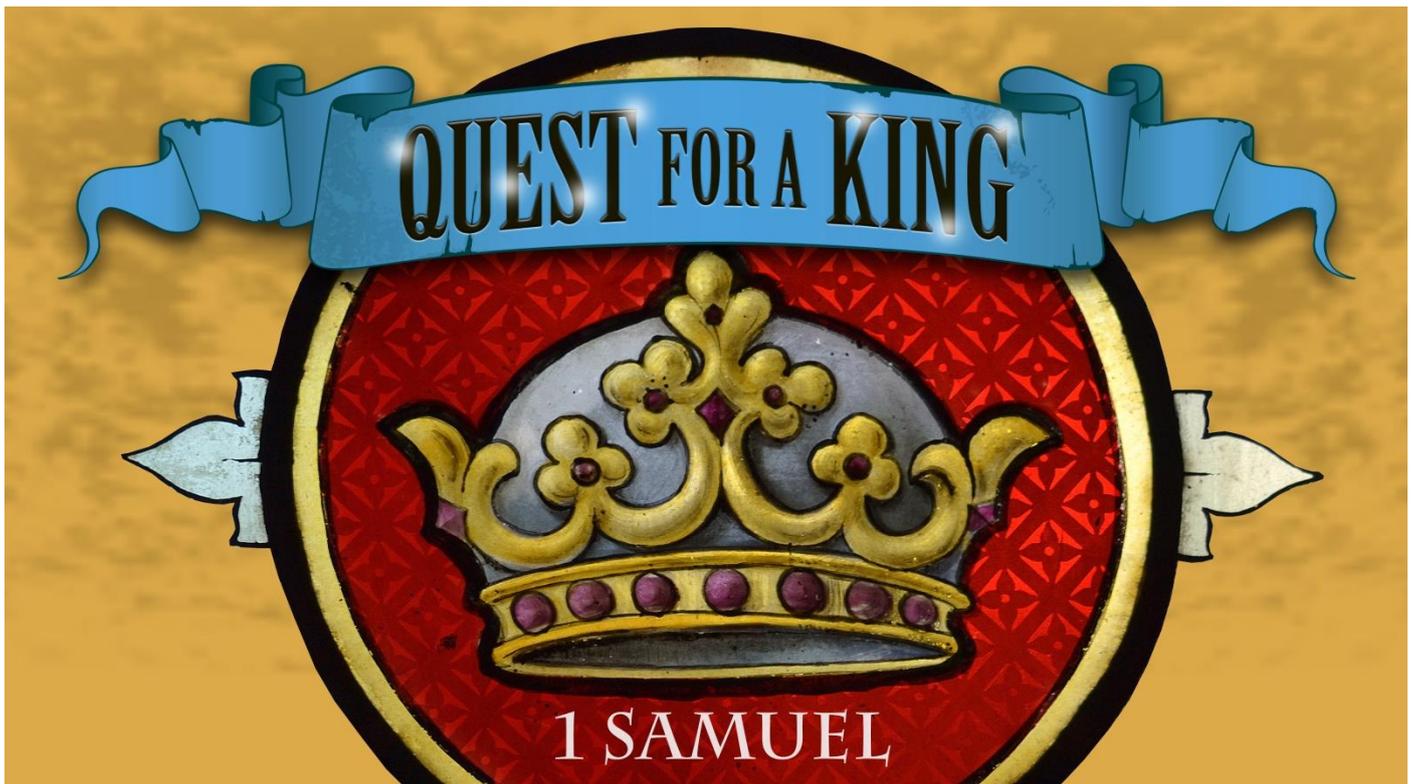


St George North Anglican Church

# **1 Samuel Bible Study Series**

July – September 2014



## Overview

Israel is a nation in crisis. For too long every person did what was right in their own eyes (see the book of Judges).

