

1 & 2 Samuel

September & October 2008



Reading Schedule

Our reading schedule for the month of September is on the back of this sheet. We plan to read *2 Samuel* in October. On the first Sunday in October, a new reading calendar will be available.

What to Expect When Reading 1 & 2 Samuel

In July we read the book of *Judges*. As we begin *1 Samuel*, we can expect to finish the story we started in *Judges*, with a surprising twist. *1 Samuel* picks up the story of Israel left off in *Judges* 16:31. Samuel followed Samson, and he too had to deal with the Philistines since Samson did not accomplish a permanent victory. *1 Samuel* traces the transition of leadership in Israel from judges to kings, from a theocracy to a monarchy. The twist is that the stunning degradation and spiritual darkness of *Judges* is overthrown and reversed by one man: David. In a little less than fifty years, Israel goes from being a loose confederation of often warring tribes to the dominant power in the Mideast. *1* and *2 Samuel* tell the story of that meteoric rise.

Emphases

The book is about God's work among His people as seen in the three main characters of these books: Samuel, Saul and David. "The story of the birth of the Hebrew monarchy is told through the lives of three men: Samuel, the last judge; Saul, Israel's first and failed king; and David, whose personal gifts and courageous faith in God catapulted him to greatness. Through the stories of these men, the author of *1* and *2 Samuel* gives us deep insights into the religious, social and political condition of the times. He also, without preaching, underlines foundational spiritual truths which shape not only the course of history, but also the direction of our individual lives. As we study *1 Samuel*, we learn from the experiences of one of the Bible's truly great men. And we better understand the way that God works through all who trust, and are eager to respond to Him" (Larry Richards, *The Bible Reader's Companion*).

Outline

The books of Samuel tell the story from the beginning of the kingdom through the last years of David's reign. **Part One** is about Samuel alone (*1 Sam.* 1-7). In **Part Two**, Samuel and Saul overlap (*1 Sam.* 8-15) as Saul arrives on the scene and is ultimately rejected. In **Part Three** (*1 Sam.* 16-31), Saul and David overlap as David rises to prominence. **Part Four** (*2 Samuel*) is all about David—his triumphs (*2 Sam.* 1-10), troubles (*2 Sam.* 11-21) and trials (*2 Sam.* 22-24).

What to Watch for as You Read

- ✓ The beginning of the kingship in Israel—how small it starts with Saul before becoming a full-fledged kingdom under David.
- ✓ The Davidic covenant with its prophecy of Jesus.
- ✓ The contrast between Saul and David—why one is rejected, the other blessed.
- ✓ The end of the Philistines—major villains in the Bible for more than 400 years.