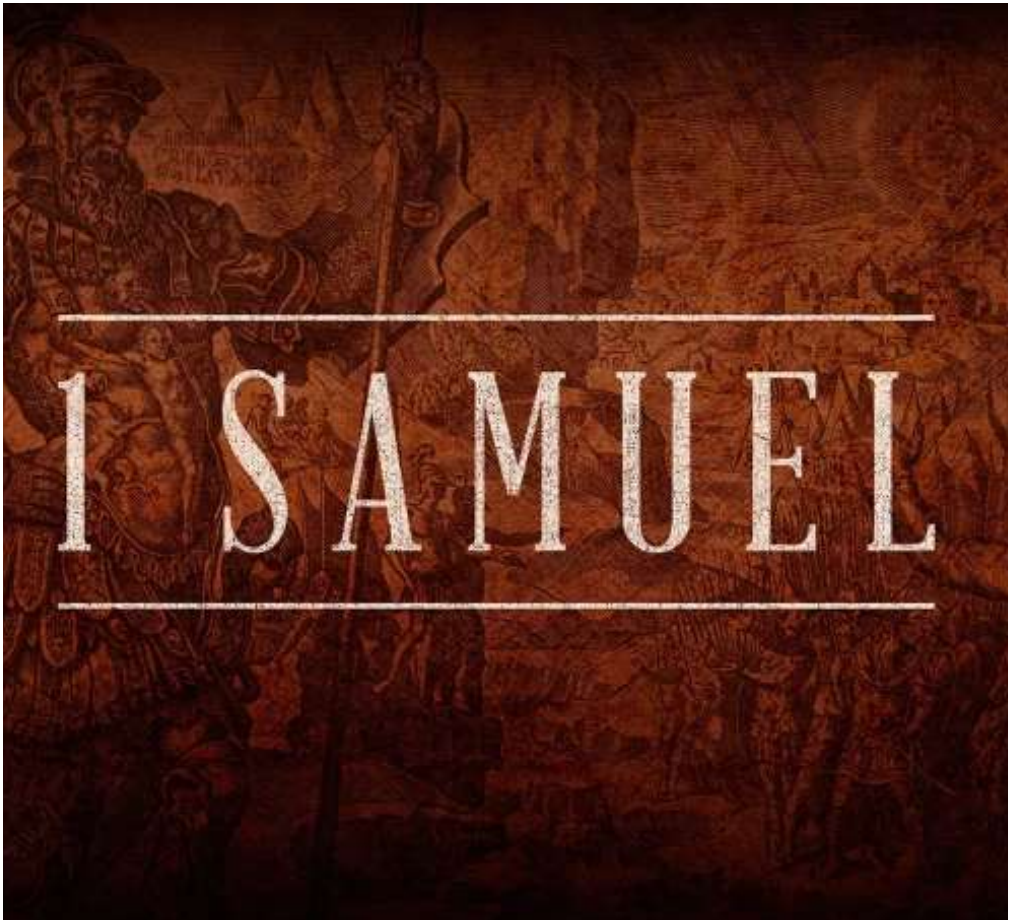


Let's Worship God

22nd-27th September 2025

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 13:15-23 - When Hope is Gone

Chapters 13-14 really form one big story. Having rejected God as king, his people have a king of their own choosing - Saul. Now we see the consequences of this.

The situation they face is utterly dire. The enemy Philistine forces are huge: 30,000 chariots (like tanks), 6000 cavalry, and infantry like the sand at the beach. They have invaded deep into Israelite territory, even into the hilly heartland that should have provided some protection,. They are 5 miles from Saul's hometown and arrayed against him just across a ravine. Saul has just 600 men, the rest are in hiding (13:6). There is terror in his camp (13:7). Raiders are ranging impudently across the north, west, and east (verses 16-18). They are blocking supply routes and reinforcements. They are ransacking as they go, leaving a trail of burning settlements, destroyed crops, and unburied corpses. The very name of these raiders means "destroyers". Israel are poorly equipped, because they have no blacksmiths (verses 19-22). The Philistines have not shared the secret of tempering iron to make steel, which had the effect of keeping Israel under their thumb economically and militarily. The Philistines would have been equipped with long and strong iron swords, the Israelites with short bronze daggers. To compound all this, Saul has rejected the Word of God, himself being rejected by God, and Samuel has left. They are spiritually rudderless.

We can't underestimate the dire position of God's people here. There is no hope for them - they are powerless in face of such a great force. It's an utter mismatch, an ant against a giant. There is terror and trembling all round. But sneak a peek at 14:23 - here is a God who saves when all is hopeless. When we are at our wits' end, circumstances overpowering us, with nothing left with which to fight, then we are ready to see God work. Nothing can hinder him.

