

== IN SEARCH OF A KING ==

Understanding 1 Samuel

Small group questions

1 Samuel 1-3 A saviour is born

Leaders - if the questions make no sense or you don't know the answer - please contact the preacher!

1. RECAP -- Why read the Old Testament?

Because the New Testament tells us that the Old Testament is all about Jesus! See for example: John 1:45; Luke 24:44 and Acts 28:23.

2. The story so far: where did we leave Israel when we arrived at the end of Judges last year? (Just take a glimpse of the last verse of the book of Judges for a clue!)

3. 1 Samuel 1-3 - have a skim read! Remember the main points?

- a. Infertile Hannah pleads to the Lord
- b. Hannah is granted a son whom she gives back to God and sings a song of praise to God.
- c. We meet the priest Eli and his rebellious sons
- d. Samuel will have a special role in Israel's history

- a. What are your initial reactions to this passage?
- b. Is anything unclear to you in this text?

4. We'll follow the same outline each week. What's the passage about, what does it teach us about God and how does it point us to Jesus. Explore and discuss the following points ensuring everyone knows what Mark and Ian were on about!!

1) WHAT DOES IT TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

- a. Reverser of fortunes
- b. A God of justice
- c. A God who saves by sending saviours

2) HOW DOES IT POINT US TO JESUS?

- a. Hannah's song/Mary's song - many parallels (1 Sam 2, Luke 1)
- b. Samuel and Jesus - growing in favour with God and men.
- c. The GREAT Saviour has come

5. Mark made three minor points of application along the way. Discuss how you might put these into practice:

- a. Hannah's example of heartfelt prayer - taking her needs right to God who can act
- b. Eli's encouragement to Samuel to wait on God to speak to him saying: 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening'. Do we ask the same thing when we open God's word or come to church?
- c. Eli's example after Samuel shared the vision of his demise of saying: 'he is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes!' Do we have that sort of trust in God's character??

6. We saw in the sermon a tremendous running theme in Scripture - made clear in both Hannah's and Mary's song - namely - that God humbles the exalted, but exalts the humble. How might this help you to talk about Jesus and his love to others?

Date: 16 July 2017
Services: 730, 930am (T) and 630pm
Series: 1 Samuel – In search of a King
Passage: 1 Samuel 1-3
Title: A Saviour is Born

✘ PRELIMINARIES

1. ✘ Why read the Old Testament?

- For many people – it simply seems so full of **genealogies**, lists of people's names who mean nothing to us; the **occasional story** we remember from Sunday school days; lots of **quite bloodthirsty wars** and **killings**; the occasional **'R' rated sex scene**; and **prophecies** that appear to us to be filled with **doom** and **gloom** and **judgement** for **page after page**.
- The **immediate relevance** escapes us!
- **Until** that is, we understand its **purpose**, and just a little about its **framework**.
- For it is not overstating the mark to say, that the **entire Old Testament ✘ points** us to, ✘ gives the **background** for, and ✘ **prepares** us for, the ✘ **arrival** of on **earth** of the person of **Jesus Christ**. (rpt)
- **How do I know that?** The New testament itself, tells us:
- Right at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Philip is excited about first meeting Jesus because he sees in Jesus the one that Moses and the prophets had written about: ✘ John 1:45 *Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote – Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*
- Then after his resurrection when Jesus was teaching his disciples we read: *He said to them, ✘ Luke 24:44 This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. I.e. – to show them how they spoke of Him!*
- And then right at the end of the Apostle **Paul's** ministry, Paul finds gathered around him – right where we was under house arrest – those who wanted to hear more of what he had to say, and we read in ✘ Acts 28:23 *From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets.*
- Because the law and the prophets – are **about Jesus!!** And by **reading** the OT, we come to a **deeper appreciation** of the **great significance** of the **coming of Christ**.
- So we always read it with the **big question** in mind - **how does this point us to the Lord Jesus?** ✘ blk
- Now – one more preliminary before we get to our text today...

