

BETHEL GOSPEL CHAPEL HOME BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

SURVEY OF I AND II SAMUEL

The thirty-nine books of the Old Testament are the foundation on which the New Testament is built. The writers of the New Testament, following the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ, clearly regarded these Scriptures as authoritative. Peter writes:

ABOVE ALL, YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT NO PROPHECY OF SCRIPTURE CAME ABOUT BY THE PROPHET'S OWN INTERPRETATION. FOR PROPHECY NEVER HAD ITS ORIGIN IN THE WILL OF MAN, BUT MEN SPOKE FROM GOD AS THEY WERE CARRIED ALONG BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

II Peter 1: 20—21 (N.I.V.)

In Matthew 5:17, Jesus said: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." During His ministry, He repeatedly used these Scriptures to demonstrate that an enlightened knowledge of their contents could lead to only one conclusion: He was the Christ.

AND THE FATHER WHO SENT ME HAS HIMSELF TESTIFIED CONCERNING ME. YOU HAVE NEVER HEARD HIS VOICE NOR SEEN HIS FORM, NOR DOES HIS WORD DWELL IN YOU, FOR YOU DO NOT BELIEVE THE ONE HE SENT. YOU DILIGENTLY STUDY THE SCRIPTURES BECAUSE YOU THINK THAT BY THEM YOU POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE. THESE ARE THE SCRIPTURES THAT TESTIFY ABOUT ME, YET YOU REFUSE TO COME TO ME TO HAVE LIFE.

John 5:37-40 (N.I.V.)

This high regard for the Old Testament is confirmed by two statements which Paul makes:

FOR EVERYTHING THAT WAS WRITTEN IN THE PAST WAS WRITTEN TO TEACH US, SO THAT THROUGH ENDURANCE AND THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE SCRIPTURES WE MIGHT HAVE HOPE.

Romans 15:4 (N.I.V.)

THESE THINGS HAVE HAPPENED TO THEM AS EXAMPLES AND WERE WRITTEN DOWN AS WARNINGS FOR US, ON WHOM THE FULFILLMENT OF THE AGES HAS COME.

I Corinthians 10:11 (N.I.V.)

I and II Samuel are historical books that record the events surrounding the establishment of the monarchy in Israel. The writer of these books is unknown but we do know that, when the books of the Chronicles were written after the exile in Babylon, the writer of those books had at his disposal written records from the prophets - Samuel, Nathan and Gad. (See I Chronicles 29:29—30.) The events recorded take place over a period of approximately one hundred years. We can still profit from the study of the ways in which God worked to carry forward His Kingdom and how the individual choices of men and women worked to include or exclude them from the blessing of the Lord.

During the next twelve weeks, you are asked to read the assigned chapters and answer both the study and the response questions. There is a place for you to record any questions or problems which arise as you work through this material. Preparation is an essential part of any learning experience, and we would encourage you to complete your personal study so that you can contribute to the growth of those attending your home Bible study group.

Note: The New Bible Dictionary published by Eerdmans, or some similar publication, contains short informative articles on the events and the people and their religious and social customs. This will be useful in your study.

Survey of I Samuel 1:2-11 - Hannah

1. What do you learn about Hannah from vs. 1-8?
2. What promises does Hannah make before the Lord at Shiloh (vs.9-11)?
3. Of what significance is the statement “and no razor will ever be used on his head” (vs. 11)? (see Numbers 6:5-8)
4. Why does Eli misjudge Hannah (vs. 12—14)?
5. What do you learn about Shiloh from the information given us in 12—16?
6. Why does Hannah pray — vs. 10—16?
7. What are the results of her prayer — vs. 17—20?
8. What do you learn about Hannah from verses 21—28?
9. List the things which Hannah knew about the Lord as indicated by her prayer — 2:1—10?
10. Why is she rejoicing?

RESPONSE

1. What do you learn about prayer from Hannah’s example’?
2. In what way is her prayer different from yours?
3. In what way did Hannah’s faith change her world?

