

Tim Chester

1 Samuel

Choose Your King



 6-Session Bible Study

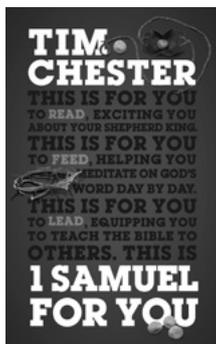
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✔ **6-Session Bible Study**



1 Samuel For You

These studies are adapted from *1 Samuel For You*. If you are reading *1 Samuel For You* alongside this Good Book Guide, here is how the studies in this booklet link to the chapters of *1 Samuel For You*:

Study One > Ch 1-2 Study Four > Ch 7-8
Study Two > Ch 4-5 Study Five > Ch 9, 11
Study Three > Ch 5-6 Study Six > Ch 12-13

Find out more about *1 Samuel For You* at:
www.thegoodbook.com/for-you

1 Samuel: Choose Your King

A Good Book Guide

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This edition printed 2025.

Published by The Good Book Company

thegoodbook.com | thegoodbook.co.uk

thegoodbook.com.au | thegoodbook.co.nz

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Design by André Parker and Drew McCall

ISBN: 9781802541489 | JOB 008236 | Printed in India

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Introduction

One of the Bible writers described God’s word as “a lamp for my feet, a light on my path” (Psalm 119:105, NIV). God gave us the Bible to tell us about who he is and what he wants for us. He speaks through it by his Spirit and lights our way through life.

That means that we need to look carefully at the Bible and uncover its meaning—but we also need to apply what we’ve discovered to our lives.

Good Book Guides are designed to help you do just that. The sessions in this book are interactive and easy to lead. They’re perfect for use in groups or for personal study.

Let’s take a look at what is included in each session.

Talkabout: Every session starts with an ice-breaker question, designed to get people talking around a subject that links to the Bible study.

Investigate: These questions help you explore what the passage is about.

Apply: These questions are designed to get you thinking practically: what does this Bible teaching mean for you and your church?

Explore More: These optional sections help you to go deeper or to explore another part of the Bible which connects with the main passage.

Getting Personal: These sections are a chance for personal reflection. Some groups may feel comfortable discussing these, but you may prefer to look at them quietly as individuals instead—or leave them out.

Pray: Here, you’re invited to pray in the light of the truths and challenges you’ve seen in the study.

Each session is also designed to be easily split into two! Watch out for the **Apply** section that comes halfway through, and stop there if you haven’t got time to do the whole thing in one go.

In the back of the book, you’ll find a **Leader’s Guide**, which provides helpful notes on every question, along with everything else that group leaders need in order to facilitate a great session and help the group uncover the riches of God’s light-giving word.

Why Study 1 Samuel?

The book of 1 Samuel traces the history of God's people from a situation where they had no king and "everyone did as they saw fit" (Judges 21:25), via the rule of the king they want, to the beginning of the reign of the king they need.

And so it is a book about choosing a king. The people demand a king like everyone else has, and God gives them the king they have chosen—Saul. It is a disaster. Then God chooses a king unlike any other, and gives him to the people—David.

And in David, we see the ruler that God's people need. Courageous, godly, thoughtful, generous, patient. David is all those things—yet we also see his flaws. So David points us away from himself and to the ultimate ruler, the King God has chosen to rule his people eternally—David's descendant, Jesus.

For us today, as for Israel then, the challenge is: *Choose your king*. We must decide who will be king over our lives; who will have our ultimate allegiance. And 1 Samuel tells us not to look at outward appearance but to look at the heart—to choose a ruler who gives, instead of takes. The message of 1 Samuel is: *Choose King Jesus*.

