Have you seen this happen in your life?

Challenge

1. Don't practice fanciful interpretation of Scripture, the story of David and Goliath is incredible as it is!

Answers

1. Saul set him over the army of Israel. David also became a popular hero in Israel.
2. He became insanely jealous and tried to kill David twice.
3. Jonathan would have been king after his father Saul, but he recognized that the kingdom had been given to David. Jonathan showed David respect, honor, loyalty, and help.
4. a. Jealousy sees others as a threat (verses 8-9).
b. Jealousy cannot stand seeing the blessing of God on others (verses 12, 14-15).
c. Jealousy does not keep promises (verse 13).
5. Saul demanded 100 foreskins of the Philistines as a dowry for his daughter, hoping in the process David would be killed. David returned with 200 foreskins, increasing Saul's jealousy.

Discuss / Consider

1. Consider Jonathan's remarkable reaction to David's popularity and authority. Contrast this with Saul's reaction. Think of the people God has raised up to be spiritual shepherds and leaders in your life. Do you react to them as Jonathan or as Saul?

2. Jealousy destroyed the relationship between Saul and David. Even today the sin of jealousy can destroy friendships, fellowships, and churches. What are some practical ways you can guard against jealousy in your own heart?

Challenge

1. Jonathan is a spiritual picture of the committed Christian who shows love and devotion to the Lord at all costs. Be a Jonathan today.

David is Protected from King Saul
1 Samuel 19

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. God can use natural means to protect His servants.**

- 2. God can use supernatural means to protect His servants.**

Practical Application

- 1. Let's be peacemakers like Jonathan.**

Questions

1. What was David's status in Israel in the beginning of the chapter?
2. What was the bad news for David at this point?
3. Why was there an idol in David's household, as we see in verse 13?
4. List the four natural means God used to protect David from King Saul.
5. Recount the humorous event of God's supernatural protection of David.

Answers

1. Whether to stay with his wife or flee for his life. Whether he should rescue his family in Bethlehem, or go into hiding as a fugitive.
2. No, David had done nothing wrong. These painful decisions were just part of his life.
3. Jonathan would come out to the field where David was hiding and shoot some arrows. When his messenger boy ran to fetch them, if Jonathan said, "Look the arrow is beyond you," David would know he needed to flee for safety.
4. They promised to care for one another's families in the future, no matter what else happened.
5. The verse in Genesis is not a blessing in context, but the verse in Samuel is.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss whether or not David asked Jonathan to lie to his father in this chapter. Is lying justified in some circumstances? How could David be called a man after God's own heart, if this was a lie?

2. Think of a painful decision you have faced in your life of faith. Did the outcome of that decision strengthen your faith in God?

Challenge

1. Have you been separated from a loved one because of work, ministry, or death? There will be painful separations in the life of faith. Remember, the Lord will always be there to bring comfort and hope.

Answers

1. David became a fugitive and left his wife and position in the royal court, because King Saul continued to threaten his life.
2. According to the Law in Leviticus 24, this bread was normally for the priests. In this case, the preservation of David's life was more important than a ceremonial regulation.
3. The Lord referenced this event in Matthew 12 when the Pharisees were criticizing the disciples for picking and eating grain on the Sabbath. His point was that moral obligations in life supersede civil or ceremonial regulations.
4. In verse 2 he claimed to be on secret business for the king. In verse 8 he said the king's business required haste.
5. He wanted the Philistines to think he was harmless, so they would give him refuge from King Saul.

Discuss / Consider

1. This lesson taught that "moral obligations in life supersede civil or ceremonial regulations." Give an application for this biblical principle today. The Bible is not teaching that it is permissible to break God's moral laws on occasion.

2. Lying is never justified, and David's lies in this chapter were no exception. How does this compare to discussion question #1. What was the sad consequence of David's lie?

Challenge

1. David made several mistakes in this chapter, but he learned from his mistakes. This does not excuse the mistake, but hopefully we will also learn from our mistakes and make less in the future.

David and His Ragtag Army Hide in the Wilderness
1 Samuel 22

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. Following the right leader leads to eternal rewards.

