

# THROUGH THE BIBLE

## 1 SAMUEL



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# 1 SAMUEL

Samuel is the first of Israel's prophets set in Canaan. The story began with his mother, Hannah, being barren like Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel. All of them prayed to God.

.. and God granted them their request and each of them had a child through whom God fulfilled a **unique** purpose. It is **wonderful** when a child is born through **intense** prayer, like Samuel. She said " If I have a son, I'll give him to the Lord " This was a **shift** in the focus of her prayer from her needs to God's need. This is when we get answers to prayer. Israel had a great spiritual need at that time. God's people and their leaders, like Eli, were **backslidden** so badly. There was no prophet since the days of Moses. Hannah would have **recognised** this. After Samuel was born, she did not **forget** her promise. Samuel grew up to **change** the face of Israel ..



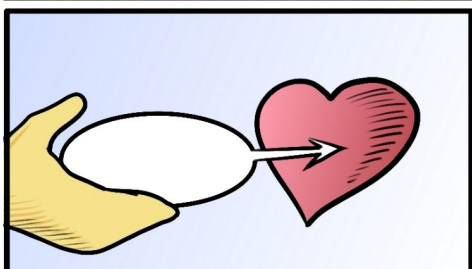
The high priest, Eli's sons were worthless, godless men, who had no fear of God. It is very sad when a leader's children are immoral and godless. The **worst** part was that Eli **permitted** them to take part in the ministry in the tabernacle. They would **steal** from the sacrifices and commit **adultery** with the women in the temple. And what was Eli's response to all this? He should **have removed** them from God's work! But he was a **spineless** and **useless** leader. In contrast, Samuel grew up " in favour with God and man "



In the midst of these **godless** surroundings, Samuel grew up **pure**. That is an example for all **young** people who find themselves in such **godless homes** or **surroundings**.

We maybe in a **church** full of **compromise** but let us **not** allow ourselves to be influenced by that. If we can be like Samuel, **steadfast** in our **devotion** to the Lord, without being **corrupted**, God can **raise** us up to be His **voice** in that **situation**, just as Samuel was. God sent a messenger to Eli saying Eli's ministry was **finished** because he had **honoured** his sons more than he **honoured** God. If we honour God, He will **certainly** honour us .

One night, when Samuel was asleep, he heard a **voice** calling him, " Samuel, Samuel " . He thought it was Eli but it was **God** and Samuel said " Speak Lord, your servant is **listening** " This is an **attitude** **all** of us must have, **throughout** the day, to the Lord's voice. God did not give Samuel any **warning**, saying " Tonight at **midnight** I am going to come and **speak** to you " No , Samuel had to be **alert** at **all** times and so must **we** .



This enabled Samuel to grow up to be a **prophet** of God and the " Lord did not **allow** any of Samuel's **words** to fall to the **ground** " Isn't it **wonderful** to be able to speak God's **word** in such a way that **every** word goes **straight** to people's **hearts** ! Samuel was a **young** man when he started to prophesy. So were **Jeremiah**, **Ezekiel** and **Zechariah**. This is an **encouragement** to all of us **young** people. We **don't** have to **wait** till we are 40 years old to **serve** the Lord. The **secret** is to have a **listening** attitude to **God**



In chapter 4 : 3 we read of a time when the Israelites were fighting the philistines and they were defeated. The elders asked themselves and they concluded that it must be because the ark of the covenant was not brought there. They didn't realise they were defeated because of their sins. The ark was only a symbol. They could have the symbol without God. So they brought the ark into their midst and shouted so loudly the earth began to shake ..

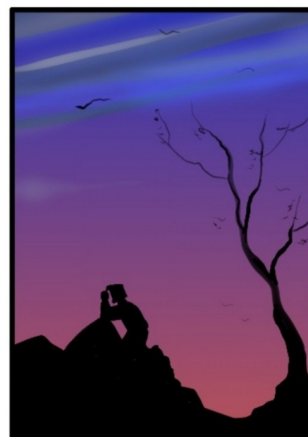
Many Christians even today imagine that it is only when they shout that God is in their midst. What happened? Before the ark came, the Philistines had killed 4,000 Israelites in battle. After the ark came and Israel had shouted, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord", the Philistines killed 30,000 Israelites! We *can't* bring God into a situation by bringing the symbols or by shouting and praising Him. God looks for people who have a *clear conscience*.