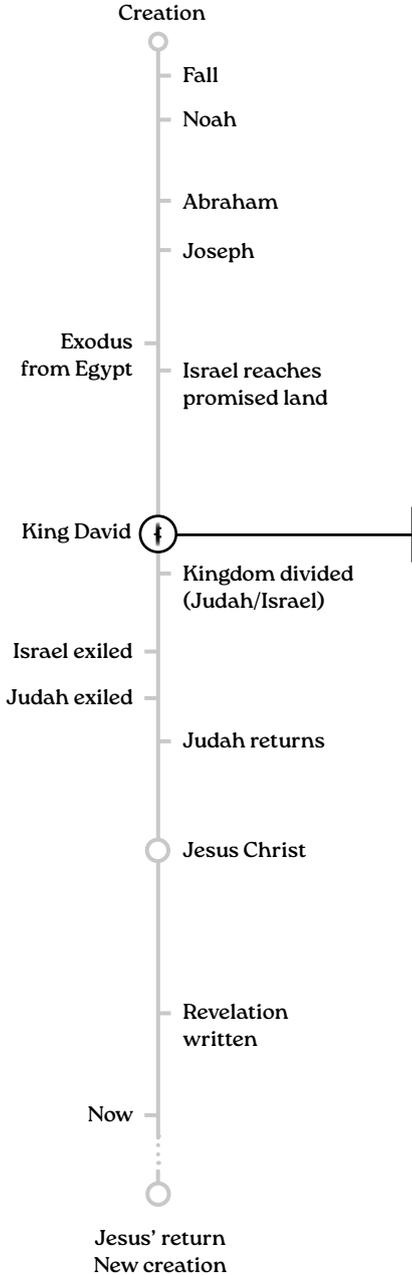
These six studies will take you through this tumultuous period of Israel's history. You'll read of battles and murders, women praying in anguish and men plotting in envy, shepherds and giants. You'll see the rise and fall of King Saul, and the rise and struggles of King David.

But more than any of that, you'll see Jesus Christ. And seeing him in and through 1 Samuel will enable you to see him with fresh colour and texture, and understand afresh what it means to follow him today; to choose the King whom God appointed—the King that God knows we need—to be King of our lives.



1 Samuel

c. 1105 - 1010 BC



- c. 1105 - Samuel born
- 1050 - Saul anointed as king
- 1040 - David born
- 1025 - David anointed as Saul's successor
- 1010 - Saul dies

1

A Time of Crisis

1 Samuel 1 – 3

Talkabout

1. How do you respond to feeling upset?

Investigate

 Read 1 Samuel 1:1-20

DICTIONARY

Sacrifice to the LORD (v 3): the God-given way for his people to stay in relationship with him. An animal died in the place of a sinner so they could be at one with God.

Priests (v 3): men who had the responsibility of offering sacrifices to

God and teaching God's law to the people.

The LORD's house (v 9): the tabernacle; the place where God dwelled among his people.

Vow (v 11): a promise or commitment to God.

2. How do verses 1-7 explain why Hannah is "weeping" and "downhearted" in verse 8?

Barrenness had added meaning in Old Testament Israel. God had promised that a child would be born who would save humanity; and Abraham had been promised that the child would come from his descendants, Israel (Genesis 3:15; Genesis 22:17-18). So infertility was a personal tragedy, as it is today, but it also carried a sense of exclusion from the purposes of God's people.

3. How does Hannah respond to her "deep anguish" (v 10) in verses 9-18?

4. Why does Hannah become pregnant (v 19-20)?

Apply

5. What do these verses tell us about how we can and should respond when we are deeply upset about something in our lives?

- Read Philippians 4:6-7. How do we see Hannah living out this command in 1 Samuel 1?

Investigate

 Read 1 Samuel 1:21 – 2:11

DICTIONARY

Horn (v 1): a symbol of strength.

Exalts (v 7): lifts up (in praise).

Anointed (v 10): someone chosen or set apart for a certain role.

Ministered (v 11): performed the duties of a priest.

Just as she promised (1:11), Hannah gives her son, Samuel, back to the Lord, to work in his service (v 24-28; 2:11). Between these verses, she prays or sings to God.