Questions

1. Where do you feel the direness of your circumstances - at home, in church, in work, in society?

Prayer Points

1. Thank God that nothing can hinder him from saving - not your weaknesses, nor your messes.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 107:29-33 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 14:1-23 - God Saves through a Faith-filled Champion

Hope is gone. Saul, the king who was to deliver them, is doing nothing. He is outnumbered, out-equipped and outmanoeuvred. Saul gave way to fear when he saw the few fighters he had. Enter Jonathan, his son - verse 1. Jonathan is a man of faith. His statement in verse 6 is incredible. But it is simply based on who he knows God to be. He understands and trusts God's Word - see Deuteronomy 20:1. He understands the power of God - "nothing can hinder him from saving by many or by few." He understands the purposes of God - "it may be that the LORD will work with us" - he is not presumptuous in thinking he knows exactly how God's promises will be fulfilled. The detail of God's purposes are unknown, but his power is known. As one writer says, "he confesses the power of God, but maintains the freedom of God."

His plan is bonkers: he and his servant attack a Philistine outpost in plain sight, after climbing a ravine whose rocky crags are called 'slippery' and 'thorny'. He decides to take the Philistines' maintaining the high ground advantage as a sign to proceed (verse 10). Yet, when they are called up by the smirking Philistines (verse 12) and proceed to attack (verses 13-14) it sets in motion a rout (verses 15-16).

One man's act of faith in obedience to God's Word (Deuteronomy 20:1 - "You shall not be afraid of them"). One man's act of faith in God's power: "nothing can hinder the LORD". One man's act of faith in God's purposes: "it maybe that the LORD will work for us". One man's act of faith routs the enemy of God's people (verse 23).

Do you see what faith can achieve? In the midst of all the pressures we face from society and in our personal lives, one person's faith can set the forces of evil to be routed; because it is faith in our God, who is greater than all the forces arrayed against us.

Questions

1. Have you ever presumed to know the detail of God's purposes in a way that turned out to be wrong, though you were convinced you had a promise from God otherwise?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a faith like Jonathan's, and a commitment to attempt great things for God.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 18:27-30 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 14:1-23 - God Saves through a Faith-filled Champion

We saw yesterday how these verses show us one man's faith and obedience leading him to take on the enemy of God's people. He is the champion, fighting to save his people and used by God to rout his enemy. But there's more to it than Jonathan simply being a model of faith for us to follow. This is a foreshadowing of the Cross and the work of Jesus Christ. And as we look at Jonathan and are amazed by his faith and feats, it should make us even more amazed at Jesus.

It's on the Cross at Golgotha that we see one man being obedient to God's word, trusting God to save by many or by few, and climbing a rocky hill to confront the mocking enemies of Sin, Satan, and Death. It's on Golgotha we see the rout of those enemies by his faith, his courage, and his attack. He is the faith-filled champion who defeats our enemies for us.

We're not Jonathan in this story; we are the armour bearer. Our champion says to us, "Come, let us assail the forces of Satan and Sin in your hearts and your communities." Do we say, "Do all that is in your heart. Do as you wish. Behold, I am with you heart and soul"? Are we with him heart and soul in taking risks in speaking to loved ones about sin and salvation; in refusing to give in to temptation, fear or doubts? He says to us, "Come up after me, for the Lord has given them into our hands." The tomb is empty and the throne is filled - our foes have been given into our hands. He has already won the victory; we just follow him and fight with him. We don't need to be a big force: one with Jonathan was enough. One with Jesus is more than enough. Are you with him heart and soul?

Questions

1. Where is Jesus saying to you, "Come, let us go over"?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that God would use our small efforts, fighting with his champion, to set the remaining enemies of Sin, Satan and Death to be routed.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 18:31-34 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 14:16-31 - Victory Spoiled By a Sinful King

This is a great victory for Jonathan, and Saul through him. Israel have no weapons, so God uses Philistine weapons (verse 20). Deserters are emboldened to join the chase (verse 21). Cowardly hidlers are inspired to join the rout (verse 22). Surely this is a great victory for Saul!

Sadly, again Saul exposes his own limitations. In verses 17-19 he asks for the Ark of the Covenant and a priest while the rout happens. The man who couldn't wait to hear from God in chapter 13 now waits to hear from God while the enemy flees. One writer sums Saul up like this: "a man who prays when he should act and who acts when he should pray."

But it's worse than this too. Saul's failures are shown up by his rash vow that leads the people into sin and leads him into sin. In verse 24 he lays an oath on the people to fast from food so they can press home the advantage. On a simple level it's commendable, like his desire for guidance in verse 18. But it is the wrong time for fasting. The pursuit from Michmash to Aijalon (verse 31) is 20 miles. Try that after a battle, on an empty stomach! In Jonathan's assessment it limits the scale of their victory (verse 30).

