



# A Summary of the Old Testament

*within the word*

# Lesson Nine | Samuel the Prophet

The Israelites were in Egypt for about 400 years, just as God foretold Abram, in Genesis 15:13-15. Next, there was a period of judges who ruled for 300-400 years.

The sad commentary on this time of judges was seen in Judges 21:25: *"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit."*

The truth is; Israel never enjoyed the life God had planned for them, because they refused to follow God in obedience.

This week we are going to look at Samuel, the prophet, a faithful servant of the LORD.

## Day One

1. When we read about Samuel's birth, we see a beautiful story of a woman of great faith. Her name is Hannah.

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20.

What facts did you learn about this woman of faith?

2. The desire of Hannah's heart was to have a child. Scripture tells us that was not happening, although she waited, and waited, and waited.

According to verse 11-16 how bad had things gotten for her emotionally?

Are you longing for God to do something and the waiting is making you miserable?

Have you seen others around you enjoying answered prayers and yet you are still waiting?

What are we to do in the time between our need and God's answer?

Andy Stanley calls this the meantime. *"What do we do when we have problems without solutions . . . questions without answers? During times like these, it is tempting to give in to anger . . . especially anger toward God. It feels like God is absent, apathetic, or angry. But what if he isn't?"*

3. Have you seen someone demonstrate great faith in God despite difficult circumstances?

What did seeing them remain faith-filled do for your faith?

4. Think back on the last time you prayed for something important, but had to wait.

What did you learn about God's character that you might not have learned any other way?

5. The LORD answered Hannah's prayer and gave her a son. She named him Samuel; the name Samuel means 'God heard.'

1 Samuel 2:21 tells us, Hannah had 3 more sons and 2 daughters. Like Hannah, our children are on loan from the Lord.

How are you following Hannah's example and giving your children to the Lord? Do you daily dedicate them to God for his plans and purposes?

6. Even though Samuel was raised in "...the house of the LORD at Shiloh" (the tabernacle of God was set up at Shiloh,) it did not guarantee he would be sheltered from every bad influence.

Read 1 Samuel 2:12.

Who was Samuel exposed to every day?

What did you see about the character of these two men?

7. Read 1 Samuel 2:22-26.

Eli tried to correct his sons, they would not listen. Their disobedience did not disqualify Eli. God used him to train Samuel.

What did you learn about Samuel from these verses?

8. Samuel lived with Eli the priest from the time he was weaned. He grew up focused on serving the LORD.

Read 1 Samuel 3:2-21.

God called Samuel personally into service. At first Eli did not recognize that it was God calling Samuel. But when he did, he told him this is the LORD speaking to you.

Can we help our children recognize God's voice?

Jot down some ways so you can discuss it in your small group time.

9. Read 1 Samuel 3:19.

Not only did he grow up in years, but he grew in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. The verse goes on to say, "...the LORD was with him."

This reminded me of Luke 2:52 "...and Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."



2. The Israelites suffered a great defeat that day. The elders of Israel were shocked. I can almost hear them saying, "What just happened?" And then someone suggests the unthinkable.

Read 1 Samuel 4:3

What was the suggestion for victory in the next siege?

3. The scripture did not record who came up with this terrible idea, to go get the Ark and bring it into battle. However, just because someone suggests something, does not mean we should follow through. I wonder how different this battle would have turned out if someone would have spoken up and opposed this idea.

Where was the Ark of the Covenant supposed to reside?

What would have been a better suggestion when seeking God's blessing?

4. Read Hebrews 9:7.

Who was the only person allowed to go in, where the Ark of the Covenant resided?

How often was he permitted to go in?

What was the only reason this person could come into the presence of the Ark?

5. When we hear an idea that is contrary to God's will, as a believer, how are we to handle it?

Several years ago, there was a popular bracelet. It was a simple leather cord with the letters WWJD. I wish I could find mine again. I am sure it is here in a box somewhere but truly only God knows where it is. If I had it, I would put it back on. It was a great reminder of things, both large and small. A reminder to stop and ask the question, "*What would Jesus do?*"

What do you do to save yourself from making poor choices and bad decisions?

6. Did you notice who was there, giving consent to this very bad idea?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

7. Eli may have been a good priest, but he did not do a very good job raising these boys into godly men. For our children to grow up to be well-rounded adults, we must take time to not merely encourage them to do right. We must correct bad behavior. So often today, we see parents who speak words of positivity into their child, but are unwilling to do the hard stuff, correction, and discipline.

Why might parents shy from parenting well?

- The purpose of the Ark, itself, was to be a reminder of God’s holiness and his help. Even the contents of the Ark spoke as a reminder to the people.

Do you recall what was inside the Ark? Look up Hebrews 9:3-4

<b>Contents of the ark of the covenant</b>	<b>Reminded the people of God’s...</b>
1	
2	
3	

- Read 1 Samuel 4:3 again.

What were they counting on the Ark to do for them?