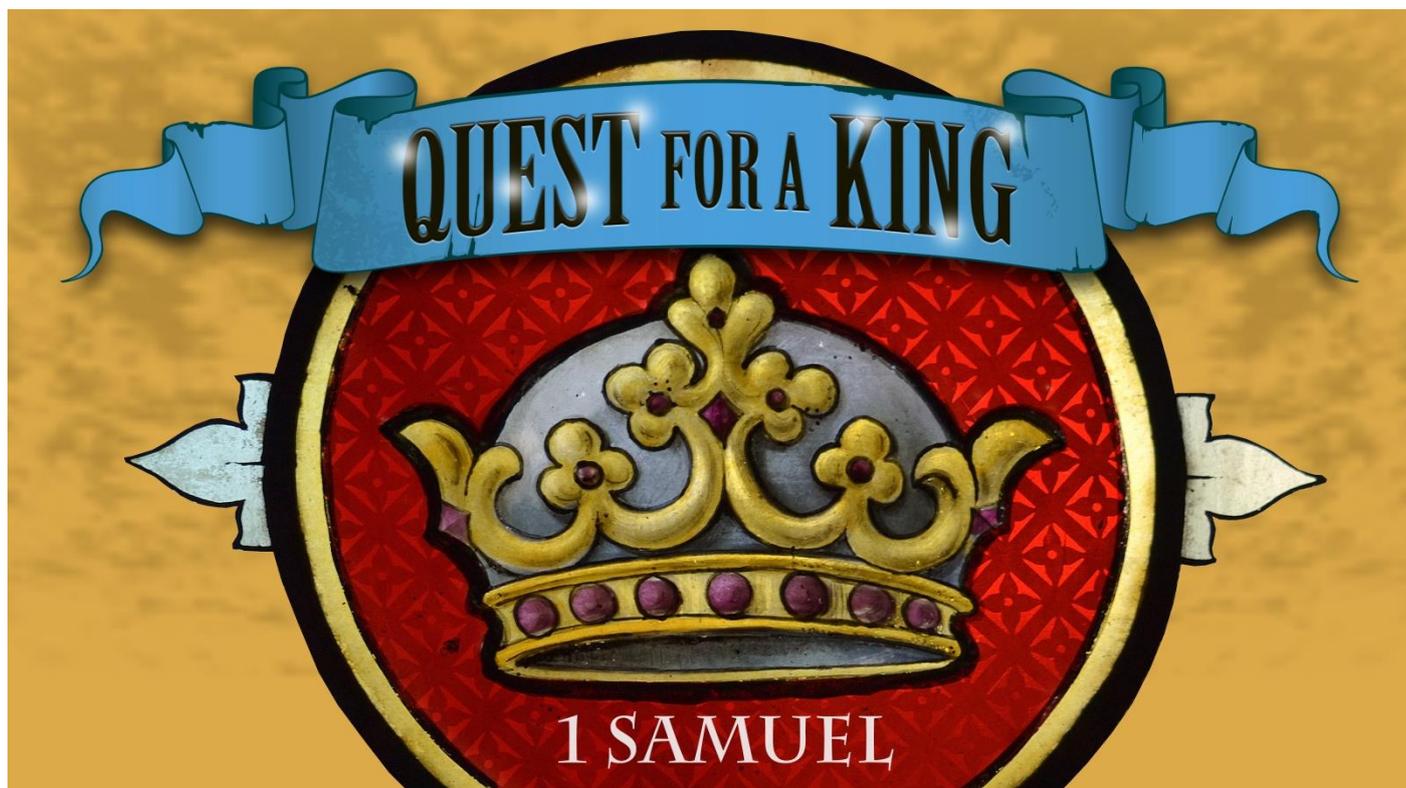
Israel had an identity problem – who were they? And what future was there when set adrift in a sea of stronger nations with powerful kings and mighty armies? **Who is your king Israel?**

1 Samuel to 2 Kings is one of the great narratives of the Bible. As we delve into the story of Israel around 1050AD we will be reminded of Yahweh's faithfulness. We will also be reminded that He cares for the humble and is not like the kings of the world. What he sets out to do he accomplishes despite the rebellion of his children.

This is Israel's history but it is also the story of all humanity – inept leadership, abuse of power, self-interest, irresponsibility, abuse of the humble, nepotism and corruption. More importantly, YHWH is at the centre of achieving his purposes in David's family and ultimately in Jesus.