We'll look tomorrow at the further consequences of his rash vow and what it says about Saul the man. But today just linger on this thought: here is a man seemingly seeking guidance from God and making grand commitments. But this does not mean he is a spiritual man. They are foolish commitments and dithering in the face of duty. Look beyond the spiritual sounding words and actions of leaders, religious and political, and see the context they are making decisions in. Often this reveals the heart of the matter. Look beyond your own spiritual facade and search your own heart too.

Questions

1. Have you ever prayed when you should have acted, giving a spiritual veneer to delayed obedience?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to show you where you are covering for dithering disobedience with spiritual sounding words and actions.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 40:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 14:31-46 - Victory Spoiled By a Sinful King part 2

By praying when he should be pursuing and fasting while trying to fight, Saul is doing a great job of nullifying what could have been a great victory. When the restrictions on eating are lifted in the evening the hungry soldiers fall on the spoil to devour it, without regard to ceremonial requirements that blood be drained from meat (Leviticus 17:10-14). Saul's rash vow has led the people into sin. More seriously, it leads to Saul nearly killing his own son. Jonathan, unaware of the vow, tastes a little honey. The scene is described to us almost in slow motion in verse 27 - it's like an M&S Food advert. When Saul receives no guidance from God about further pursuit (verse 37) it is determined that someone has sinned (verse 38). Saul makes another rash vow about the culprit being executed (verse 39), and when Jonathan is selected by lot Saul resolves that he must die (verses 44). The people have to intervene to save his life.

Here's the picture of Saul: he was not willing to let his people eat blood, but was willing to shed the blood of his son. He's ignoring the more significant commandment, while fussing about minor details of the ceremonial law. Jesus' words to the Scribes and Pharisees apply here too: "You should have practised the latter without neglecting the former" (Matthew 23:23). He should have repented of his rash vows rather than try to carry them out. One writer says, "This is the blind unreasoning of a man whose moral and religious instincts are badly confused." He has hindered the victory and nearly executed his heroic heir.

The victory isn't pressed home because the king they've chosen is a sinner and a fool. He's a threat and a liability. God's people have put their trust in the wrong place - in one who cannot save. There is a King who saves - he is the one the people rejected: the LORD. Human solutions fail when they start with the rejection of God. Keep that in mind for governments, charities, and education.

Questions

1. How does this chapter show the unsuitability of Saul as king?
2. In what Christ-rejecting institutions do we often place our hope for help?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for Christ to be at the centre of our national life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 146A:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 14:47-52 - Saul's Summary

In this section the camera zooms out and we get an overview of Saul's time as king. It reads like an official court record. We have got a very negative picture of him, but in verses 47-48 we see Saul's successes. An encircling array of long-time enemies have been subdued. North, south, east, and west - Saul "does valiantly" in every direction.

In verses 49-51 we read of his family, most of whom will have some part to play in the unfolding dramas. If there are profound depths of revelation here they haven't been revealed to me. Yet that does not mean that these verses are meaningless. Like all Scripture, they are God-given and profitable. This is an official record of a royal genealogy and administration: Saul's sons, daughters, wife, and Chief of Staff. Records like this litter 1 Samuel to 2 Kings. Saul's family is itself listed 5 times. This is something that God has deemed important to be recorded. It makes me think of Psalm 139:16: "All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be." and Psalm 56:8: "You have kept count of my tossings ... are they not in your book?" Remember too, Saul's family is not just any family; it is the family of the king of God's people. The family of the king is important to God. As Christians we are family of the King, his brothers and sisters. We are important to God and our names are recorded by him.

Although the picture here of Saul is positive, there is a shadow cast in this official record, for those with ears to hear. It begins by noting that Saul "took" the kingship. That is an unusual word, and a forceful word. There's an ambiguity about how he came to the throne (remember the discontent of some?) The shadow gets clearer when we see that he failed to gain the full victory over the Philistines, the task he had been commissioned for (9:16). Contrast verse 52 with 7:13 and Samuel's rule. He also lives up to Samuel's warning in 8:11 that the king will "take, take, take", as he introduces a system of military conscription (verse 52b). A better king was needed, and a better king was sent - not David, but Jesus. He doesn't just take, he gives. He subdues all his and our enemies.

Questions

1. How does this more positive picture of Saul fit with all that we've already read about him?
2. How does it look beyond David to Jesus?

Prayer Points

1. Thank God for his care - all our days are recorded in his book.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

Memory Verse

"It may be that the LORD will work for us, for nothing can hinder the LORD from saving by many or by few." 1 Samuel 14:6b

Praise: Psalm 38 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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