In Chapter 7 we see Samuel was travelling so much he didn't have time for his family. The result ? His sons went astray.



They took bribes and perverted justice. But Samuel *still* appointed them as judges, when God had *never* called them to this ministry. That was Samuel's *biggest* mistake. As a young man, Samuel preached to Eli regarding his sons and now we see Samuel failing in his *own* house.

But in many other areas, he was an outstanding example. He felt if he didn't pray for the people, he was sinning ! What an *example* for Christian leaders !



Jesus prayed for His 12 disciples regularly. Samuel understood that too. He was a man of prayer. Moses and Samuel are referred to by God as men of prayer in Jeremiah. "The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" ( James 5: 16 ) But we see even Samuel made a mistake



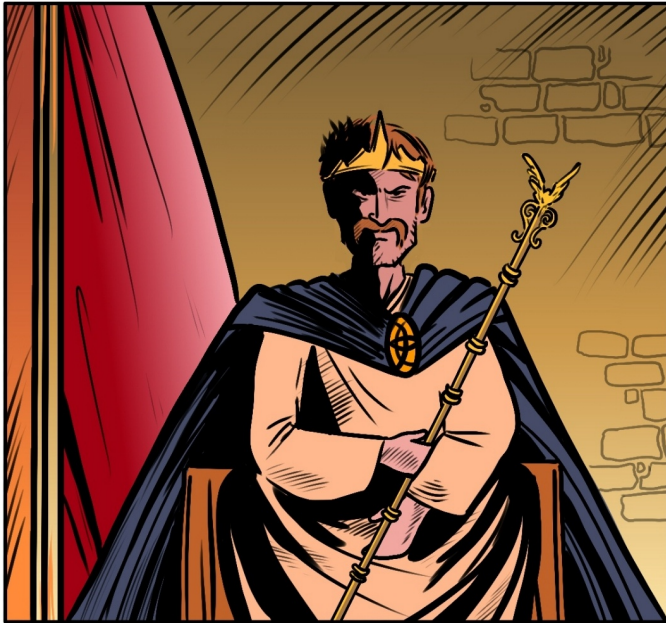
Now we see King Saul, who started out as a **humble**, young man who had **no** interest in being king. He was **surprised** when he was anointed and he was **changed** into another man when the **Holy Spirit** came upon him. This happens to **us** also when we are **filled** with the Holy Spirit. We need to experience this **continually**. Saul had many **good** qualities which the Lord had seen. Saul was **faithful** and **thorough** in his **work**. He was **wise**. He knew how to **respect** God's servants.



He had a **humble** opinion of **himself**. He did not **boast** and did not tell his uncle that **Samuel** had anointed him. He **stayed** in the **background**. He was **longsuffering**. He was **zealous** to help those in **need**. He was **courageous**. He **forgave** his **enemies**. These were some of the **good** qualities we see in Saul. Yet in a **few** years, he had **lost** contact with **God**, **lost** the **anointing** of the Spirit, his **humility**, **character** and **kingdom**.



We see the **first** reason in Chapter 13: 8. Samuel had told Saul to **wait** for him and he would offer a **sacrifice** to the Lord. Saul waited 7 days and Samuel did not come. So **Saul** decided to offer the sacrifice **himself**. He **knew** that he was **not** a priest. But because he had been **blessed** as king, he felt he could go **outside** his **boundary** that **God** had drawn around him. Just because **God** has **blessed** us in **one** ministry, does **not** mean we can move into another ministry that **God** has **not** called us to. But **after** a few minutes of offering the sacrifice, **Samuel** came ..



VS



Samuel told Saul " Your kingdom shall *not* endure now. You have acted *foolishly*. The Lord now seeks for somebody who is a man after *His own heart*. " . When Saul was anointed as King, the Bible says that his *head* stood out among the people, for he was taller than anybody else. Now God was looking for someone distinguished by their *heart*, not their *brains*. Christianity of the head and the heart are *vastly* different.

