

Each Fall our church spends time working through a book of the Old Testament. This year we will spend two months journeying through the books of 1&2 Samuel.

How to Use the Reading Schedule:

- Before you start reading through 1&2 Samuel, identify a reading partner (someone you can check in with as you read) and then check in with one another as you read.
 - Some people will check in daily with a phone call or text and share their key word and/or verse
 - Others will check in weekly and share the key words and verses from the week.
- The 55 chapters of 1&2 Samuel are divided into 11 sections (12 weeks)
 - Each section begins with an **Overview** of the section you will be reading through that week.
 - The **Overview** is taken from “How to Read the Bible Book by Book” by Fee and Stuart
 - Each day/date will have a specific chapter or chapters to read
- After reading the chapter(s) take a moment to write the key word (idea) and/or verse from the chapter(s). There is no right or wrong answer to be found...just write down the word (idea) and/or verse that stood out to you.
- Each Sunday, in place of selected readings, you are encouraged to reflect on the morning’s sermon and/or previous week’s reading.
- If your small group is basing their conversations on the readings and/or sermons, this question will serve as a great conversation starter.

Overview of 1&2 Samuel

The books of Samuel and Kings together form a continuous history of the Israelite monarchy from the time of Samuel to its demise in 587/6 BC. It is important as you read them to remember that in the Hebrew Bible they belong to the Former Prophets. Like the books of the Latter Prophets, these books present God's perspective on the history of his people; although they concentrate on Israel's kings, prophets play an important role as well.

The book of Samuel tells the story from the beginnings of kingship to the declining years of David's reign. The story centers on three key people: *Samuel*, the last of the judges and the prophet who anoints the first two kings; *Saul*, Israel's first king; and *David*, Israel's most important king. The book itself is in four basic parts, related to these three men.

Part one is about Samuel alone (1 Sam 1-7). Essential here are the birth, call, and early career of Samuel (1:1-4:1a) and the loss and return of the ark of the covenant (4:1b-7:1), followed eventually by a great victory over the Philistines (7:2-14).

In part 2 (1 Sam 8 – 15), Samuel and Saul overlap. Two matters are essential here: (1) Yahweh's affirmations of and warnings about the monarchy (chs. 8 - 12; cf. Deuteronomy 17:14- 20) and (2) the beginning of Saul's reign and Yahweh's rejection of him as king (1 Sam 13 – 15).

In part 3 (1 Sam 16-31), Saul and David overlap. Its essential story is told at the beginning and the end: the anointing of David to replace Saul as king (16:1-13) and the death of Saul and his heir apparent, Jonathan (ch. 31). Thus it is all about David's rise and Saul's decline, as well as Saul's constant pursuit of David in order to kill the upstart rival to his dynasty.

Part 4 (2 Samuel) concentrates on David - although concern over Saul continues (chs. 1-4; 9; 21) - while Nathan (chs. 7, 12) and Gad (ch. 24) now dawn the prophetic mantle of Samuel. Chapters 1 - 9 set out the basic story of David's reign, the most significant part of which is the covenant in chapter 7 that establishes David's dynasty "forever" (vv. 15 16). Chapters 10-20 narrate David's sin with Bathsheba that becomes a catalyst to expose the internal weaknesses in David's family and the tenuous nature of the united kingdom. Chapters 21-24 are a kind of reflective appendix to the story of David.

1 Samuel 1:1-4:1a

The Birth and Call of Samuel

Note the decisive role that Hannah plays in the story: a barren woman praying for a son (1:1-20), dedicating him to God (1:21-28), and rejoicing in the lord (2:1-11). Note also how her prayer anticipates at least two motifs of the story – (1) God blesses the weak, not the strong, and (2) God will give strength to his king. Samuel's origins are then set in contrast to the wickedness of Eli's sons (2:12-36), followed by Samuel's call (3:1-18) and a concluding summary of his ministry (3:19-4:1a). Note how Eli's acceptance of Yahweh's rejection of him as priest (3:18) serves as a foil for Saul's later refusal to accept Yahweh's rejection of him as king.

