

# The Book of 1 Samuel

## Chapters 1 – 15

### Introduction:

- The books of first and second Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible, but the Septuagint translation split them into two books.
- The name Samuel means, “God hears”. His mother named him Samuel because God heard her prayer.
- Samuel himself wrote the first book and part of the second. When Samuel died, Gad and Nathan, the prophets, then completed the second book of Samuel.
- Up until the time of Samuel, Israel had no king. God was their King and chose leaders to rule over them (prophets and judges such as:
  - Moses
  - Gideon
  - Samson
  - SamuelNevertheless, the people wanted to have a king like other nations. In spite of that, God did not leave His people but continued to care for them.
- The Book of Samuel is considered the link between the period of judges, the last of which was Samuel the prophet, and the period of kings, the first of which was Saul.
- The main theme of this book is prayer. It talks about the respect of God’s house and the punishment of those who dishonor His house.
- The first book of Samuel is divided into 3 parts:
  - **Chapters 1-8:** Samuel the prophet and judge
  - **Chapters 9-15:** King Saul
  - **Chapters 16-31:** King David

## Characters in the Book of 1 Samuel:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Samuel</i>	God hears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Last judge</li> <li>• The author of the first book of Samuel</li> <li>• He anointed the first two kings of Israel.</li> </ul>
<i>Elkanah</i>	God creates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samuel's father</li> <li>• From the tribe of Levi</li> </ul>
<i>Hannah</i>	Grace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samuel's mother</li> <li>• God gave her 6 children (4 boys, 2 girls)</li> </ul>
<i>Peninnah</i>	Pearl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elkanah's wife</li> </ul>
<i>Eli</i>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel's judge and priest</li> <li>• He sinned by not punishing his sons for breaking the Law</li> </ul>
<i>Dagon</i>	Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A god who had the head and hands of a man and the body of a fish</li> </ul>
<i>Saul</i>	Asked for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Israel's first king</li> <li>• The Israelites liked him because he was an impressive young man</li> <li>• His heart was not totally with God, so God refused him</li> </ul>
<i>Nahash</i>	Serpent or Snake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The leader of the Ammonites</li> <li>• He threatened the people of Jabesh Gilead to take out their right eyes</li> <li>• He is a symbol of Satan</li> </ul>
<i>Jesse</i>	Man	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• David's father</li> <li>• Son of Eubid, who was the son of Boaz and Ruth</li> <li>• He was from Bethlehem</li> </ul>
<i>Goliath</i>	Exile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Palestinian giant who defied the army of Israel</li> </ul>
<i>Jonathan</i>	Jehovah gives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saul's son</li> <li>• David's best friend</li> </ul>

## Places in the book Book of 1 Samuel:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<i>Ramah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samuel's place of birth</li> </ul>
<i>Shiloh</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The place of the Tabernacle and the Ark of Covenant</li> </ul>
<i>Mizpah</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where Samuel and the Israelites gathered to pray, asking for God's mercy to help them in the war against the Palestinians.</li> <li>• God heard their prayer and helped them.</li> </ul>
<i>Gilgal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where Saul was crowned king</li> </ul>

## Chapter Summaries:

### ❖ *Chapter 1:*

- Elkanah was a righteous man, from the tribe of Levi.
- He was called an Ephraimite because he lived in the Ephraim mountains.
- He had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah.
  
- Hannah was barren and mourned the fact that the Lord shut her womb.
- However, Elkanah loved Hannah more than Peninnah, which made Peninnah jealous so she treated Hannah harshly.
- At that time, it was shameful for women to be barren because every woman wanted to be the mother of the Messiah. It was thought that if a woman was barren, it must be because God was angry with her.
  
- Hannah was a righteous woman who put her problems before God in tearful prayers.
- Every year, her husband took the whole family to celebrate the feast and offer sacrifices.
  
- One year, when Hannah was praying in her heart, only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore, Eli thought she was drunk.
  - So Eli said to her, “How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away!”
  - But Hannah answered and said, “No, my lord, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Do not consider your maidservant a wicked woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now.”
  - Then Eli answered and said, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.”
  
- Hannah made a vow to the Lord. She promised God that if He gave her a baby, she would give him to the Lord all the days of his life.
- God answered Hannah’s prayer and she gave birth to Samuel.
- When Samuel was a young boy, she brought him to the temple to serve God, and she would see him once a year when she went to celebrate the feast.

➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- We must learn that in difficult times, we must go to church and put our problems before God in prayers and tears and that the first solution to any problem is prayer.
  - Just as Hannah found the solution to her problem in the temple.
- Do not treat people differently.
  - Elkanah's partiality towards his wives made Peninnah jealous and caused her to treat Hannah harshly.
- When we defend ourselves, it must be with humility and patience.
  - Just as Hannah defended herself to Eli the priest.
- Be patient on the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.
  - Because of Hannah's patience in prayer, she gave birth to one of the greatest prophets in the Old Testament.
- We must offer our greatest gifts to the Lord.
  - Just as Hannah offered her only son.

## ❖ *Chapter 2:*

- Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving (1 Samuel 2:1-10) illustrates how the Lord rewards the weak, lifts up the humble and fills the hungry, but opposes the proud and the unjust.
- Samuel was growing in the service of the Lord, so the Lord rewarded Hannah by giving her three other sons and two daughters.
- Eli's sons were corrupt and followed the way of Belial.
- They dishonored people's sacrifices by taking more than their portion from what was dedicated to the Lord.
- They would not wait for the fat of the sacrifice to burn according to the rites.
- Because they were wicked and dishonored the rites of the Tabernacle, their punishment was death.
- Because Eli the priest was not strict with his sons, his punishment was severe. All the members of his family would die young, his two sons Hophni and Phinehas would also die and there would be poverty in his house.

### ❖ *1 Samuel 2:30*

"For those who honour Me I will honour, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed".

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- Do not forget to give thanks to the Lord for His gifts.
- It is important to grow in the knowledge of God day after day.
- ❖ *1 Samuel 2:26*  
"And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the Lord and men".
- It is the duty of our parents to be strict as this is their responsibility before God. If they are negligent, they will be blamed by God.
  - Just as Eli was blamed for his lack of firmness with his sons.
- We have to respect the Lord's house and not abuse the tolerance and patience of the Lord.



### ❖ *Chapter 3:*

- The wickedness of the people increased, so the Lord stopped appearing to them in visions for guidance and teaching.

#### ❖ *Amos 8:11*

“Behold, the days are coming,’ says the Lord, ‘That I will send a famine on the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord’”.

- When Samuel was twelve years old, the Lord wanted to send a message to Eli the priest through Samuel.
- God called Samuel but Samuel did not realize that it was the Lord’s voice because visions were not known at that time due to the people’s wickedness.
- Samuel thought that Eli was calling him, but when this happened three times, Eli told Samuel that when he hears the voice of God, to answer saying

#### ❖ *1 Samuel 3:9*

“Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears”.

- Samuel did as Eli instructed, and the Lord told Samuel what He would do with Eli.
- When Eli learned from Samuel the Lord’s message, he said,

#### ❖ *1 Samuel 3:18*

“It is the Lord. Let Him do what seem good to Him”.

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- If we abide in the Lord’s house, we will be far from the corruption of the world.
  - Just as Samuel did.
- We must learn to obey and serve others.
  - As Samuel rushed to help Eli when he thought that he called him in the middle of the night.
- When in doubt, we should seek guidance and advice from the elders of the Church.
  - Just as Samuel asked Eli.

#### ❖ *Chapter 4:*

- The Israelites went out to fight the Philistines at Ebenezer without sanctification and without asking the Lord, so they were defeated.
- They returned to take the Ark of covenant, where God dwells, from Shiloh in order to win the battle.
- They wanted the Ark not because they wanted to repent, but because they depended on superficial worship and deceived themselves.
- Once again, they were defeated, 30,000 men were killed and the Philistines took the Ark.
  
- Hophni and Phinehas were killed.
- When Eli heard that the Ark was taken and his sons were killed, he fell down, broke his neck, and died.
- Phinehas' wife died while giving birth. She named her son Ichabod saying, "the glory has departed from Israel" because the Ark of God had been captured and because her father-in-law and her husband died.

#### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- True worship is from the heart and is accompanied by repentance. Prayer without repentance is superficial.
- God will not help us if we refuse to take the sin out of our lives, even if we are always in the Church.

## ❖ *Chapter 5:*

- Dagon was the god of the Philistines. His name means fish, and he was half man, half fish.
- The Philistines took the Ark of Covenant and put it in Dagon's temple in Ashdod although they knew that the Ark was a symbol of God's presence.
- In the morning, they found Dagon, fallen on its face on the ground before the Ark of the Lord.
- They took Dagon and set it in its place again, but when they arose early the next morning, they found Dagon once again fallen on its face.
- The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold.
- The hand of the Lord was heavy upon the people of Ashdod as He brought devastation upon them and afflicted them with tumors and rats to eat their crops.
- They carried the Ark from Ashdod to Gath and then to Ekron but the hand of the Lord continued to afflict the people so they decided to return the Ark to Israel.

## ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- We cannot keep both God and our sinful habits in our lives at the same time.
  - Just as Dagon and the Ark could not coexist in their land



## ❖ *Chapter 6:*

- The Ark remained in the land of the Philistines for seven months.
- God used even the pagan priests and the diviners to witness for Him.
- The priests and the diviners did not return the Ark empty but with a trespass offering.
- The five cities of Philistine gathered, and made five golden tumors and five golden rats.
- They made a new cart, took two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitched the cows to the cart.
- They took away the calves from the cows, then put their offerings on the cart with the Ark and sent it on its way.
- They believed that if the cows went up towards Beth Shemesh, then it was the Lord who brought this disaster on them. But if they do not, then it was not the hand of the Lord that struck them, and the disasters were by chance.
- Although the Philistines separated the cows from their calves, the cows walked towards Israel and settled in Beth Shemesh.
- The unyoked cows, heading towards Israel, are a symbol of the colt that Jesus rode into Jerusalem.
- The people of Beth Shemesh did not honor the Ark as a symbol of God's presence.
- God struck fifty thousand and seventy men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the Ark of the Lord.

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- We must offer God a new heart.
  - Just as the Philistines offered a new cart with unyoked cows.
- We cannot walk with God and commit sins at the same time.
- We have to approach the Holy Sacraments with respect and honor the house of the Lord.

## ❖ *Chapter 7:*

- The people of Beth Shemesh became afraid of the Ark.
- The men of Kirjath Jearim then came and took the Ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the Ark of the Lord.
- It was there for 20 years.
- The men of Kiriath Jearim realized that the Ark was a symbol of the presence of the Lord and a source of blessing.
  
- Samuel used the return of the Ark of Covenant to teach the people to return to the Lord and put away the foreign gods.
- They accepted what Samuel said, put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths (Baal's wife) and served the Lord. They began to pray and fast together in one accord.
- However, the people's worship was superficial. Their minds were with the Lord but their hearts were after other gods.
  
- Samuel gathered the people at Mizpah because the only way to reform the people was through prayer.
- When the Philistines heard that the Israelites were gathered at Mizpah, they ascended to fight them.
- The children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."
- Samuel prayed and offered a sacrifice on behalf of the people.
- The Lord answered him and the Israelites won the battle.
- They took back some cities that were taken by the Philistines and Samuel set a stone between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name "Ebenezer", saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us."

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- By prayer, we can defeat Satan and be united with the Lord.
- God forgives our sins through the sacrament of the Eucharist.
  - Just as God forgave the sins of the Israelites through their sacrifices.
- Prayer and sacrifice are the practical solutions to our troubles and afflictions.

## ❖ *Chapter 8:*

- Samuel's two sons, Joel and Abijah, did not walk in their father's ways.
- They turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice.
- At that time, they were not under their father's guidance.
- Samuel was in the north, at the city of Ramah while they were in the south at Beersheba, which is why God did not punish him as He did with Eli.
  
- The elders of Israel asked Samuel for a king to rule over them.
- Samuel felt that they had rejected him as their leader.
- God, however, told him to answer their request as they rejected God Himself not Samuel.
  
- God does not deny man's freedom.
- He asked Samuel to warn them that the king will enslave them and take their sons and daughters to serve him.
- They insisted to have a king like other nations, so the Lord asked Samuel to do as the people requested.

## ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- The Israelites wanted to be like other nations but did not realize the grace they were losing.

### ❖ *Chapter 9:*

- The Lord chose Saul, which means, “asked for”, to be their king.

#### ❖ *1 Samuel 2:9*

“There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people”.

- Although he had good intentions, his heart was not with God because he was proud.
- Kish, Saul’s father, had lost two donkeys and sent his son to look for them. After a three-day journey, Saul considered returning home so that his father does not begin to worry about him.
- Saul’s servant told him to first go see the man of God, Samuel, to inquire about the donkeys.
- God planned for this to happen in order to bring Saul before Samuel.
- Before going to see Samuel, Saul asked his servants what gift they would bring to the man of God. He was taught not to enter the Lord’s house empty handed.
- They decided to give Samuel the little money they had.
- When Samuel saw Saul, he reassured him that they would find the donkeys and asked him to stay with him until the next day.

#### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- God often uses little trivial incidents in our lives to direct us towards His bigger plan for us.
- Giving should be with joy and we should offer God the best we have.

