

# Let's Worship God

12th-17th January 2026

1 Samuel



# 1 SAMUEL

## **Monday - 1 Samuel 31 - The Death of the King**

"The king is dead" - words that can conjure up very different emotions. When treacherous and cruel English king John died in 1216 one chronicler wrote, "Foul as it is, Hell itself is made fouler by his presence." The theology may be off, but it's revealing of the emotions felt. Emotions were very different when Elizabeth II died - these words were words of great sadness. Joyful or sad, they are always important words, ushering in a new period. Even in a constitutional monarchy like ours the national anthem and coins all change.

1 Samuel ends with the death of a king ushering in a period of great change. This book has been all about the kingship. Beginning in the time of the Judges, when there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Judges 21:23), it was a time of moral and spiritual disaster. Israel was defeated by the Philistines - people slaughtered, the leaders dead, and the Ark of the Covenant captured (chapter 4). It looked like God himself had been defeated. Samuel the prophet rescued the situation, leading the people to repentance, reform, and renewal (chapter 7). God had promised to provide a king to rule and bless his people, but when the people ask for a king (chapter 8) it is a rejection of God as their king, and a request for a king on their terms - a strong warrior king, like the nations around them.

They are given Saul - tall, strong, well-bred, and handsome; he looks the part. We watched his rise, empowered by the Holy Spirit, culminating in the incredible rescue of Jabesh-gilead (chapter 11). Then we watched his fall, as he disobeyed God's clear commands to wait for Samuel (chapter 13) and to wipe out the Amalekites (chapter 15). He is rejected for rejecting God. We traced Saul's tragic decline: cowardice before Goliath (chapter 17); fear and fury at David's success (chapter 18); rantings and ravings as the Holy Spirit leaves him; pursuing David from his bed to the wilderness, massacring a Jewish city en route. (chapters 19-23). The darkest point is his visit to a medium in chapter 28. Here is the tragic fruit of self-rule and rejection of God. And it all ends in chapter 31 with the death of the king.

## **Questions**

1. As we look back on 1 Samuel, what is the abiding lesson for you?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Pray that God would cause us to feel the tragedy of self-rule and rejection of God as he portrays them to us in 1 Samuel 31.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise: Psalm 74:1-3, 21-22 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Tuesday - 1 Samuel 31:1-7 - A Prophecy Fulfilled**

I wonder how Saul felt that morning. He hadn't eaten the day before, had been up all night, had his last meal prepared by a medium, had spoken to Samuel (who was dead!), and had been told that his army would be defeated, with him and his sons being killed (28:19).

It's hard to imagine how he would have felt through the day. Picture him being roused in the morning by the generals: "This is it - time for great deeds and courage!" Has he any appetite for breakfast? Unlikely. Perhaps as he is dressed for battle, the armour strapped on, he thinks, "What is the point? I die today." As he sees his sons line up beside him he thinks, "They die today." As he stands in front of the men to address them he is thinking, "Many of them will die today." Battle begins and the Philistine chariot-charge smashes through the ranks, the hail of arrows darkens the sky and Saul sees them sweeping up the hillside towards him. He sees all three sons fall before he himself is struck by an arrow. In all this he is seeing the fulfilment of Samuel's words before his very eyes.

As we watch this scene unfold it should chill us. Saul is harvesting exactly what he had sown, and God is doing exactly what he'd told him. Saul had rejected the Word of God, and God had rejected him. However, rejecting God's Word did not mean he could escape God's Word. God will do all that he says he will do, regardless of what we think of his Word. Saul had no time for God's Word, but God's Word had time for him. God said judgement would sweep him away, and judgement swept him away. Hear the warning, friends. Do not reject the Word of God. Do not reject its call to repentance and faith. Do not reject its calls to obedience in specific areas of life. Judgement comes to those who reject God's Word. God has spoken, and he will do it.