2. Following the wrong leader leads to tragic results.

Practical Application

1. Let's be willing to admit our mistakes.

Questions

1. Why did David take his parents to the land of Moab?

2. Who was Gad?

3. What kind of men gathered themselves around David?

4. Why were 85 priests and many women, children, and animals killed in the village of Nob?

5. Who slaughtered this community?

Answers

1. He took them there for safety from King Saul. Saul was enemies with Moab, so they were open to David's request. David also had distant relatives in Moab, through his great grandmother Ruth.
2. Gad was a prophet the Lord provided to exhort, advise, and counsel David during these times of trouble. He also wrote a record of much of David's life (see 1 Chronicles 29:29).
3. Men who were in distress, in debt, discouraged, and discontent. But they chose the right leader to follow.
4. Because Doeg the Edomite reported that Ahimelech the high priest had aided David in his flight from Saul.
5. Doeg did it himself, because Saul's guards would not strike the priests of the Lord.

Discuss / Consider

1. In this chapter we see that following the right leader leads to reward. How was this true for David's army? How is this true for us as believers? Discuss how David is a spiritual picture of Christ in His time of rejection.

2. Following the wrong leader led to tragic results for Doeg the Edomite. This is also true for people today who reject Christ and follow Satan. Discuss the tragic results for those who choose to follow the Antichrist in the end times.

Challenge

1. David did the right thing by admitting his mistake in this chapter. Are you willing to admit your mistakes and take the blame? Don't shift the blame to others. Admit when you are wrong and humbly repent.

God's Continued Protection and Encouragement for David
1 Samuel 23

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord provides protection during times of trouble.

2. The Lord provides encouragement during times of trouble.

Practical Application

1. Don't assume that every opportunity is from the Lord.

Questions

1. What report did David hear while he was hiding in the wilderness from King Saul?

2. In what unique way did the Lord communicate to David through the garments of the high priest?

3. How is David a spiritual picture of the Lord Jesus in this chapter?

4. What stopped Saul during his pursuit of David?

5. Why was Jonathon able to find David when Saul was not able to find him?

Answers

1. He heard that the Philistines had attacked the border town of Keilah and were plundering the threshing floors.
2. The ephod of the high priest was an apron-like garment over which was a breastplate. Twelve precious stones on the breastplate represented the twelve tribes of Israel. The Urim and the Thummin were probably two additional stones in the breastplate, which the high priest used to determine yes or no answers about the Lord's will.
3. Like David, the Lord was rejected and betrayed by the very people He came to save.
4. An urgent message came to Saul telling him that the Philistines had invaded the land.
5. This is another indication that the Lord was protecting David.

Discuss / Consider

1. When David was in trouble, he could not look to the people for protection, because they were willing to betray him! Instead he looked to the Lord. What kind of troubles are you facing in your life? Have you sought the protection only the Lord can provide?

2. Jonathan encouraged David by reminding him of the promises of God. Did you know that is the most important thing you can bring people who are hurting and in times of trouble? Think of one person you can encourage this week by reminding them of God's care and control in their situation.

Challenge

1. Saul wrongly assumed the "open doors" to pursue David were from the Lord. We can be deceived this way as well! The devil can provide all kinds of opportunities and open doors for you to do your own will! Be aware.

David Spares Saul's Life
1 Samuel 24

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The godly let the Lord plead their cause.

2. The ungodly say one thing and do another.

Practical Application

1. Wait for the Lord in all areas of life.

Questions

1. Where is En Gedi?

2. When did David have the opportunity to retaliate against King Saul?

3. What did David do in the face of this opportunity?

4. How did Saul respond when David revealed himself and showed the corner of Saul's robe?

5. What significant landmark might have been David's stronghold (verse 22)?

Answers

1. En Gedi, which means “the fountain of the young goat,” is a beautiful fresh water spring amongst the rocks in the hills along the west side of the Dead Sea.
2. As David and his men were hiding in the inner recesses of a cave, Saul came into the cave to either take a rest or go the bathroom. David had a golden opportunity to kill King Saul.
3. He crept up to Saul and cut off the corner of his robe. Later he regretted even doing that to the king.
4. Saul wept and acknowledged that David was right and had shown mercy to him. He even acknowledge that David would be the next king, although this repentance did not last long.
5. This might have been Masada, a natural fortification running south along the coast of the Dead Sea. Masada played a significant role in Jewish history in the first century, AD.

Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss how David followed the principle of Romans 12:19. He did not take matters into his own hands and take his own revenge. Are you facing opposition in some area you know God has led you? How will you let the Lord plead your cause against your enemies?

2. Have you ever put your trust in ungodly people, institutions, or organizations? Did you experience the principle that the ungodly say one thing and do another? How can you prove yourself as a godly person that others can trust?

Challenge

1. David learned from his experiences with Saul how to wait for the Lord. Has the Lord allowed you to go through testing and trying situations so you will learn to wait for Him? Be encouraged by Psalm 27:14

David's Dealings with Nabal and Abigail
1 Samuel 25

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. God allows the Nabals to test our faith and patience.