Saul *degenerated* from a wonderful *humble* young man to someone *useless* to God. But he sat on the throne for another 30 years. There are many who have lost the *anointing long* ago but are *sitting* on their thrones today in Christendom. This is because they have *money* and *human authority*.



He finally *acknowledged* that he did it but told Samuel that he would acknowledge it *privately* to him but did not want to be let down *publicly* by Samuel. ( verse 30 ) He sought honour from people. He wanted to put up a *holy front* and wanted the people to think that God was *still* with him. He didn't want it to look that Samuel had *stopped* supporting him. He was *afraid* of people's opinions

In chapter 15 we read of the *second* mistake Saul made when he spared some of the good sheep. He then *blamed* the people instead of *acknowledging* his mistake and *taking the blame*.



The Spirit of God now left Saul and an *evil* spirit entered him. Suspicion, fear, jealousy now occupied the heart once zealous for God. It is very *dangerous* to know the Spirit's power and *then* be *unfaithful*. The latter end is *worse* than the *unconverted* state. Saul spent the *rest* of his life chasing David. Also, he once killed 85 priests!



Samuel was then told to anoint one of Jesse's sons. Jesse didn't even bother to call David, his 8th son! Obviously, no one thought much of David, who was looking after sheep. But God said "man looks at the outward appearance but God looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16 : 7) God had rejected all the other 7 and Samuel was confused. He asked Jesse "Are these all the sons you have?" Then Jesse mentioned David, a teenager, not even an adult, strumming his harp and singing songs to God! But God had been watching him and seen his love and devotion to the Lord. Even today, God looks for such youth!



When David sees Goliath threatening Israel, notice his intense concern for the glory of God's name. He knew what God had done to the Canaanites giants through Joshua and Caleb. Saul laughed at David saying he was young.