## ❖ *Chapter 10:*

- Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head to anoint him king.
- At that time, oil was used to anoint priests and prophets.
- Samuel explained to Saul what will happen to prove to him that everything is according to God's plan.
- God wanted to teach Saul a lesson at the beginning of his rule.
  
- Samuel asked Saul to visit Rachel's tomb and told him that there, he would meet three men, one carrying three goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine.
  - The man carrying the three loaves would give him two loaves, one for him and one for his servant, to teach him the life of poverty and austerity.
  - The man carrying the goats would not give him any, to teach him not to interfere with the duties of priesthood.
  - The man carrying the wine would also not give him any, to teach him to stay away from the life of pleasure.
  
- Along the way, he met a group of prophets and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.
- He prophesied and joined them in praising God and was transformed into a new man.

## ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- We should be occupied with heavenly matters not earthly matters.
- We should be satisfied with less and stay away from earthly pleasures.
  - Just as God taught Saul.
- We must understand our responsibilities and not interfere with the duties of others.
- God's plan for us is to live a life of praise and always seek His advice.



### ❖ *Chapter 11:*

- Nahash the Ammonite, whose name means snake, came up and encamped against Jabesh Gilead, and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, “Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you.”
- Nahash the Ammonite answered them, “On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel.”
- This angered Saul, so he gathered an army of thirty-three thousand men to fight the Ammonites and won.
- The people rejoiced and offered sacrifices and enthroned Saul in Gilead.

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- Satan wants to take from the believers their spiritual insight and make them concerned with earthly matters.
  - Nahash represents Satan, the right eye represents spiritual insight, and the left eye represents earthly lust.

### ❖ *Chapter 12:*

- As Samuel grew old, he gathered all the people to witness for his faithfulness.
- He wanted to teach Saul about spiritual leadership.
- During his life as a judge over the people of Israel, he did not cheat, oppress or take bribes.
- He told the people about the wonders that the Lord had done for them, beginning with the story of Exodus until their victory over the Ammonites.
- The people asked Samuel to pray for them and he replied,  
*1 Samuel 12:23*  
“As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you”.

### ➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- Let us all pray for each other.

### ❖ *Chapter 13 & 14:*

- Saul prepared a small army of 3000 soldiers to fight against the Philistines' large army.
- The people of Israel realized that they were in grave danger and became very distressed.
- Saul waited for Samuel, but when Samuel was late, Saul offered the sacrifice himself, a task that may only be done by priests.
- Although he was instructed not to, he interfered with the duties of priesthood.
- When Samuel arrived, he said to Saul,

### ❖ *1 Samuel 13:13-14*

"You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now, the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you".

- The Philistines did not allow the Israelites to have any swords or spears; even their axes were sharpened by them.
- By faith, Jonathan, Saul's son, and the young man bearing his armour went alone to the Philistines' camp saying,

### ❖ *1 Samuel 14:6*

"For nothing restrains the Lord from saving by many or by few".

- The Philistines thought that Jonathan had a great army behind him, and they panicked.
- In the meantime, Saul asked the priest to enquire from the Lord, but he did not wait to hear His answer.
- He went after his enemies without considering the needs of his people who were very tired. He ordered them not to eat until the battle is over.
- Jonathan did not know about his father's oath and ate honey.
- Jonathan was condemned to death because he did not follow Saul's oath but the people of Israel defended Jonathan because of his great victory.
- Because the men could no longer tolerate the hunger, they ate meat with blood, which was forbidden by the Law.
- As time went on, Saul defeated many armies and accomplished a great victory over God's enemies. He was strong and courageous.

### ❖ *1 Samuel 14:52*

"When Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself".

➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- It is important to leave the priestly duties to the priests ordained for the service. Only priests can administer the sacraments.
- God can give us victory over the devil through the little that we have.
  - Just as God gave victory to the Israelites through a small army.
- Only by faith can we defeat the devil.
- We must pay attention to the needs of others and carefully consider the oaths we take.

❖ *Chapter 15:*

- God ordered Saul to fight the Amalekites, to destroy all they had.
- However, Saul did not obey the Lord.
- He kept the good cows and sheep and killed only the weak ones.
- Saul tried to defend his actions by telling Samuel that he had left the good animals to offer them as sacrifices to the Lord.
- Samuel however replied,

❖ *1 Samuel 15:22*

“Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams”.

➤ *Lessons Learned:*

- Do not justify wrong behavior.
  - Saul did not obey the Lord and justified it by pretending that he wanted to offer a sacrifice to the Lord.

❖ *Psalms 51:17*

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit”.