

THE BIG READ (32)

Jesus in Samuel

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. Why aren't we reading Ruth?

In our English Bibles, the next book in the Old Testament after Judges is Ruth that retells an event that happened “*In the days when the judges ruled.*” (Ruth 1:1)

However, we are following the order of the Old Testament that Jesus read, which was arranged in a different order.

Unlike the Old Testament in our English Bibles, which has five sections (the Law, the Historical Books, the Wisdom Books, the Major Prophets, and the Minor Prophets), the Old Testament Jesus read had three (the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings).

The book of Judges is the second book of the Prophets, whereas the book of Ruth is to be found in the part of the Old Testament known as the Writings.

3. The next book of the Prophets is Samuel.

Originally 1 and 2 Samuel was one book, Samuel.

It was given the title ‘Samuel’ after the first major character in the narrative.

When the book of Samuel was translated from Hebrew to Greek, because Greek is a much bulkier language to write down than Hebrew, a second scroll was needed, and so Samuel was split in two.

This explains why the second book has Samuel in its title even though Samuel does not feature in the book.

B. Getting Started with Samuel

1. By the end of the book of Judges, the people of Israel were in desperate need of a king to rule over them.

In the book of Joshua, the 12 tribes together entered and conquered Canaan, and once the land was allocated, the responsibility of destroying the remaining Canaanites was given to the individual tribes, as God had commanded in Deuteronomy 7.

“When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations – the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you – and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.” (Deuteronomy 7:1-2)

"After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who will be the first to go up and fight for us against the Canaanites?" (Judges 1:1)

The tribes failed to do this and soon began to worship the gods of the Canaanites and God's response was to hand them over to their enemies.

"In his anger against Israel the LORD handed them over to raiders who plundered them. He sold them to their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress." (Judges 2:14-15)

Yet in His mercy, God raised up judges to rescue them.

"Then the LORD raised up judges, who saved them out of the hands of these raiders." (Judges 2:16)

But the rescue the judges brought was temporary, lasting only the lifetime of the judge.

"But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their fathers, following other gods and serving and worshipping them." (Judges 2:19)

Also, without a king, the Priests and Levites were responsible for providing spiritual leadership for the people of Israel and ensuring that the people were obeying the Law of Moses.

"He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel." (Deuteronomy 33:10)

But they failed to do this, and the book of Judges ends with Israel in a mess spiritually and morally.

"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." (Judges 17:6)

"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." (Judges 21:25)

Israel needed a king, who unlike the tribes, would lead them into battle and destroy their enemies, who unlike the judges would provide lasting peace and security in the land, and who unlike the Priests and Levites, would keep and enforce the Law of Moses.

2. The book of Samuel tells the story of how God provided a king to rule over His people.

Under his rule the enemies living in the land will be driven out.

Under his rule peace and security in the land will be established.

Under his rule the worship of God will be restored.

But Samuel is clear that he is not the king that the people of Israel ultimately need – that King is still to come.

C. The Story of Samuel (or rather The Story of Jesus in Samuel)



1. Samuel divides into 4 sections.

1 Samuel 1-7: The People Need a King

1 Samuel 8-15: The King the People Wanted

1 Samuel 16–2 Samuel 10: The King God Wanted

2 Samuel 11-24: The People Still Need a King

2. In 1 Samuel 1 to 7 we see that the people of Israel needed a king.

The situation in Israel is the same as it was at the end of the book of Judges.

Eli the High Priest was old and useless and his sons were wicked and corrupt.

"Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. If a man sins against another man, God may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death." (1 Samuel 2:22-25)

Israel had no effective leadership.

"In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions." (1 Samuel 3:1)

The Philistines were a constant thorn in Israel's side.

"So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died." (1 Samuel 4:10-11)

Things were not looking good for the people of Israel – it appears that God has given up on this corrupt nation.

"She named the boy Ichabod, saying, "The glory has departed from Israel" – because the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured." (1 Samuel 4:21-22)

Yet there were signs that change was on the horizon.

A child is born to a barren woman.

"So in the course of time Hannah conceived and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him." (1 Samuel 1:20)

Hannah's prayer looks forward to the day when God's rule would be established through his anointed King.

"He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed." (1 Samuel 2:10)

A new leader appears who speaks God's Word.

"The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognised that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word. And Samuel's word came to all Israel." (1 Samuel 3:19-4:1)

The people of Israel seek the LORD.