6. What does her song in 2:1-10 tell us about who God is and how he acts?

Hannah's song serves as the key to interpreting the story of 1 Samuel (and 2 Samuel). In these lines we hear all of the main themes of the book. The Lord humbles some and exalts others (2:7). It is not by strength that people prevail (v 9). God gives strength to his anointed king (v 10). And this last truth is remarkable, because at this point in the story there is no king in Israel! Hannah's prayer is saying: *God's king is coming; and when he does, he will turn the world upside down.*

 **Read 1 Samuel 2:12-36**

DICTIONARY

Contempt (v 17): total disrespect.

Ephod (v 18): the special tunic worn by a priest.

Mediate or **intercede** (v 25): speak up for someone else so that two enemies become friends.

My dwelling (v 29): the tabernacle.

Disdained (v 30): rejected.

7. How are Eli's sons described (v 12)?

- What evidence does the writer give for this accusation (v 16-17)?

- Read Leviticus 7:31-32; 3:14-16. How do these verses help us understand in what way Eli's sons' actions in 1 Samuel 2:13-16 were "treating the LORD's offering with contempt" (v 17)?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

The Bible tells us: "In view of God's mercy ... offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship" (Romans 12:1). The sacrifice that belongs to the God who has saved us is our whole lives.

Is there any way in which you are acting like Eli's sons, and keeping what belongs to God for your own use?

This week, how will you offer God more completely what he deserves from you?

8. What does Eli do about this, and how effective is it (v 22-25)?

9. What does God say will happen to the house of Eli (v 27-36)?

Explore More | OPTIONAL

 **Read 1 Samuel 4:1, 10-18**

- How does God's promise of judgment on the house of Eli come true?
- What does this remind us of, about God's word?

In 2:29, God says that Eli has, along with his sons, fattened himself on the parts of the offerings that belonged to God, not to the priests. He has grown fat...

- How might this contribute to the way he dies in 4:18?
-

Israel is in crisis. The priests were meant to point people to God, and offer sacrifices when people sinned against God. They were meant to “stand before the LORD to minister” (Deuteronomy 10:8). Instead, they are leading people away from God, and abusing the sacrificial system for their own ends. The proud, the arrogant and the full that Hannah sang about (1 Samuel 2:3-5) are found not among Israel’s enemies but among Israel’s priests!

10. How do the descriptions of Samuel in chapter 2 give us some hope for Israel (v 11, 18, 21, 26)?

Read 1 Samuel 3:1; 4:1

This was a time when “the word of the LORD was rare” (v 1) and the people of God were in spiritual crisis.

DICTIONARY

Ark of God (3:3): box containing the Ten Commandments, kept at the heart of the tabernacle, which was intimately connected with God’s presence.

Blasphemies (v 13): disrespectful untruths.

Atoned for (v 14): brought back into friendship with God.

Attested (v 20): proved to be.

Philistines (4:1): a people living along the coast to the south-west of Israel, who were often at war with the Israelites.

11. What does God do about that in these verses?

Apply

12. What does this tell us about what we most need when our lives, our church or our country is in crisis?

13. Read Hebrews 1:1-2. We have no Samuel today. But in what sense do we have a greater word-bringer than him?

Getting Personal | OPTIONAL

If God's word is rare today, it is not because God is silent. He has spoken, loud and clear. If God's word is rare today, it is because people will not listen and Christians will not speak.

Are there any ways in which you are refusing to listen to God?

How and where will you speak God's word in the coming week?

Pray

Thank God...

- *for prayer; that he hears and that he cares.*
- *for his word; that he speaks and that when he speaks, things change.*
Thank him most of all for revealing himself through his Son.

Ask God...

- *to enable you to pray when you are feeling anguished or bitter.*
- *to entrust your greatest worries and disappointments to him and his sovereign purposes.*
- *to give you peace where you are feeling troubled. (If you are comfortable to, you could share prayer requests with the group.)*