- "How to Read the Bible Book by Book" by Fee and Stuart

Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Sept 3	1 Samuel Overview	
Sept 4	1 Samuel 1:1-20	
Sept 5	1 Samuel 1:21-28	
Sept 6	1 Samuel 2:1-11	
Sept 7	1 Samuel 2:12-26	
Sept 8	1 Samuel 2:27-36	
Sept 9	1 Samuel 3-4:1a	
Sept 10	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

1 Samuel 4b-7:17

The Loss and Return of the Ark

Note how this section is dominated by the loss and return of the glory of God, associated with the ark, where God “is enthroned between the cherubim” (4:4). The ark is not a talisman for Israel to use at a whim (4:1b-22), but neither are the Philistines to think that they have conquered Israel’s God (ch 5), so it is returned part way toward its final resting place (6:1-7:1). Some twenty years later, Samuel calls for national repentance, which results in God's aid in defeating the Philistines (7:2-13, echoes of Judges). Note how the concluding section summarizes Samuel’s ministry, even though there is more to say about him (cf. the role of 1 Sam 15:34-35 in the Saul narrative).

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Sept 11	1 Samuel 4:1b-11	
Sept 12	1 Samuel 1:12-22	
Sept 13	1 Samuel 5	
Sept 14	1 Samuel 6-7:1	
Sept 15	1 Samuel 7:2-17	
Sept 16	1 Samuel 8	
Sept 17	What is your take away from this morning’s sermon or from this past week’s reading?	

1 Samuel 8:1 – 12:25

Saul anointed king

You might want to read this section in light of Deuteronomy 16:18-17:20). Note how it starts (8:13) with echoes from Deuteronomy 16:18-20 (judges who pervert justice and show partiality). The rest of this section is bookended by two warnings about the potential evils of monarchy, including statements about the people's rejection of Yahweh's kingship (8:4-22 and 11:14-12:25). These frame the narratives about Saul's becoming king - first, his anointing by Samuel (9:1-10:8), which emphasizes Saul's humble beginnings, and second, is being presented to the people and their confirmation of him (10:9-11:13), emphasizing his continuity with the prophetic tradition, his timid nature, and his military success the holy war.

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Sept 18	1 Samuel 8	
Sept 19	1 Samuel 9-10:8	
Sept 20	1 Samuel 10:9-27	
Sept 21	1 Samuel 11:1-11	
Sept 22	1 Samuel 11:12-15	
Sept 23	1 Samuel 12	
Sept 24	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

1 Samuel 13:1-15:35

The Failure of Saul's Kingship

Here Saul's entire reign (13:1) is reduced to three incidents that occurred well into his reign. Two framing narratives demonstrate his covenant disloyalty - offering his own sacrifice (13:2-15) and violating the covenantal holy war rules (15:1-35; cf Achin's sin in Joshua 7). The central narrative (13:16-14:48) demonstrates his weakness of character and personal failure in engaging the holy war. Each of these is symptomatic of his general disobedience and provides evidence of his lack of true faith in Yahweh. Thus Yahweh rejects him as Israel's king (encapsulated in 15:22-23). Note how, despite the fact that Saul lives on until chapter 31, his reign comes to its effective end at 15:35, where he is rejected (though mourned) by Samuel and by Yahweh.

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Sept 25	1 Samuel 13:1-15	
Sept 26	1 Samuel 13:16-22	
Sept 27	1 Samuel 13:23-14:14	
Sept 28	1 Samuel 14:15-23	
Sept 29	1 Samuel 14:24-52	
Sept 30	1 Samuel 15	
Oct 1	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

1 Samuel 16:1 – 17:58

The Rise of David

Notice how the opening story of David's anointing as future king (16:1-13) concludes on the twin notes that the Spirit of Yahweh came on David (v. 13) but had departed from Saul (v. 14). The first two scenes (16:14-23; 17:1-58) set up the program: David's initial positive relationship with Saul; David's first exploit - a shepherd boy who trusts Yahweh ("the battle is the Lord's [Yahweh's]," 17:47) slays the Philistine champion Goliath (thus success in the holy war).