## **Questions**

1. God has given us all a prophecy, telling us that we will all die - how should you live in light of that?
2. Where is God calling you through his Word to obedience?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Father, let Saul's death speak to my heart about the dangers of rejecting your Word.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise:** Psalm 18:23-26 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Wednesday - 1 Samuel 31:1-7 - A Picture Painted**

We've been very hard on Saul; was God very hard on Saul too? We could feel sorry for him as we think through his last day, living with the fulfilment of God's prophecy rolling towards him. I think we get an insight into Saul's heart in verse 4 which should remove any thoughts that he was 'hard done by'. Knowing that he is about to die, Saul is more concerned about falling into the Philistines' hands - and the accompanying abuse, shame, mutilation, and torture - than he is about falling into the hands of the living God. This is consuming his mind as death approaches.

Who will remove this wicked king from his throne? His armour bearer, one of the Israelites, won't do it. Philistines won't be the ones to do it. David isn't the one to do it. Saul removes himself from the throne as he falls upon his sword - it is by his own hand. A picture is being painted - just as Saul now physically removes himself from the kingship, so had he spiritually removed himself from the kingship. He lost the throne by his own actions - by his own hand. Saul had no-one to blame but himself. He'd rejected God's Word, gone his own way, and put himself under the death sentence.

Saul is an 'everyman' here - the epitome of human rebellion against God and the embodiment of 'doing it your way'. He is a picture of ourselves. The reason we are rejected by God, under his judgement and doomed to death is that we have rejected him. It is 'by our own hand', the result of our own actions. Sometimes we are too ready to put the blame elsewhere: our spouse, our parents, our family, our church, our government, our bosses. Our world fosters a permanent victim culture. Saul was no mere victim when it came to God's judgement, and neither are we. We remove ourselves from God's rule and blessing.

There is ultimately no-one else to blame for our sin. Other factors can exacerbate the problem - our education, our lack of opportunity, our genes, our background; but we all reject God and put ourselves under his judgement.

## **Questions**

1. Whom or what do you tend to blame for your sin?

## **Prayer Points**

1. Ask God for a heart that takes responsibility for sin.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

## **Memory Verse**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise: Psalm 38:1-4, 13 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

# 1 SAMUEL

## Thursday - Deuteronomy 28:15-35 - A Proof of Failure

1 Samuel started with Israel under the rule of the Philistines, having fled before them in battle, and her leaders being killed by them. Now we've come full circle. Saul was meant to save Israel from the Philistines (9:16). Instead, he is killed by them; the Israelites flee before them and lose territory to them (verse 7). They even lose territory across the Jordan, an easily defendable position. They lose control of vital north-south and east-west trade routes. Saul has failed.

The most vivid thing I can liken this to is the flight of Greek Cypriots before the Turks in 1974. They simply upped and fled when they heard they were coming, leaving washing on the line and breakfast on the table. Cities like Famagusta became ghost towns; in other places foreigners moved into deserted family homes. That's what has happened to Israel. It is a crushing defeat for God's people - their armies routed, their cities lost, and their king and his heirs dead. They chose this king, and this is where it led.

Asking for Saul was an act of rebellion, and now God has given them over to the fruit of their rebellion. These events are the curses for breaking God's covenant - see Deuteronomy 28:25. God has brought his judgement on their rebellion. It is all failure: Saul, the king, hero, and rescuer has failed; their rebellion against God has failed. The king is dead and they are left in shame and defeat.

When we go our own way it leads to failure. Rejecting God as our king leads to failure. Rejecting God's Word as our rule for life leads to failure. Rejecting God's right to rule over us leads to failure. Rejecting God's wisdom leads to failure. Failure, shame, and defeat. This is the predicament that mankind's sin has left us in - we are doomed to everlasting shame and defeat.

Thankfully, God's plans to rule and bless his people don't stop here - they are not thwarted by the death of the king. Actually, the death of the king furthers his plans. From the death of the king will come victory, as the way is left open for David.

### Questions

1. In what way does 1 Samuel end as it started?
2. How does this mirror the situation for all mankind?

### Prayer Points

1. Thank God that he can bring victory and blessing out of the darkest defeats.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise:** Psalm 106:30-33 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Friday - Isaiah 53:3-5; Zechariah 12:10; John 19:31-37 - A Pointer to Another**

Thankfully, this is not the last death of a king of Israel recorded for us in the Bible. There are two characteristics of Saul's death that makes us think of Another's death.

