

Personal Application

Samuel allows people to examine his life. He claims to have performed his public responsibilities with absolute honesty and integrity. Can you say the same?

Does it matter to God what form of government we have?

Despite Samuel's interpretation that Israel had sinned he offers hope: he say "Do not be afraid. you have done all this evil; yet you do not turn away from the LORD with all your heart." (1 Sam 12:20) Here there is a reminder with the God of the Bible there is always hope of a new start.

Is there anything you need to confess and receive forgiveness over?

Are you comforted by the promise that "For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people?" (1 Sam 12:22)

How do you think about the kingship of Jesus.

What difference does it make in your life?

Pray

This study has been written to accompany a sermon series at St Columb's Anglican Church Hawthorn. It is written for small group and personal study. It is meant as a resource so feel free to select the parts that are most useful to you or your group. It is advised that you at least do the section "Getting Inside the Passage," some parts of "Personal Application" and "Pray." The section "Going Further" will take you further into the 1 Samuel and the Bible as a whole.

With acknowledgement and thanks to Rev. Peter MacPherson
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1 Samuel 12 Small Group Study Material

A New Start

Context

In the chapter 7 Samuel has grown to be a man. He leads Israel like the judges combining priestly, military and administrative roles.

Chapters 8-12 are a unit, the focus of which is the appointing of Saul as the first king.

Samuel, however does not like this change in how Israel is governed. These chapters present both a negative and positive view of kingship:

Chapter 8: the request for a king is seen by Samuel as a rejection of God as king.

Chapter 9: we meet Saul for the first time. He is described in glowing terms: tall, handsome, brave. he is God's choice, he does not seek after public office. He is anointed by Samuel, and the Spirit of God comes on him in power.

Chapter 10: Saul is found hiding amongst the baggage, frightened of being appointed as king. Samuel repeats the charge that the people are rejecting God (Saul the weakling)

Chapter 11: The Spirit of God comes on Saul again and he wins his first battle as leader, against the ammonites (Saul the warrior)

We get to chapter 12 needing a resolution to the tensions that

have been created in the previous chapter.

Ch 12 functions as a transition from the period of the judges (some say Samuel is the last of the judges) to that of the kings.

It is a major change in the history of God's people.

Getting Inside the Passage

1-5 Samuel's integrity.

What sort of leader has Samuel been?

6-12 A history lesson.

What seems to be the point of Samuel's recounting the past?
(nb v12)

13-15 Future options under a new king.

What are the two options open to them?

16-18 God confirms Samuel's words.

Does this lead us to conclude that the kingship is an evil (v17)

19-25 A new start

The people repent. Samuel assures them of God's continued presence and his own continued prayer and teaching. What must they do in return?

Going Further

Deut 7:2-6 explain that Israel is to be completely different to the surrounding nations. Moses, however, sees a time when they will ask for a king (Deut 17:14-20)

Why do the people want a king? (1 Sam 8).

Is Samuel right in thinking this is a rejection of God as king? Compare Samuel's speech with those of Moses (Deut 32-33) and Joshua (Josh 24).

Notice how God responded each time Israel was on the brink of a major political change.

Considering what happened to Saul later, why do you think God chose Saul as the first king rather than David?

Jesus comes preaching about the 'kingdom of God' and though he is initially hesitant to be called a king at his trial before Pilate, he acknowledges that he is in fact a king (Lk 23:3, Jn 18:33-36). The Bible's story ends with Jesus acknowledged as King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 17:14; 19:16)

What does this mean?

Is there a connection between the kingship of Jesus and that of Israel's kings?