Why was this the wrong thing to do?

How would this be like an idol?

Read Exodus 20:4.

What if they had won a battle, by counting on the Ark.

Then who, or what, would receive the praise and the glory for the victory?

- When the Ark of the Covenant came into camp, how was it received by the Israelites?

## Day Three

- The Philistines heard the commotion in the camp of the Israelites.

How did the Philistines feel about the noise from the Hebrew camp?

What did they say?

- What was the result of the next battle after bringing the Ark into the camp?  
1 Samuel 4:10-11

*a.*

*b.*

*c.*

*d.*

- Eli, the priest had not been at the battlefield. He remained back in Shiloh. News was brought to him of the events of the battle.

Which bit of news hurt him the worst?

4. Phinehas's wife was pregnant and about to deliver when she heard the news of these events. What happened to her?

It is often hard to see all the possible ramifications of our actions. Therefore, it is so important that we stop and take time to pray and seek godly counsel, before we choose a path that might cost more than we are willing to pay. Looking back, we can see the decision to bring the Ark of the Covenant to the battle had a tremendous cost.

What had it cost?

5. What did the name Ichabod mean?
6. Considering the position held by Eli, Ichabod's grandfather, and Phinehas, his father, what was Ichabod in line to do for a living?

How did his name stand in direct opposition to this line of work?

7. 1 Samuel 5 describes the events that went on around the Ark of the Covenant while it was in the hands of foreigners. The Ark was taken from Ebenezer to \_\_\_\_\_ . The Philistines placed the Ark of the Covenant in the house of \_\_\_\_\_ .

In the morning what had happened?

8. This is an amazing thing to have happen.

Did the people understand the power of God that was in their midst?  
Did they give honor and praise to God?

9. It is always a sad thing when God shows himself mighty and people miss the truth of the event.

Can you think of a recent event where God showed himself mighty and yet the people of our nation missed it or simply did not stop to give him praise?

10. What did the Philistines find on the second morning possessing the Ark of the Covenant?

Be specific.

11. Were the Philistines blessed by having the Ark of the Covenant in Ashdod?

12. Where did they move the Ark of the Covenant to next?
13. How did things go for the people of this city while they had the Ark of the Covenant?

## Day Four

1. Where did they take the Ark of the Covenant next?
2. As they came into this last town how was the Ark received by the people there?
3. 1 Samuel 6 tells the story of the return of the Ark to Israel.

How long had the Ark been in the land of the Philistines?

4. When the Philistines returned the Ark what gifts were sent along with it?  
Why these strange gifts?
5. The text said these were a guilt offering.  
Is this the kind of guilt offering that would please the Lord?

A guilt offering was supposed to be done as a sign of repentance; these men are trying to appease a god they do not know.

What is the difference between appeasing and repentance?

6. It is easy to be critical of their ridiculous gifts, sent to appease God.

Is it really any different than the way people today try to come to God by all kinds of plans of their own?

God has made it so simple even a child can obey and yet they want to display some great sacrifice to please God.

Is God pleased by our idea of sacrifice or obedience?

7. The Ark of the Covenant was sent to Beth-Shemesh.

What agricultural season was it?

How did the people of Beth-Shemesh respond to the return of the Ark of the Covenant?

8. The men of Beth-Shemesh did right by their offering and sacrifice for the safe return of the Ark.  
But, what did they do wrong?

1 Samuel 6:19 tells us 70 men died that day; why did these men die?

9. After losing 70 of their friends and family, the people quickly sent word to have the Ark taken to Kiriath Jearim.

Where did they take the Ark of the Covenant?  
How long did the Ark remain in Kiriath Jearim?

10. Samuel led the people of Israel in a time of rededication.

What did he tell them to do if they really were returning to the LORD?

11. If we would like to see a time of national rededication in America, what might we need to do?

12. Samuel served the LORD all his days. He faithfully led Israel to seek and know God.

Are you leading others to a closer walk with the LORD?  
Who are you leading?

## Day Five

1. 1 Samuel 8 tells us that Samuel was growing old. He set his sons up as judges in Israel.

What were the names of his first two sons?  
What was the character of these men?

- a.
- b.

2. Because Samuel is so old and the prospect of spiritual leadership is so poor, what do the people ask for?
3. Who did they want to be like?
4. God's plan for Israel was never to be like other nations, but to be an example for other nations. This is what God meant when he told Abraham that his descendants would be a blessing to all the other nations. God had clearly given Israel the choice several times, choose life or death, obedience or rebellion, blessings or curses.

Who did God want the Israelites to look to for all their needs?

5. Notice the warning given by Samuel to the people about wanting a king to rule over them.

Read 1 Samuel 8:10-22.

What could they expect when they get a king?

6. As we have done each week, add God's character qualities you have seen to your list on **The Character of God** page. Some of His qualities may be repeated from chapter to chapter but you may also see new ones as well.

Please, do not leave this undone. The purpose of our study is to get to know our God.