First, in verse 1 we are told that "Israel fell slain" and in verse 8 that the slain were stripped. The word "slain" is a stark word, which carries a broad range of meanings. It can mean slain, wounded, fatally wounded, or pierced. It is the same word that is used in Isaiah 53:5. This is a song about God's Servant who will rescue God's people by bearing their sin and being slain or pierced for it. The New Testament does not hesitate to apply these words to Jesus.

Second, in verse 4 Saul twice uses the phrase, "thrust me through". More specifically, the word behind this phrase also means 'pierce' and is used in another prophecy, Zechariah 12:10. It is also picked up by the New Testament when John tells us that Zechariah spoke of the Crucifixion (John 19:37).

Come with me in your minds to the death of another King of Israel. He too has died on a mountain, not Gilboa, but Golgotha outside Jerusalem. This King is wearing a crown of thorns - a crown of suffering. His hands and feet are pierced, and he has been wounded for our transgressions. Like Saul's death it is shameful and seems like a defeat. Satan has plotted and now the Son of God is on the Cross. The Messiah-King of God's choosing is dying. He's dying as the most wretched sinner ever, bearing his people's sin and God's curse. The enemy seems victorious and God's people doomed.

But this is different. He is the King of God's choosing, and he has not rejected God's Word. He is not dying for rejecting God, like Saul, but for those who rejected God. Saul had his life taken from him, Jesus laid his down of his own accord (John 10:18). Saul's death led to defeat, Jesus' to victory over Sin, Satan, and Death. Saul's death delivered many to slavery, Jesus' death delivered many from slavery to Sin and Death. For us "the King is dead" is good news indeed.

### **Questions**

1. In what ways is Jesus' death like Saul's death?
2. In what ways is it different from Saul's death?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks that the King died and, yet, he lives.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise:** Psalm 69:20-25 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.

# 1 SAMUEL

## **Saturday - 1 Samuel 31:8-13 - The King's Body**

What do the actions of the Philistines and the men of Jabesh-gilead at the end of this chapter say to us? Despite Saul's dying wish, the Philistines have their sport with Saul's body. He is found, decapitated, stripped, and pinned to a wall. It is humiliating - the Philistines dishonour the body of the king. It's too much for the Jews of Jabesh-gilead, who had been delivered by Saul years earlier (chapter 11). They march all night, deep into enemy territory, and retrieve his body, so they can give him a proper burial. They honour the body of the king.

How do you treat the body of the King, Jesus? His body was broken for sinners, and he died that they might be saved. Do you honour that death? Or do you dishonour that body, broken for forgiveness of sins? Do you live in obedience to him, or do you scorn what he did, denying that you have any need of it? Do you honour his sacrificial death by your repentance and faith?

We can contrast what happened to Saul's body with what happened to the Lord's body. Saul's body was displayed for all to see that they had won the victory. Good news of their victory was declared in their cities and temples: "See Saul's armour, head, and body! We have won!" His body was displayed as proof of defeat. However, after the death of King Jesus there was no gloating display of his body by his enemies. There was no corpse to display! The King was dead, but is alive!

In fact, it was King Jesus who displayed his risen body, even to more than 500 of his followers at once. He displayed his resurrected body as proof of his victory! This is how we know that the death of Jesus was a victory, not a defeat - there is no body to be shamefully displayed. Rather, his body is gloriously exalted in Heaven. How do we know that our sins are forgiven, that we are accepted by God, that freedom is possible, and that death is not the end? Because his living body is in Heaven.

### **Questions**

1. How does the treatment of Jesus' resurrected body - its glorious lifting up to Heaven - encourage you?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Give thanks for the hope that Jesus' body gives us for our own eternity and our own bodies.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters

### **Memory Verse**

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Isaiah 53:4

**Praise: Psalm 70 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://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!**

Let's Worship God is produced  
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