This series combines a sermon series, bible study series and reading program with the hope that we might thoroughly enjoy and grow from this wonderful part of the Bible. Our prayer is that we see afresh how desperately we all need to answer 'Who is your King?' with: Jesus!

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## Leading this series in 1 Samuel

### Latest version of these Studies

The latest version of this study guide is available from [www.snac.org.au](http://www.snac.org.au) under SNAC -> Resources.

### Using these studies for your group

The studies have been written to help you delve into the text of 1 Samuel, to ask what it means in that historical and biblical context and then to ask what it means in the light of Jesus for us.

You may be tempted to simply print and read out the questions but I would encourage you to take the time to prepare for your study in advance.

These questions serve as a guide but they are no substitute for your own preparation and thinking through the passages. In some of these studies there is far more material than you will need but in others it may run short.

As you prepare, keep the people in your group in mind and ask yourself: how can this part of God's Word push each of them along in maturity in Jesus? What applications are suited to this group of people from this part of the Bible? What questions will this group naturally have of this piece of text?

### Commentaries

Group leaders may find additional commentaries to be useful as they prepare for the weekly studies. The following commentaries are recommended:

- "1 and 2 Samuel – Hope for the Helpless" by Andrew Reid
- "1 Samuel – Looking for a leader" by John Woodhouse

## Program/schedule

Sunday	Passage to cover	Service Readings (Preachers may change readings but must notify the readers)	SUNDAY TOPIC/NOTES	Bible-study: passages	Bible-study subject	Reading program prior to following Sunday
13/07/2014	<i>Preacher's choice</i>	<i>Preacher's choice</i>	<i>KHC Celebration</i>	(various)	Israel's leadership crisis	1 Samuel 1-2:11
20/07/2014	1 Sam 1 & 2:11 Luke 1:26-38	1 Sam 1 & 2:11; Luke 1:26-38	Help for the helpless Hannah	1 Samuel 2:1-10; Luke 1:46-56	Hannah's Song	1 Samuel 2:11-5:12
27/07/2014	1 Samuel 2:12-4:1a	1 Samuel 3; Acts 13:16-23	Eli to Samuel: Passing the baton God's way	1 Samuel 4&5	Israel and the ark: FAIL	1 Samuel 6:1-8:22
3/08/2014	1 Samuel 8	1 Samuel 8; Mark 15:6-20	Israel wants a king	1 Samuel 6&7	God and the ark: SUCCESS	1 Samuel 9:1-12:25
10/08/2014	1 Samuel 9&10	1 Samuel 9; Matthew 16:21-28	Saul the king	1 Samuel 11&12	Saul's kingship	1 Samuel 13:1-16:23
17/08/2014	1 Samuel 13-15	1 Samuel 13; Hebrews 10:1-10	Saul fails as king	1 Samuel 16	David anointed	1 Samuel 17:1-19:24
24/08/2014	1 Samuel 17	1 Samuel 17:1-27; Hebrews 11:1-2 & 32-40	David versus Goliath	1 Samuel 18-19	David's success is Saul's paranoia	1 Samuel 20:1-23:29
31/08/2014	1 Samuel 20-21	1 Samuel 21; Matthew 12:1-8	David flees	1 Samuel 22-23	Saul pursues	1 Samuel 24:1-30:31
7/09/2014	1 Sam 24-26	1 Sam 24; Matthew 5:1-12	Saul versus David: portrait of two kings	1 Sam 27-30	David in exile	1 Samuel 31:1-2 Samuel 2:11
14/09/2014	1 Samuel 31 & 2 Sam 1-2	1 Samuel 31; Acts 13:26-41	Saul's death & David's response	n/a	<i>Social / Prayer / Topical</i>	Keep reading!

## Study 1 – Leadership crisis in Israel

The objective of this study is to uncover the historical and theological background of Israel at the time of 1 Samuel. This study, more than others in this series, will involve investigation of multiple bible passages by the participants of your groups. Please adjust the amount and the way that you do your investigation in this study to suit the dynamics of your group. Please also allow plenty of time for prayer and don't forget to pray that our time in 1 Samuel will challenge us to serve the true King every day.