2. The story so far and overview of 1 Samuel

- Run video
- So **taken together**, the **two books** move from ✘ **rebellion** against **God**, to the **golden era** of the **Old Testament**.
- The story moves from Israel ✘ **worshipping** God in the **tabernacle** (i.e. the portable temple established after the rescue from Egypt) at Shiloh, to the **temple promised** and all but **built**;
- from ✘ **Israel** being constantly under the **threat** of the **Philistines** and other **nations**, to the stability of the **great Empire** under **Great King David**;
- and from the ✘ **unstable** rule of the **Judges**, to the **monarchy** and the **promise** of an **everlasting dynasty**. //

Sermon proper

- There are **three basic questions** we'll ask in each address in this series. And you'll see them there on the screen – **what is the passage ABOUT?, what does it teach us about GOD? And how does it point us to JESUS...**

1) ✕ WHAT IS THIS PASSAGE ABOUT?

- 1 Samuel is a book of **great stories** and right from the **start** we meet **Elkanah** and his two wives **Hannah and Peninnah**.
- **Hannah is childless** as we soon discover... and she
 - e. **Infertile Hannah pleads to the Lord**
- **Hannah's infertility** is the **Lord's doing** – 1:5 – *the Lord had closed her womb*.
- Great **unhappiness**, great **jealousy** between the **two wives**.
- Hannah had no recourse but to **turn to God**. v10 – *In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord*.
- In 1:11, Hannah prayed – *if you look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life..* If he had closed her womb, then he could open it.
- Great thing to remember for our **own trials** isn't it? To take things to God in **prayer** – for **he** is the one who can **act!**
- well >>>
- f. ✕ **Hannah is granted a son whom she gives back to God as vowed**
- in 1:19 we read the wonderful words – *and the Lord remembered her*. Which doesn't mean he had ever forgotten her – but he **took action** for her!
- She named the boy Samuel – which means something like – 'he over whom the name of God has been said'.
- And true to her promise she tells her husband in 1:22 – *after the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the Lord, and he will live there always*.
- And v27 – on presenting him to Eli the priest – *I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord*.
- Which brings us to: >>
- g. ✕ **[We meet] the priest Eli and his rebellious sons**
- *They had no regard for the Lord (2:12) – literally – they did not know him*.
- They had no desire to **serve** him, **no fear** of his **power** or **judgement...**
- And in many ways – they are a **case study** on **Israel itself**.
- In **2:22-25** Eli their father **rebuked** them – but by now it was **all too late** and an unknown man of God addresses a word from God primarily to their **father...** because their service of God will now be **terminated**.
- God promises he will do a **new thing** – 2:35 – *I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his house and he will minister before my anointed one always...*
- He speaks of **Samuel** and the role he is to have... which brings us to **final section** – ch 3 – which tells us that >>

h. ✨Samuel will have a special role in Israel's history

- Chapter 3 depicts God's call of Samuel.
- The young boy is **asleep** in the **inner area** of the **tabernacle**. Some time before **dawn** is he woken up by a **voice** and **immediately jumps** up and runs to **Eli the priest**.
- **Trouble was?** Eli **hadn't called** him. After this is repeated a couple of time, Eli realises **God** may be involved.
- Indeed he was and upon **Samuel's word** – '**speak, for your servant is listening,**' God revealed a **fierce condemnation** of **Eli** and his **sons**...
- (by the way – that's a great example for us isn't – before the Word of God – 'speak Lord for your servant is listening... say that before you read your Bible in the week? Or – as you to come to church?)
- Samuel, understandably, didn't want to tell Eli what God said... – but eventually he does, and in a **stunning display** of **sorrow** and **humility** says 'He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes.'
- **CAN YOU TRUST GOD THAT MUCH....?** Submit to his superior **wisdom** and **actions** to that **degree?** – to say – no matter **what** the Lord brings across **my path** – **HE IS THE LORD; LET HIM DO WHAT IS GOOD IN HIS EYES!** //
- Well, it was the first of **many** words from **God** to **Samuel** – words of **great significance** and **consequence**, and we begin to understand that he will have a **special role in Israel's history**.
- 3:19-21 – forms a summary statement: *The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. 21 The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word. And Samuel's word came to all Israel.*
- Which brings us to the **second question** we'll ask each week...