Questions or problems:

STUDY 2

Survey of I Samuel 2:11 through Chapter 4 —The House of Levi

1. What was the root sin of the sons of Eli - 2:12?
2. Explain what was wrong with their behavior regarding the sacrifices — 2:13—16? (See also Leviticus 7:28—38)
3. What does it mean to treat the Lord's offerings with contempt 2:17?
4. Why does Eli object to his sons' behavior — 2:22—25?
5. By permitting his sons to continue in their service what is Eli doing — 2:27—29?
6. On what principle will the Lord act against Eli's house —2:30—36?
7. List the reasons given for the judgment — 3:11—14?
8. What do you learn about the people's belief regarding the ark of the covenant from their actions in 4:1—9?
9. How do vs. 10—11 indicate error in their thinking?
10. What was the symbolic significance of the ark's capture by the Philistines — 4:12—21?

RESPONSE

1. What choice did Eli make regarding the behavior of his sons for which the Lord held him accountable?
2. What kind of situation would be a parallel to this today?
3. Come prepared to discuss the issue of accountability before God. Questions and Problems:

STUDY 3

Survey of I Samuel 1:27—28; 2:11; 2:18—21; 3:1—10 & 19—21; 7:1—17; 8:1—5 — Samuel.

1. Describe the experiences which influenced the direction of Samuel's life — Ch. 1, 2, 3.
2. In your opinion, what was the key experience in Samuel's life up to this point?
3. How was Samuel protected against the corruption and immorality which prevailed at Shiloh?

READ: I Samuel, Chapters 5 and 6.

With the capture of the ark of the covenant and the destruction of Shiloh, the nation lost its central place of worship. Its future now lies in the hands of Samuel, a man of integrity, to whom the word of the Lord came and who was publicly recognized as a prophet of God.

4. To what conclusion did the Philistines come regarding the ark?

READ: I Samuel, Chapter 8.

6. What reasons do the people give for requesting that Samuel appoint a king over them — vs. 1—5?
7. Explain why the Lord regarded their request as a rejection of Him — vs. 6—9?
8. List the changes which will occur because of this new form of government — vs. 10—22.

READ: I Samuel, Chapter 12

9. What is the point of Samuel's challenge — vs. 1—5?
10. To what does Samuel attribute the successes and failures of the nations to this point in history — vs. 6—24?

RESPONSE

1. What practical things do you learn from Samuel's example and choices as given in these chapters that help you in living your life today?
2. What do you learn from the fact that Samuel's sons did not walk in the steps of their father?
3. What do you think is the significance of the fact that the people neglected the ark for 20 years?

Questions and Problems:

STUDY 4

Survey of I Samuel 9—15 — Saul

1. What do you learn about Saul in Chapter 9?
2. List the three signs which will confirm to Saul the truth of what he has been told by Samuel — 10:1—8.
3. When the people assemble at Mizpah Samuel reminds them of what two things — vs. 17—19?
4. By what process is Saul chosen — vs. 20—22?
5. What are the regulations of the kingship? (see Deut. 17:14—20)
6. Explain why Saul is successful in chapter 11.
7. What problems confront the new king in ch. 13?
8. Why is his solution to these problems criticized by Samuel?
9. What is the key factor in the victory of Saul over the Philistines in chapter 14?
10. Restate in your own words Saul's justification of his actions as given in chapter 15.
11. His actions are unacceptable — why? — vs. 22—23.

RESPONSE

1. Why was Saul's choice to make this offering such a serious offense and what do his actions tell you about Saul?
2. Can you describe a situation today which would be the parallel of the dilemma in which Saul found himself?
3. What do you think are the results of disobedience today?

Questions and Problems:

STUDY 5

Survey of I Samuel 16 to 22 — Saul, Samuel and David

Saul continues to rule over the nation but because of his deliberate disobedience, he no longer has the blessing of the Lord. He has lost Samuel's support and the rest of his reign illustrates what happens to a person when they only do what is expedient.

1. What do you learn about Saul and Samuel in Chapter 16:1—2?

Saul

Samuel

2. Why are the first seven of Jesse's sons rejected — vs. 6—10?
3. Why is David chosen?
4. Can you explain the statement in vs. 14 "an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him."?
5. What is the difference between how' the Israelites saw Goliath's actions and how David saw them — ch. 17?
6. Why does Saul become jealous of David — 18:1—9?
7. Make a list of the lies told in ch. 19, 20, 21.
8. What do you think motivates the people telling these lies?
9. What do you learn about Saul in ch. 22:1—8?
10. What are the consequences of the lies David told in ch. 21?