### Getting started

Who do you think of as the great leaders of our world? What makes them great?

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Who are the Christian leaders that have influenced you? Why?

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### Investigation – A king in Israel?

Read the following passages and summarise what each contributes to our understanding of kingship in Israel:

- (1) Genesis 14:17-24: \_\_\_\_\_
- (2) Exodus 1: \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Exodus 3: \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Deuteronomy 7:12-8:10: \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Deuteronomy 17:14-20: \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Deuteronomy 28:15-37: \_\_\_\_\_

Who was Israel's King?

What kind of life would a faithful & loyal subject of the King live?

### Investigation – Leadership problems

In the book of Judges there is a recurring pattern of rebellion that gives us a great insight into the state of leadership in Israel prior to 1 Samuel. The recurring pattern consists of: Israel sins -> God's judgement -> Israel repents -> God sends a saviour (judge) and then a period of peace and prosperity (see Moore College, PTC - Introduction to the Bible, page 68 for more information).

What do the following passages tell us about the leadership problems in Israel at this time?

- (1) Othniel – Judges 3:7-11: \_\_\_\_\_

- (2) Ehud – Judges 3:12-30: \_\_\_\_\_
- (3) Deborah – Judges 4:1-5:31: \_\_\_\_\_
- (4) Gideon – Judges 6:1-8:35: \_\_\_\_\_
- (5) Jephthah – Judges 10:6-12:7: \_\_\_\_\_
- (6) Samson – Judges 13:1-16:31: \_\_\_\_\_
- (7) Conclusion – Judges 21:25: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection**

In 25 words or less, what is the state of leadership in Israel prior to 1 Samuel? \_\_\_\_\_

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Christians have Jesus as their King and therefore our ultimate leadership is never in trouble. However, under Jesus, all sorts of leadership is required in the day to day business of living as Christians in this world.

What makes a good Christian leader? Reflect upon Philippians 2:1-11 as you think about this and also reflect upon how you are going in any contexts in which you have leadership.

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What can we as church members do to encourage these kind of attributes in our leaders? Reflect upon Hebrews 13:7 and Hebrews 13:17 and list some practical ways.

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**Prayer**

Pray widely and specifically. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Give thanks to God for Jesus’ great leadership of his people and pray we might make his leadership a joy as we honour him
- Pray for leaders in the growing churches in mainland China
- Pray for leaders in our church: in families; in home groups; in our various church congregations.
- Pray for leaders in our Diocese.
- Pray for leaders in the persecuted African churches

**Preparation for Sunday**

Please read 1 Samuel 1-2:11 before Church this Sunday

## Study 2 – Hannah’s Song

In this study we will investigate Hannah’s response to the Lord after he answered her prayer for a son.

### Getting started

1. Hannah’s story reminds us that we are not in control of the world. Even with all the medical assistance available today there is no guarantee that a couple will conceive and bring a child into this world.

List out some other areas where our only recourse is prayer to our Heavenly Father?

When faced with some of these issues are you likely to grow in your trust of God or not?

2. Is this statement a fair assessment?

*“Modern Christians are quick to prayer requests but slow to praise and thankfulness of the God who answers their prayers”*

### Read 1 Samuel 2:1-11

- What’s the difference between the tone in Hannah’s prayer versus her tone in chapter 1? What are some of the words that illustrate how she is feeling?
- What things does Hannah ask for herself in verse 1?
- What could Hannah’s ‘horn’ be? (Note: the Holman translation includes a ‘bullet’ notation for certain words allowing you to gather more information from the table of special words at the back of your Bible)
- What attributes of God does Hannah affirm in v2?
- What does it mean when she says there is no ‘rock’ like God?

- Verse 3 introduces a long section of comparisons from verse 4 to verse 9. For example in verse 7 the Lord brings poverty to some and the Lord gives wealth to others.

Why does Hannah give this long list of comparisons?