2) ✨WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE TEACH US ABOUT GOD?

d. ✨Reverser of fortunes

- This is a theme we'll see **repeated throughout** the **book**.
- He had **closed** Hannah's womb, then he **opens** it.
- **Hannah** takes up the **theme** in her **song** – v6 – *The Lord brings **death** and **makes alive**; he brings down to the **grave** and he **raises up**... The Lord sends **poverty** and **wealth**; he **humbles** and he **exalts**.*
- in this passage, we see the beginning of the **downfall of Eli** and his sons as judgement is pronounced on them, and we see the beginning of the **rise to influence** of the **young man Samuel**.
- For **God** is **sovereign**. He calls the **shots**. He is the **King**.
- And the great Biblical principle is that **everyone** who **exalts himself** will be **humbled**, and **everyone** who **humbles themselves** will be **exalted**.
- Which brings us to the next important thing we learn of God: that he is a

e. ✨God of justice

- ...because he will **not let Israel** carry on in their **rebellious ways**, and in this case study – not only will he hold Eli's **sons accountable** – but **Eli himself!**
- **Again** we see this in **Hannah's song** – which acts as an introduction to the book – the themes introduced there, we see throughout – but v 10bff – *those who **oppose** the Lord will be **shattered**. He will **thunder against** them from **heaven**; the Lord will judge the **ends of the earth**....*
- But God's justice in **Scripture** **always** – ALWAYS goes hand in hand with his **mercy**. And **here is no exception**. He is not **capricious** or **malicious**. **Justice** is brought about in the **context** of **mercy**... so we see that God is >>>

f. ✘A God who saves by sending saviours

- God is not out to simply **abandon** his **wayward people**.
- Since the time of the **flood** – God has **raised up** and **used people** who would be his **instruments** in **saving his people**.
- ✘In the **flood** – he raised up **Noah** and **through him**, saved a **godly remnant** of **people**
- ✘After the tower of **Babel** – he raised up **Abraham** – the **father** of the nation of **Israel**.
- ✘When his people were enslaved in **Egypt** – he raised up **Moses** who would lead his people out of **Egypt**.
- ✘When it was finally time to **enter** the **promised land** – he raised up **Joshua** to lead his people into **Canaan**.
- ✘In the **period** of the **judges**... he raised up **Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, Tola, Jair, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon** and **Samson**.
- And **now?** – **now** ✘**Samuel** comes on the **scene** – as really the **LAST JUDGE** and the **first prophet** – and the **new priest!**
- And under his **influence** and during his **leadership**, a loose confederation of tribes will become unified under a **King** – **King David** – an **influential empire** is established on the **world scene** – and **from King David** we are told, one will come who will reign for **eternity**.
- So – don't **underestimate** the significance of **Samuel's arrival** on the **scene**.
- He will be a **great Saviour** for Israel! ✘ blk
- And **perhaps then** you can already **see**, how this passage points us to **Jesus**.

3) ✘HOW DOES IT POINT US TO JESUS?