2. God provides the Abigails to save the day.

Practical Application

1. Let God handle the Nabals.

Questions

1. Who was Nabal?
2. What did David request of Nabal, and what was Nabal's response?
3. How did David then respond to Nabal's insult?
4. How did Abigail intervene and save the day?
5. How does the story of David, Nabal, and Abigail end?

Answers

1. Nabal was a wealthy rancher who owned 4000 head of sheep and goats. David and his men were camped in the same area as Nabal's flocks, thus providing protection against any sheep thieves.
2. David asked Nabal for some provisions for his men in return for the protection they had offered his flocks. Nabal responded with rudeness and pride and sent David's men away empty-handed. He also denounced David's character in the process.
3. David failed the test of faith and patience. He became enraged at Nabal's insult and wanted to take his own revenge by killing Nabal and robbing his ranch.
4. Abigail brought a gift of food to meet the needs of David and his men. She showed humility and spoke softly. She acknowledged that David was in the right, and Nabal was wrong, but that did not justify David shedding blood. Abigail also reminded David that he would be king, and he should not be the cause of this bloodshed.
5. After Abigail saved the day, Nabal was struck with what may have been a stroke, and he later died. David took Abigail to be his wife!

Discuss / Consider

1. When was the last time God tested your faith and patience? Was there a Nabal-type person involved? How does James 1:3-4 encourage you to respond the next time such a situation arises?

2. Review Abigail's approach to David. What lesson on being a peacemaker can you learn from her example? Matthew 6:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God."

Challenge

1. God's justice will always prevail in time. Let God handle the Nabals!

The Lord Delivers David
1 Samuel 26

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Lord will test the righteousness of every believer.

2. The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer.

Practical Application

1. Expect to be tested again!

Questions

1. This is the 3rd time David had the opportunity to take his revenge. When were the previous two times?
2. Why did Saul so easily break the promise he made in 1 Samuel 24:17-22?
3. How did David gain another opportunity to take revenge on King Saul?
4. What was Abishai's counsel to David?
5. What did David do to Saul?

Answers

1. David spared Saul's life in a cave in En Gedi, although he cut off the corner of his robe (chapter 24). David wanted to take revenge on the rude and prideful Nabal, but Abigail saved the day (chapter 25).
2. There were probably certain men in Saul's court who hated David and stirred up lies about him in Saul's mind.
3. David and his men were able to sneak up on Saul's camp at night. While Saul was sleeping, David and his nephew Abishai were able to get so close to Saul that they could have killed him with his own spear.
4. Abishai told David that this was an opportunity from the Lord. Abishai pleaded with David to at least let him do the job.
5. David only took Saul's spear and water to prove to Saul and to General Abner that David could have killed the king and that Abner was not protecting the king.

Discuss / Consider

1. David had a second opportunity to take revenge on Saul, but again he passed the test of righteousness. Would you have passed? The Lord will test the righteousness of every believer in the areas of honesty and integrity, submission, and much more. Will you pass?

2. The Lord will reward the righteousness of every believer. Your reward for righteous living may not come overnight or even in this lifetime, but when you do the right thing, you will be rewarded. Do you believe this is true?

Challenge

1. Although David had already passed the test of faith and patience, he was tested again. Your faith and righteousness will be tested throughout your lifetime. Graduation does not come until we get to heaven.

David's Faith Falters
1 Samuel 27

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Believers can make the same mistake more than once.**

- 2. Believers should not justify the means by the ends.**

Practical Application

- 1. Try to see your dilemmas coming before they face you.**

Questions

1. What is the major theme in this second half of 1 Samuel?
2. Where do we find David at the beginning of this chapter 27?
3. Where did we previously see David seek protection from the Philistines? What was the outcome?
4. Explain the expression "The end justifies the means."
5. What "good ends" was David accomplishing while hiding out in Ziklag?
6. What ugly means did David use to accomplish these ends?

King Saul and the Witch of Endor **1 Samuel 28**

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Spirit mediums cannot contact departed spirits.**

- 2. Spirit mediums are under God's sovereign control.**

Practical Application

- 1. Don't turn to the occult when God doesn't answer.**

Questions

1. In the previous chapter, David fled to the Philistine King Achish for protection from King Saul. What consequence do we see for his lack of faith?