- Verse 10 concludes the long list of comparisons. What response does Hannah suggest for people?
- What do we learn from verse 10 about the ends to which God is working in the world?
- Work through each of the comparisons from verse 4 to verse 9. How does the comparison relate to the introduction given in v3 and the conclusion drawn in verse 10?

### **Conclusions and application**

- Hannah's prayer points forward to the prayer of praise and exaltation of another barren woman amongst God's people. Read Luke 1:46-55.

What are the similarities in their prayers?

What do these 2 prayers reveal about God' plans for the world?

- What things can we learn about praying from Hannah?
- What things can we learn from Hannah about our attitude as God's people in this world?
- As a group, write and then pray a prayer which incorporates some of the elements you have discussed today.

### **Preparation for Sunday**

Please read 1 Samuel 2:11-5:12 before Church this Sunday

## Study 3 – Israel and the ark: FAIL

In this study we will begin to look at a particular disaster in the history of Israel – the day God’s people used the ark of God as if it was a weapon for battle. Today we will focus on the failure side from 1 Samuel 4 & 5.

Next week we will look at the way God rescues the ark in chapter 6 & 7.

Please be aware that the ark narrative will be the focus for Bible Study whilst in the sermons at our various churches we will skip this narrative and focus on the kingship theme. Be sure to both attend your group and attend church so as not to miss any of the action!

### Getting started

Have you seen “Raiders of the Lost Ark” or something similar featuring a supposed “Ark of the Covenant”? What kinds of properties do people expect God’s Ark to have?

What does this kind of thinking tell us about humanity?

### Background

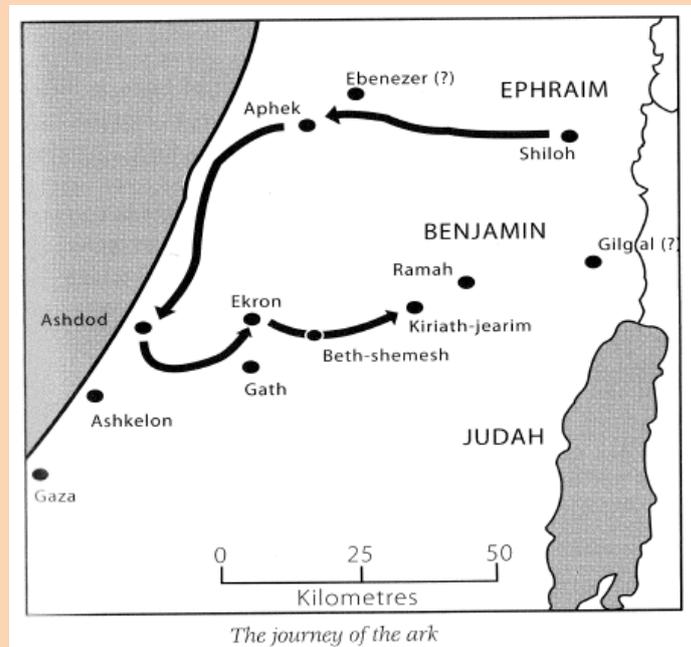
What is the Ark? If time permits you may wish to quickly read Exodus 25:8-22, Deuteronomy 10:1-5.

How had the Ark been used since it was built? Read Numbers 10:33-36.

### More background information

The Philistines were a small but militarily advanced nation in the south-west of Palestine. External Egyptian historical sources suggest they were a migrated 'sea people' who appeared in the area around 1200BC.

The following map illustrates the journey of the ark in chapters 4 to 7 (source: 1 Samuel, Reid)



### Read 1 Samuel 4:1-11

According to the Israelite elders, who is to blame for the battle loss?

What is good about the response of the people in verse 4?

What internal evidence is there in verse 4 that despite the 'good' of the idea this might not go so well? Hint: what do we know about Hophni & Phinehas?

In this section, who honours God appropriately?

### Read 1 Samuel 4:12-22

Why is Eli's death not unexpected?

In this section who displays the best theological insight?

What does this section indicate about the state of theological teaching and leadership in Israel?