- There are **echoes** here of the **role** Jesus will **have**.
- ✘**Samuel** is an **anticipation** of **Jesus**.
- Let me show you some **specifics**:
 - d. ✘**Hannah's song/Mary's song**
- Many of you will be familiar with **Mary's song** in **Luke's gospel**... *My Soul magnifies the Lord*... Mary sings in response to her being told she would bear the Son of God.
- And the parallels with Hannah's song in 1 Sam 2 are fascinating to see: ✘

Hannah (1 Samuel 2)	Mary (Luke 1)
v.1 My heart exalts in the Lord; I rejoice in Thy salvation	v.46f My soul magnifies the Lord; My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.
v.2 There is none holy like the Lord.	v.49 Holy is His name.
v.4 The bows of the mighty are broken but the feeble gird on strength.	v.52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree.
.5 Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.	v.53 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

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- The parallels are not word for word, but the theme of both songs is this **reversal of human fortunes** at the **intervention of God**. ✖ blk
- The coming of both **Samuel** and **Jesus** – bring about a **reversal of fortunes** of which both their **mothers sing**: The **proud humbled**; the **humble, exalted**.
- So – these **two songs** indicate a **strong link** between **Samuel** and **Jesus**
- And then in **another amazing parallel** – we read that **both**
 - e. ✖**Samuel and Jesus** – [are reported as] **growing in favour with God and men**.

✖1 Samuel 2:26 And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with men.	Luke 2:52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men.
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- So not only does **Mary** takes up the themes of **Hannah’s** song, **Luke** himself – sees a connection **between Samuel** and **Jesus**.
- in the passage which describes the growth of the boy **Jesus**, we find the **same words** which describe the **growth** of the **young Samuel**.
- The Bible regards him as one of the kind of **forerunners of Christ...**
- And then we read in 1 Samuel 3:21- *The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word...*
- And in Jesus? – Jesus is called **The Word** - because he **SUPREME**LY reveals God to us.
- So in Jesus >>>>
 - f. ✖**The Great Saviour has come** – of which Samuel is/was a forerunner.
- Samuel – **last judge, first prophet, new priest**.
- Jesus – **THE Judge, THE prophet, THE GREAT high priest**.
- **Samuel** – by the **mercy of God** – **saves** the nation from **disintegration**, is used by God to announce **judgement and mercy**, to call God’s people to **obedience**, and save them from their **enemies**.
- **Jesus** – by the mercy of God saves the **whole world** from **disintegration...** **announces judgement and mercy** – and at the cross, brilliantly combines the two
- Let’s close

CONCLUSION

- ✖ [The great reversal]
- And friends – all this points us to the greatest reversal of all!
- That **staggering reversal** of **our position** before the **Father**.
- in keeping with both **Hannah’s** song and **Mary’s** song – I want to point out a **running theme** of the **Scriptures** – i.e. the **humbling** of the **exalted**, and the **exalting** of the **humble**.
- ✖In **Hannah’s song** – we see it in 1 Samuel 2:7-8 – *the Lord sends poverty and wealth; he humbles and exalts. He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap...*
- ✖In **Mary’s song** – we see it in Luke 1:51-52: - *he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down the rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.*
- ✖**Luke 18:14** - at the conclusion of the parable of the Pharisee and tax collector: *For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*
- ✖**James 4:10** – *humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up*

- **✠1 Peter 5:6** - *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.*
- It's the great **invitation** of the **gospel**... to **humble yourself** before **God**... and he will **lift you up**. ✠
blk end
- It's **all** he asks – **all** he asks – is that we **admit** our **need** for him and **turn** to **him**. **Admit** our need of his **forgiveness** and **mercy** and **grace** – and then through the **CROSS** – and he **takes us** and **welcomes** us as **sons** and **daughters** and **forgives us** and **cleans us up** and **fits us for heaven**.
- The **great reversal** – from **death** to **life**; from **enemy** to **friend**, from **darkness** to **light**... from **sinner** to **saint**... from **humbled** to **exalted**.
- And friends – like as for Hannah and Mary – this is >>>>>>
- **Something to sing about**
- **Hannah:** *My heart rejoices in the Lord... there is no-one holy like the Lord; there is no-one besides you. There is no Rock like our God!*
- **Mary:** *My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my /// SAVIOUR...*