2. Meanwhile, what dilemma is King Saul facing?

3. Why would the Lord not answer Saul (verse 6)?

4. When Samuel appeared to King Saul & the witch, was it really Samuel or a spirit?

5. What message did God lead Samuel to give Saul?

Answers

1. David is expected to go with Achish in battle against Israel, David's own people. Achish makes David his personal bodyguard, so he can keep his eye on him!
2. Saul was frightened by the Philistine threat, and the Lord would not answer Saul's request for direction. So Saul turned to the world of the occult in order to get some kind of answer.
3. Because Saul had turned away from the Lord and was unwilling to obey him.
4. In this case we believe it was really Samuel. This is why the woman was so surprised as well. Usually mediums contact demonic spirits that can mimic the voice and appearance of the dead person.
5. That the kingdom would be taken from Saul and given to David. The following day Saul and his sons would join Samuel in death.

Discuss / Consider

1. David's lack of faith put him in an awful dilemma in this chapter. Recall a time when you faced a dilemma because of a previous lack of faith. Did you continue in your unfaithfulness, or was the dilemma a motivation to get back on track with God?

2. Occult practices are extremely popular in our society today through the entertainment media. Discuss the potential dangers of viewing the occult as entertainment. Discuss what boundaries you have set for yourself and your family in this regard. Read 1 John 4:4.

Challenge

1. Has it ever felt like God is not listening to you and doesn't care? Don't turn to the occult in this situation. There are many reasons why God may be silent, but it is not because He doesn't care.

The Lord Rescues David from a Major Dilemma
1 Samuel 29

Background

Doctrinal Points

- 1. Moral mistakes of believers always result in greater problems.**

- 2. God sometimes delivers believers from the consequences of their mistakes.**

Practical Application

- 1. Take the way of escape that God provides.**

Questions

1. What were the Philistines planning according to 1 Samuel 28?
2. What had God prophesied would happen in this battle?
3. What dilemma did David cause for himself here?
4. What are moral mistakes?
5. What was King Achish' opinion of David?
6. How did God deliver David from this dilemma?

Answers

1. David and his men had been called by the Philistine king to fight with the Philistines against the Israelites. God graciously delivered them from this dilemma (Chapter 29).
2. The Amalekites had raided Ziklag, burned it to the ground, and taken the people captive.
3. He turned to the Lord for help and strength.
4. Although David and his men became exhausted, the Lord strengthened some of them to continue their pursuit. The Lord also led them to an Egyptian slave who led them to the Amalekite camp.
5. The controversy was whether the 200 exhausted men who had stayed with the equipment should share in the spoils of war with the 400 men who went on to battle.

Discuss / Consider

1. Are you in a situation right now where you have suffered losses because of your bad decisions? Be like David and look to the Lord. Read the following verses and discuss their application to your situation: 2 Timothy 2:26, Hebrews 4:16, Isaiah 40:31.

2. Discuss the important principles for Christian service that we draw from this chapter. Some believers are called to the front lines of Christian service. Others are called to more supporting roles. Both are important and necessary.

Challenge

1. When problems and conflicts arise in your home or church, do you look for a scapegoat or for a solution?

Israel's Defeat by the Philistines and the Death of King Saul
1 Samuel 31

Background

Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible does not condone suicide.

2. The Bible does not condemn cremation.

Practical Application

1. In all your ways acknowledge His and He will direct your paths.

Questions

1. What happened to the Israelites on Mount Gilboa?

2. How did the Philistines boast of their victory over Saul in his death?

3. List some other suicides that are recorded in Scripture.

4. Why did the men of Jabesh Gilead put themselves in danger to rescue the bodies of Saul and his sons?

5. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. Does "all your ways" include the decision about cremation and burial?

Answers

1. The Philistines defeated the Israelites and Saul and his sons died.
2. They hung the bodies of Saul and his sons on the high walls of Beth Shan, where they would be seen for miles around.
3. a. Abimelech in Judges 9.
b. King Saul here in 1 Samuel 31.
c. Ahithophel in 2 Samuel 17.
d. King Zimri in 1 King 16.
e. Judas Iscariot in Matthew 27.
4. Forty years earlier King Saul had raised an army to rescue the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead from the siege and threat of the Ammonites (Chapter 11).
5. Of course. God will guide you in any area if you seek His will.

Discuss / Consider

1. Review what you have learned about the life of King Saul. This king started out well; even the Spirit of God came upon him. But then he fell to pride, partial obedience, and jealousy. What lesson does his life teach you?

2. Discuss principles from the Bible concerning burial versus cremation.

Challenge

1. Reflect on the lessons you learned from the life of King Saul as you conclude this study of 1 Samuel.