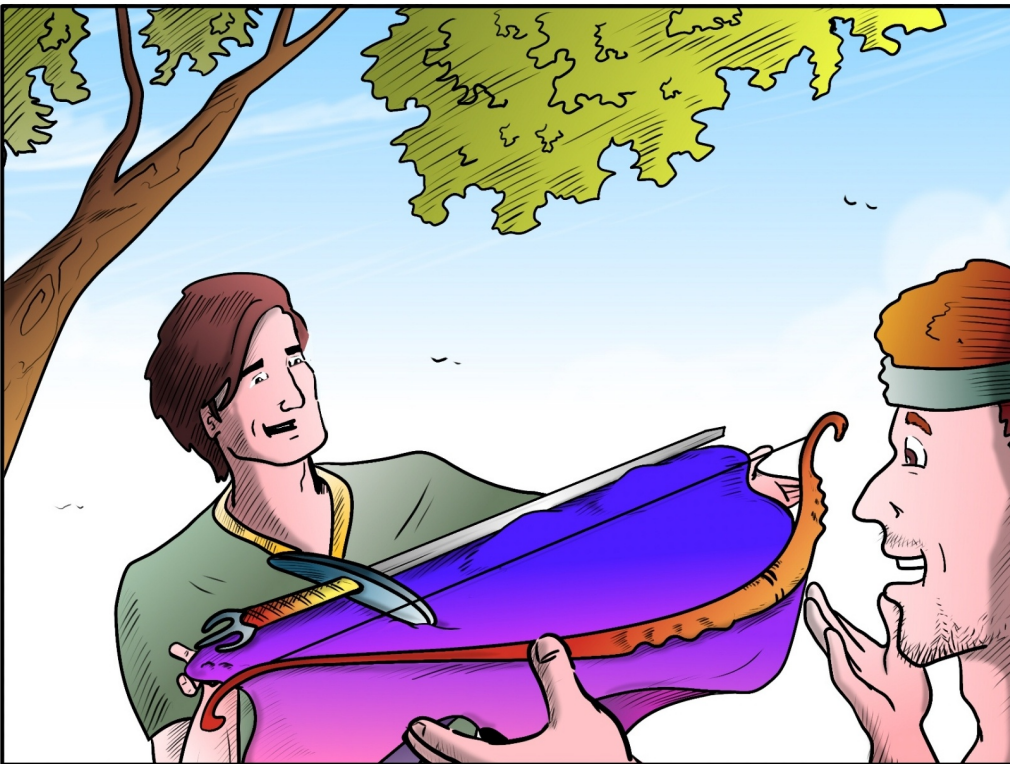


Then David told him about some incidents in his private life, victories against lions and bears, which he *hadn't even told his parents about!* How many shepherds would go after a lion to rescue a tiny lamb? When God saw David's care, He decided that David was fit to shepherd Israel. When Satan gets hold of a weaker brother, it is the shepherd's duty to go after Satan in spiritual warfare and rescue that brother from Satan's grip. That's the type of shepherd God is looking for today. This also teaches us that we have to slay the enemies privately *before* we face Goliath publicly.



Once Goliath was killed, the other Philistines ran away. ( 1 Samuel 17 : 51 ). This teaches us that once we kill the giant sin in our life ( " the sin that so easily entangles us " - Hebrews 12 : 1 ), we will find that many other sins in our life are conquered too.

David went against Goliath, not trusting in Saul's armour but trusting in God alone and killed Goliath and cut his head off with his own sword. This is how we are to go against Satan today. God uses Satan's own weapons to destroy him. " Through death, God destroyed him who had the power of death " ( Hebrews 2 : 14 )



In the same way, Barnabas, who was the senior brother, graciously withdrew into the background when he saw a greater anointing on his younger brother Paul. What a powerful force the church of Jesus Christ would be on earth, if it had more like Barnabas and Jonathan, who did not seek their own !

In chapter 18 we read of the lovely attitude that Jonathan, son of Saul, had towards David. Jonathan was older than David and heir to the throne. So he should have hated David for being so popular in Israel now and thus being a threat to him. But instead, we see a pure love and respect in his heart for David. He was more concerned with the glory of God and the good of Israel than personal advancement. He wasn't bitter like his father, Saul.

Now God was **with** David but he had to **flee** for his life from Saul who was trying to kill him. But no-one can kill us **before** God's plan for us is **fully** fulfilled. **Few** men who **recognized** the anointing on David joined him. They gathered to him and **moved** with him **constantly** from cave to cave ..

We too must **recognize** where God is moving **today** - not where He moved **yesterday**. We must **stand** with those upon whom the anointing of God rests **today**.

David lived his life in **daily dependence** on the Lord for **guidance**. He would ask the Lord and do things even **against** the advice of his **own** men.



In Chapter 24 we see David's noble action of **sparing** Saul's life when he had Saul at his mercy. Even though Saul was **moved** to **tears** on hearing this, he starting hunting David **again** after awhile. ( chapter 26 : 2 ) Jealousy and hatred come back like **waves** on a beach ..



In chapter 30 the Amalekites had taken their families captive. His men were ready to **stone** David. But David **encouraged** himself **in the Lord** ( verse 6 ) even when his **friends** turned against him. He **sought** the Lord and pursued the Amalekites.



But David did not know in which direction to go to find these Amalekites. It is wonderful to see how God led him through a simple act of kindness to a dying stranger. David and his men saw an Egyptian, half- dead, abandoned by the Amalekites.



They cared for him with food and water. When he revived, he showed them the way. Thus David found and defeated the Amalekites. Then it is written thrice, that "David **recovered all**" that had been stolen by the Amalekites ( verses 18 - 20 ) - a beautiful picture of Jesus recovering all that Satan had stolen from us !



We read in chapter 31, we read of how Saul committed suicide. God knows how to deal with those who persecute His children - in His own way and in His own time. David **never** had to lay a hand on Saul. He allowed God to deal with him. **Revenge** belongs to God and he will repay one day ( Romans 12 : 19 )



But until then, David faced difficulties and trials and then became a successful king. It is only this way we can have an effective ministry. But through oppression and suppression, God brings us through into abundance ( psalm 66 )