"And Samuel said to the whole house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only." (1 Samuel 7:3-4)

Under Samuel's leadership there were victories over the Philistines.

"Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines. The towns from Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to her, and Israel delivered the neighbouring territory from the power of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites." (1 Samuel 7:13-14)

But Samuel was only a temporary solution to Israel's problem, which was that they had no king to lead them.

"When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel... But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice." (1 Samuel 8:1-3)

3. In 1 Samuel 8 to 15 we see the people of Israel get the king they wanted.

"So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have." But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king." (1 Samuel 8:4-7)

The problem was not that the people of Israel had asked for a king, but the kind of king they were asking for.

"When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses." (Deuteronomy 17:14-15)

God wanted them to have a king whose rule would reflect his own.

"When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his brothers and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel." (Deuteronomy 17:18-20)

But they wanted a king like all the other nations had, so they would be like the other nations – and by doing so they were rejecting God as their king.

"We want a king over us. Then we shall be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." (1 Samuel 8:19-20)

Samuel warned them about what would happen if they got the king they wanted.

"Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will do... When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the LORD will not answer you in that day." (1 Samuel 8:10-11, 18)

The people got the king they wanted.

"When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king." (1 Samuel 8:21-22)

Saul, the king the people wanted, was strong in stature but weak in character and failed to be the king the people needed.

"He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites – a head taller than any of the others." (1 Samuel 9:2)

"So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought

out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command." (1 Samuel 13:13-14)

A new king needed to be found.

4. In 1 Samuel 16 through to 2 Samuel 10 we see the people of Israel get the king God wanted.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)

An alternative way of translating this verse brings this point out more clearly.

"But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks *according to the eyes*, but the LORD *according to the heart*."

David was the king God wanted, the one on God's heart, and because he was God's choice, it is no surprise that God was on David's heart.

The key moment where we see the difference between the king the people wanted and the king God wanted is the showdown versus Goliath. (Remember Israel wanted a king to fight their battles).

"On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified." (1 Samuel 17:11)

"David said to Saul, "Let no-one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." (1 Samuel 17:32)

The contrast between David and Saul is clearly seen from 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Samuel 31 where Saul takes his own life.

In 2 Samuel 5, David becomes king over the whole nation, and Israel it seems got the king they needed.

Under David's rule the enemies living in the land were driven out (see Deuteronomy 7:1-2).

Under David's rule peace and security in the land was established (see Deuteronomy 12:10).

"In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them... The LORD gave David victory wherever he went." (2 Samuel 8:1, 14)

Under David's rule the place where the people worshipped God moved to Jerusalem (see Deuteronomy 12:4-7, 11-14).

David was a good king (2 Samuel 8:15) and a gracious king (2 Samuel 9), but was not the ultimate king that the people of Israel needed.

5. In 2 Samuel 11 to 24 we see that the people of Israel still needed a king.

This was hinted in 2 Samuel 7 as God makes a covenant with David that from one of his descendants would come a King who would rule over God's people for ever.

"When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever... Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever." (2 Samuel 7:12-13, 16)

This becomes clear in 2 Samuel 11 as David sins by committing adultery with Bathsheba and murder as he tries to cover up his sin.

"But the thing David had done displeased the LORD." (2 Samuel 11:27)

Whilst God forgave David when he confessed his sin (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 51; Psalm 32), his sin had consequences for the rest of his life.

David is not the King the people needed – his Son will be!

D. Jesus in Samuel

1. Jesus is the Good Shepherd

David is introduced as the shepherd who is willing to die for the sake of his sheep.

“But David said to Saul, “Your servant has been keeping his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I went after it, struck it and rescued the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.” (1 Samuel 17:34-35)

David by the end of his reign is the shepherd (king) who has decided his sheep (people) should die for his sake.

“David said to Gad, “I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men.” So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died.” (2 Samuel 24:14-15)

Jesus is the good shepherd who actually dies for the sake of His people.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

2. Jesus is the Lord’s Anointed

“He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.” (1 Samuel 2:10)

He is the Son of David (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

“A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham.” (Matthew 1:1)

Like David, He had to wait before ascending to the throne over all Israel (1 Samuel 16, 2 Samuel 5).

“As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him.” (Matthew 3:16)

Like David, He was persecuted by His enemies.

Like David, He represents His people and triumphs against their enemies bringing peace and security (1 Samuel 17).

Unlike David, He will be faithful to God and His reign will never end.

“You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end.” (Luke 1:31-33)

3. Jesus is the King, Israel needed and the King we need.