RESPONSE

1. Why do you think that the writer of I Samuel records both the wise and foolish actions of David?
2. Under what circumstances do you think it is justifiable to lie?
3. Are you responsible for the unforeseen consequences of your choices?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 6

Survey of I Samuel 23 to 31 — Choices and Consequences

1. List the circumstances used by God to preserve David's life so that Saul, with far superior forces, was unable to put him to death — ch. 23—24.
2. What is the point of the story of Nabal and what do you learn about David from it — ch. 25?
3. Why does David again spare Saul's life — ch. 26?
4. On what grounds does David justify his behavior in ch. 27?
5. What reasons does Saul have for consulting a medium — ch. 28?
6. Why do the commanders of the Philistines reject David's help — Ch. 29?
7. What is the difference between the response of David and that of his men over the destruction of Ziklag — ch. 30?
8. What do you learn about David and his men from this chapter?
9. Why does Saul take his own life — ch. 31?

RESPONSE

1. List the things in these chapters which you find objectionable.
2. How is it possible for David to make these kinds of choices and still be God's man?
3. On what basis do you justify choices which compromise the principles on which your testimony for God is built?

Questions and Problems

II Samuel

STUDY 7

Survey of II Samuel 1—6 — David; The Ark of God

1. In what way does the account of Saul's death in II Samuel 1 differ from that in I Samuel 31?
2. How would you reconcile those two accounts?
3. What do you learn about David from the lament for Saul and Jonathan in vs. 19—27
4. Make a list of the significant events in chapter 2.
5. Why do you think the details of David's marital life are given in II Samuel 2:2; 3:2—5; 3:13—16; 5:13—15?
6. Why does David object to the death of Abner — chapter 3?
7. What is the difference between Joab's behavior in the case of Abner and David's in the case of Baanah and Recob in chapter 4?
8. What is the key factor in the victories of David in chapter 5?
9. Why does the first attempt to bring up the ark to the city of David fail, and why does the second succeed - Chapter 6:1-15? (See also Numbers 4:1-20)
10. What was it about David's behavior that offended his wife Michal?

Response

1. Why do you think that David disregarded the regulations of the kingship regarding multiple wives - Deut. 17:14—20?
2. What do you learn about attempting any work for the Lord from David's experience with the Ark of God?
3. What statements from the Scriptures would you use to show that good intentions are not the crucial factor in serving the Lord?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 8

Survey of II Samuel 7—10 — The Kingdom Established by God

1. Why does David have a troubled conscience — Chapter 7:1—2?
2. What do you learn about the Lord's relationship to his people Israel from vs. 4—7?
3. List the promises which the Lord makes specifically to David in vs. 8—11.
4. List the promises which the Lord makes concerning David's descendents — vs. 12—16.
5. Put David's initial response in your own words — vs. 18—19.
6. What does David know about the Lord — vs. 20—21?
7. What is David's response to these insights into God's character — vs. 20—24?
8. Why will the Lord's name be great forever — vs. 25—26?
9. What motivates David to make this prayer — vs. 27—29?
10. What accounts for David's victories in chapters 8—10?

Response

1. What are the necessary preconditions to your experiencing any blessing from God? (See Hebrews 11:6)
2. What do you learn about the Lord from his response to David's desire to build a house for him?
3. What is, for you, the most significant thing about David's prayer?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 9

Survey of II Samuel Chapters 11 and 12 — David and Bathsheba Chapter 11

1. What are the circumstances that lead David into sin — v.1?
2. Why is his sin not just an “accident” - vs. 2—5?
3. What is David’s motive in sending for Uriah the Hittite — vs. 5—13?
4. What other steps does David take to cover his sin — vs. 14—27?
5. Why are they not successful?

Note the passage of time in v. 27 and read Psalm 38 for a possible insight into David’s situation from the murder of Uriah until the coming of Nathan the prophet.