Drawing this chapter together, why might God have allowed his people to be so soundly defeated by the Philistines?

### **Read 1 Samuel 5:1-12**

Comparing this section to the previous, what lesson was God teaching his people at that time?

What lesson did the Philistine's learn about defying God (compare 4:6-9 with 5:11-12)?

### **Think it through**

Humans are good at defying God, Christians included. What are some ways you defy God & his glorious power?  
What does this example from 1 Samuel teach us about doing these things?

The ultimate example of defying God was shown at the cross when humans put God's Son to death. How successful was that? (eg. Col 2:15) How should this challenge & encourage us?

### **Pray**

### **Preparation for Sunday**

Please read 1 Samuel 6:1-8:22 before Church this Sunday

## Study 4 – God and the ark: SUCCESS

In this study we see part two of the Ark narrative that we started last week. This time, rather than the Israelites losing the ark, we see God rescue the ark without the intervention of his people

### Getting started

Don Carson has written many excellent books to encourage and build up Christians. He has a way of teaching theology that helps you to simultaneously: grow in understanding, take a long hard look at yourself and praise God for Jesus.

In his book *The Cross and Christian Ministry* he writes:

*"...the cross is nothing other than God's way of doing what he said he would do: by the cross, God sets aside and shatters all human pretensions to strength and wisdom.*

*This is a central theme of Scripture. God made us to gravitate toward him, to acknowledge with joy and obedience that he is the center of all, that he alone is God. The heart of our wretched rebellion is that each of us wants to be number one. We make ourselves the center of all our thoughts and hopes and imaginings. This vicious lust to be first works its way outward not only in hatred, war, rape, greed, covetousness, malice, bitterness, and much more, but also in self-righteousness, self-promotion, manufactured religions, and domesticated gods.*

*We ruefully acknowledge how self-centered we are after we have had an argument with someone. Typically, we mentally conjure up a rerun of the argument, thinking up all the things we could have said, all the things we should have said. In such reruns, we always win. After an argument, have you ever conjured up a rerun in which you lost?*

*Our self-centeredness is deep. It is so brutally idolatrous that it tries to domesticate God himself. In our desperate folly we act as if we can outsmart God, as if he owes us explanations, as if we are wise and self-determining while he exists only to meet our needs." (Pages 14-15)*

In what ways do we try and domesticate and outsmart God in our lives?

In today's study we are confronted again by the truth: God doesn't NEED us, he isn't bound by our man-made rules and he won't be domesticated by us.

**Review: Summarise chapter 4 & 5 before you begin**

**Read 1 Samuel 6**

Verse 1 describes a monumental crisis for Israel. Why?

Having captured the ark, why do the Philistine diviners want to get rid of it again in verse 2?

List the ways that the Philistines have ironically understood God better than the Israelites:

The language of the Exodus appears at several points in this chapter.

1. List the places a comparison to the Exodus is made.
2. What does this association tell us about God?

V13 is a joyous event for Israel. What possible suggestion is made when compared to 4:22? Who is the author of this joy?

Verse 19-20 describe an awful event. Why did this happen? What did these representative Israelites still not understand?

Do we Christians ever fall into the trap of thinking God's work is really just our work – it is all up to us? What does this chapter say to us about that?

Who has been conspicuous in his absence during this whole Ark narrative?

### **Read 1 Samuel 7**

After much time has passed, effective leadership is finally on display in Israel. What are Israel told to do? What attitude are they to have?

What underlies this new effective leadership as compared to the events of previous ark narrative? Be specific and provide verses.

What is the outcome of this new approach?

From verse 7, once again, the Philistines and Israelites are at war. What makes this war different to the last?

During the war, what does Samuel's leadership entail? After the war what does Samuel's leadership entail?

Samuel's leadership was a faint shadow of the future leadership of Jesus. What of Jesus' leadership is hinted at by Samuel?

**Pray**

**Prepare for next Sunday by reading 1 Samuel 9:1-12:25**

Visit [www.snac.org.au](http://www.snac.org.au) and click on SNAC->Resources to obtain the next studies.