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Oct 2	1 Samuel 16:1-13	
Oct 3	1 Samuel 16:14-23	
Oct 4	1 Samuel 17:1-11	
Oct 5	1 Samuel 17:12-31	
Oct 6	1 Samuel 17:32-54	
Oct 7	1 Samuel 17:55-58	
Oct 8	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

1 Samuel 18:1 – 31:13

The Decline and Death of Saul

This section begins with a story illustrating its central theme: Saul's jealousy of David and his attempt to kill him (ch. 18). Note how the rest of the section is dominated by Saul's pursuit of David, while David in turn has two opportunities to kill Saul, but will not lift his hand against "the Lord's anointed" (chs. 24 and 26, which encircle his being saved from his own anger by Abigail).

Interwoven into this theme are (1) other accounts of Saul's downward spiral, in the end consulting a medium (ch. 28) and finishing in shame (ch. 31); (2) accounts of David's existence as the fugitive head of a band of guerrillas; (3) evidence of David's obedience to Yahweh and consideration of his character (e.g., his large heartedness towards Saul and Jonathan) - note especially how Abigail's speech in 25:26-31 not only saves David from vengeful wrongdoing but in effect allows the narrator to express his theme for these chapters; and (4) David's frequent, temporary stays in enemy territory, where God protected him from harm and covenant disloyalty under conditions that could have produced either result.

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Oct 9	1 Samuel 18	
Oct 10	1 Samuel 19	
Oct 11	1 Samuel 20	
Oct 12	1 Samuel 21	
Oct 13	1 Samuel 22	
Oct 14	1 Samuel 23	
Oct 15	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	
Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Oct 16	1 Samuel 24-25	
Oct 17	1 Samuel 26	
Oct 18	1 Samuel 27	
Oct 19	1 Samuel 28	
Oct 20	1 Samuel 29	
Oct 21	1 Samuel 30-31	
Oct 22	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

2 Samuel 1:1 – 4:12

The story of David as king of Judah

This section presents the aftermath of Saul's death; note how it emphasizes David's *non*role in the civil war that followed. Thus he laments over Saul and Jonathan (ch. 1). Following the account of his becoming king of Judah (ch. 2), he is notably exonerated in all of the tragedies that follow (chs. 3-4). Keep your eye open for the rift between north and south, which is picked up again in chapters 19-20 and becomes final in 1 and 2 Kings.

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Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Oct 23	2 Samuel 1:1-16	
Oct 24	2 Samuel 1:17-27	
Oct 25	2 Samuel 2	
Oct 26	2 Samuel 3:1-21	
Oct 27	2 Samuel 3:22-39	
Oct 28	2 Samuel 4	
Oct 29	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

2 Samuel 5:1 – 9:13

The story of David as king over all Israel

Following David's assuming the kingship over all Israel (5:1-5) is a sequence of four narratives (5:6-7:29) that are especially crucial: (1) David's conquest of Jerusalem, (2) the conquest of the Philistines, (3) bringing the ark to Jerusalem, and, above all, (4) God's covenant with David that "your house and your Kingdom will endure forever before me" (7:1-16), to which David responds in an outpouring of praise and gratitude (7:18-29).

The importance of the preceding narratives is highlighted by the brevity of chapter 8, which serves to bring the conquest to a conclusion (see Joshua). Here you find David's many years as king condensed into two brief summaries. And because our narrator is ultimately concerned not with David's kingly exploits but with his character, he concludes with another narrative of David's kindness to the house of Saul (ch. 9), where the "lame" enter the palace - despite the saying in 5:8! But note how this scene sits in contrast to the unfortunate story that follows.

Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Oct 30	2 Samuel 5	
Oct 31	2 Samuel 6	
Nov 1	2 Samuel 7:1-17	
Nov 2	2 Samuel 7:19-29	
Nov 3	2 Samuel 8	
Nov 4	2 Samuel 9	
Nov 5	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

2 Samuel 10:1 – 20:26

David's Sin and Its Consequences

Note how the account of David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah is told in detail. It is set up in chapter 10, recounted in Chapter 11, and condemned in chapter 12. And watch for the irony in Chapter 11 - the faithful foreigner Uriah honors an unfaithful Israelite king; the foreigner retains sexual purity during war, while the Israelite king dallies with his wife; the king, who has not gone into battle himself, sends the faithful soldier to his death in battle. The king is portrayed throughout as one who is accountable to God for his actions (note how crucial ch. 12 is to the Israelite view of the kingship), but in contrast to Saul, David repents - and is then filled with remorse over the dying child, the result of his sin.

This event sets in motion the rest of the story (chs. 13-20) in two ways. First, watch how illicit sexuality, murder, and intrigue are multiplied in David's family, as Nathan's prediction (12:10-12) is fulfilled. In turn there is rape, fratricide, treachery, rebellion, seizure of David's concubines, and civil war, and the fissures between North and South portrayed in 19:8b-20:26 anticipate the unbridgeable chasm related in 1 Kings 12. And second, observe how this whole series of events is related to the question later raised by Bathsheba in 1 Kings 1:20: "Who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

Date	Text	Key Word / Verse
Nov 6	2 Samuel 10	
Nov 7	2 Samuel 11	
Nov 8	2 Samuel 12	
Nov 9	2 Samuel 13	
Nov 10	2 Samuel 14	
Nov 11	2 Samuel 15	
Nov 12	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	
Nov 13	2 Samuel 16	
Nov 14	2 Samuel 17	
Nov 15	2 Samuel 18:1-18	
Nov 16	2 Samuel 18:19-19:8a	
Nov 17	2 Samuel 19:8b-43	
Nov 18	2 Samuel 20	
Nov 19	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	

2 Samuel 21:1 – 24:25

Final reflections on David and his reign

Notice how the narrator also summarizes David, as he did Samuel and Saul, before David's story is actually over (cf 1 Sam 7 :15-17; 15:34-35). But in this case it is a purposeful arrangement (in a concentric, nonchronological pattern) of two narratives, two accounts of David's mighty warriors, and two poems. The two poems (2 Sam 22:1-51 [a version of Ps 18] and 23:1-7) review, first, God's mighty acts for and through David and, second, God's covenant promise of an enduring throne. Note especially how both poems ascribe glory to God at every point. If David is “the lamp of Israel” (21:17), *God* is in fact David's lamp (22:29).

The inner frame for these affirmations comprises two accounts of David's mighty warriors (21:15-22; 23:8-39), reminding you of God's role both in battle and in times of David's humanity and vulnerability. Specifically, the famine and plague stories (3 years/3 days) that frame the whole (21:1-14; 24:1-25) end with obedience and sacrifice. Again watch for the irony: Following the two poems and the list of David's mighty men, 2 Samuel concludes with the story of David's counting his fighting men, in violation of holy-war law, to begin preparations for further conquests, and to establish his own importance (24:1-17). At the same time, the sacrifice on the site of the future temple (24:18-25) prepares the way for 1 and 2 Kings.

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Nov 20	2 Samuel 21	
Nov 21	2 Samuel 22	
Nov 22	2 Samuel 23:1-7	
Nov 23	2 Samuel 23:8-39	
Nov 24	2 Samuel 24:1-17	
Nov 25	2 Samuel 24:18-25	
Nov 26	What is your take away from this morning's sermon or from this past week's reading?	