Chapter 12

6. What is Nathan’s story designed to do — vs. 1—6?
7. On what grounds is David held guilty — vs. 7—9?
8. Why is David forgiven his sin — v.13? Read also Psalm 51.
9. What are the consequences of David’s sin — vs. 10—22?
10. List the things which you learn about the Lord from these two chapters.

Response

1. In what ways do you think that David’s disregard for the regulations of the kingship in Deuteronomy 17:14—20 contributed to his downfall?
2. Why is the temptation to sin so often successful? (see James 1:13—15)
3. Why is sin such a serious matter when in fact you can ask for forgiveness and receive it?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 10

Survey of II Samuel 10—15 — The Rebellion of Absalom

1. What is the relationship between Amnon and Absalom — v.1? (see II Samuel 3:25)
2. What is wrong with the advice on which Amnon acts — vs. 2—11? (See Leviticus 18:1—30; Deut. 28:22)
3. List the arguments which Tamar used to defend herself — vs. 12—13.
4. What are the immediate results of Amnon's behavior — vs. 15—22?
5. What are the long term results — vs. 23—38?
6. What do you learn about David and Absalom from Chapter 14?
7. By what means does Absalom win the loyalty of the people — Chapter 15:1-12?
8. What steps does David take to minimize the dangerous position in which he finds himself — vs. 13—37?
9. Why does David refuse to take the ark of the covenant with him when he leaves Jerusalem — vs. 25—26?
10. Based on the information in these chapters how would you describe Absalom?

Response

1. In what way do you think David contributed to the success of Absalom's conspiracy?
2. What principles of God's rule are at work in these chapters?
3. According to II Corinthians 10:11 a warning can be taken from this historical example. What do you think it is?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 11

Survey of II Samuel Chapters 16—19 — David and Absalom

1. What do you learn about conditions in the kingdom at this period of time from chapter 16:1—14?
2. By what means does Hushai gain acceptance with Absalom — vs. 15—19?
3. Why would implementation of Ahithophel's strategy in vs. 20—23 be particularly devastating to David? (see II Samuel 12:11—12)
4. List the significant events of chapter 17.
5. In the civil war that follows what is David's main concern — chapter 18:1—5?
6. Why do you think that Joab disregards the king's wishes — vs. 6—18?
7. What is David's response to the news of victory — vs. 28—33 and chapter 19:1—4?
8. Why is Joab angered by the king's behavior — vs. 5—8?
9. Compare the details of chapter 16:1—14 where David is departing from Jerusalem in defeat and his return in victory — chapter 19:9—39. What are these people doing?
10. What do you learn about the kingdom from vs. 40—43?

Response

1. In your opinion, what were the key factors which led to the breakdown of David's kingdom?
2. What do you learn about God from these chapters?
3. Can you suggest New Testament scriptures which explain the principles which are at work during this period of David's life?

Questions and Problems

STUDY 12

Survey of II Samuel Chapters 20—24 — Consequences

1. David attempted to relieve Joab of his command — 19:11—13. Can you suggest why?
2. Why is Joab able to act so independently of David's wishes? (See II Samuel 18:12—15)

Note: Chapter 21 — 23 appear to be an appendix to the book, summarizing some events which took place in David's reign that are important to an understanding of the kingdom and give insight into David's own thoughts regarding the Lord. The writer's reasons for not placing these events in chronological order are not known.

3. What do you think is the point of the story regarding the Gibeonites in chapter 21:1—14?
4. Why is David's involvement in actual combat now regarded by his troops as being too dangerous — vs. 15—17?
5. List the things which David praises the Lord for in his song — Chapter 22.
6. On what principle does the Lord act in the affairs of men — vs. 21—30?
7. Why does David praise the Lord — vs. 31—51?
8. On what facts does David base his claim to the kingdom — Chapter 23:1-7?
9. List the steps by which the nation comes under the judgement of God — chapter 24:1—10. (See Ex. 30:11—16 for possible explanation of David's sin.)
10. What do you learn about David from this chapter?

Response

1. What are the characteristics of the Lord for which you praise him?
2. Why should you fear the consequences of sin?
3. In your opinion, what is the most important lesson to be learned from II Samuel?

Questions and Problems