

Bible-Reading Coach Podcast Transcript

Week 13: 1 Samuel 1-19 *We Want A King! (Samuel to Saul)*

Welcome to Week 13 of the Bible reading coach podcast. My name is Karl Vaters and I'm here to help you read through the entire Bible in 52 weeks.

This week, we're going to be reading the first 19 chapters of the book of First Samuel, which has 31 chapters total. Now, this is the first time in our Bible reading that we've seen a book of the Bible that has the word first in its title. So let's talk about what that means. It's one of those things that we often just assume, and we don't actually explain to most people, so let's explain it for a moment. In some cases, like in the books of first and second Samuel, First and Second Kings First and Second Chronicles, which are the next six, six books we'll be reading together, the one and two are first and second are probably there because of the size of the original book that had to be split into two separate scrolls. So let's walk through that.

When you're writing a book today, books can be almost any size, and certainly electronically, they can be any size. But way back in the day, when they were writing it on scrolls, and actually physically having to write it out. The Scrolls could get exceedingly large, especially for our large Bible books. So to put First and Second Samuel, as one book called Samuel in a single scroll would have made the scroll too large. So they probably divided it into First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, because the scroll would have been too large for each of those to be individual books, that is almost likely the case. In other cases, like in First and Second Corinthians and First and Second Thessalonians. They are actually two separate letters written and sent at separate times. So they do stand a separate books, but sent to the same people.

So how do we tell the difference? Whether the first and second means that it's one scroll split into two or two separate letters set at separate times? Well, the difference is Old and New Testament. In the Old Testament, the first and second is probably a large scroll divided into two. In the New Testament, it is definitely two different letters sent at two different times, but to the same people, or in the case of first, second and third John, three different letters sent at three different times. So Old Testament, the continuation of one book, and in the New Testament, the first and second or first, second. And third, mean two different letters sent at two different times. So there's an explanation for something that you've probably, even if you've been in church a long time, you've probably seen a lot but never really had explained. And hopefully that helps a little bit.

So now let's get to the passage for this week that we'll be reading together. First Samuel, chapters one through 19 will be the passage the first three chapters are about the the birth and the calling of Samuel for whom these two books are named. Okay. It starts with Samuel being born and Samuel being called into ministry, Israel at this time is in a time of great moral and spiritual depravity. Chapter two gives us an example of that. The high priest at the time was a man named Eli, and his sons who assisted him in the tabernacle were evil, they were stealing

from the offering, and they were having sex with the women who are waiting outside the temple. It's hard to imagine that there are very few things you can do to desecrate God's presence. More than that there are a few and we'll talk about them and months to come. But this is about as bad as it gets.

So God sees this and decides I'm going to use someone else. I'm not going to keep Eli's line as the high priest anymore. And in the meantime, there's a woman named Hannah, and she doesn't have a child, although she's getting very old. You'll notice that's a common theme in the Bible. Old folks not having babies when they want them, we saw it with Abraham and Sarah, we saw it with Rachel. So God tells her you what she does, she goes to the temple, she prays, and she says, God, if you give me a baby, I will give the baby back to you. She then does give birth to this baby, she calls him Samuel. And when the boy is old enough, she dedicates him and she actually gives him to live at the temple, and then visits him from time to time, but she does this out of gratefulness to God. He is then raised by the priest, Eli, and he is called by God and chapter three, in one of those beautiful stories of the Bible that pastors love to preach about and for very good reason.

We then go to chapters four through seven for Samuel, where we see an episode involving the Ark of the Covenant. This is one of those places where stories like Raiders of the Lost Ark, get their stories from and super exaggerate them. But this is where they come from. Basically what happens is as a result of the sin of the nation, God allows the Ark of the Covenant, which you'll remember from previous readings, is where God actually lived with them. And from where he spoke to Israel. He allows this ark of the covenant to be stolen by Israel's enemy, the Philistines. There is no greater picture of the absence of God among them than the absence of the Ark of the Covenant from them, which is the place where God actually dwelt on the earth at the time.

So then we they see this wonderful and fascinating tale of how the Ark gets returned. But it ends up staying in a small town on the edge of the company and an edge of the country and not in the tabernacle, where it belongs. We then move to First Samuel chapters eight through 10, where they ask for a king. First Samuel chapters eight through 10 is one of the Bible's big turning points, there are several, but this is definitely one of them. The people of Israel have been living with God as their king for centuries, 200 to 400 years, depending on how you do the counting.

And now they say they want a human king. To a certain degree, you can almost understand that. We want someone who looks like us as King, I get it, but God's your king, and he's doing really well when you follow Him. You should be okay with that. But no, they want a human king. And what makes it worse is here's the reason why, here's what you're gonna read coming up this week. We'll read it together this week. But I'll read a little bit in advance. First Samuel eight verses 19 and 20, we will see the reason why they want a king and it's this, we want a king over us, then we will be like all the other nations with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles. They wanted a king not because it was a better way to do government, but because all the other nations have a king. It's like, it's like you're a teenager, all

the other kids have one site. Yeah, but it's not as good. But all the other kids have one, right? That's the reason they're looking around at the other nations that they defeated by the way and going we want to be like them, like the nations we defeated and have a king over us. It's amazing peer pressure doesn't stop when your teenage years are over.

So God gives them a king he gives them actually a stereotypical King tall, good looking and from a great family. In a man named Saul, God agrees to give them this King Saul and Saul is anointed by Samuel. But note in chapter eight, when you get there, God is very clear with them through Samuel, about what this king will do that this king will not give you what you're expecting. Life under a king is going to be harder than life under God as your King. God doesn't sugarcoat that for them and they want a king anyway, we then move to First Samuel 12, where Samuel really gives a warning about this. After Saul takes the throne, Samuel actually warns the nation you've got the king now, but here's what's gonna happen, and most of it is not good. And then he says the only way this is going to turn out well for you at all is if you've really got to obey God, including that King, you King Saul, you have to obey God as well. The king's will does not supersede God's will if you can get that right maybe this will be okay. But it probably won't. Because you probably won't do that. We'll see that in First Samuel 12.

We then go to First Samuel 13. In his first major act as king, Saul does something that's actually shockingly similar to the sin that Eli's sons were committing, he commits a major act of sacrilege in the tabernacle. And that was what Eli's sons were doing different sin but same place, desecrating the tabernacle, and Samuel calls him on it. And this becomes one of the spark points for a conflict that we still live with the church and state, their religion and politics divide, and which one has precedent in our lives. And for Christians, it's not even a close call, God's Will supersedes all. But what Saul did was he basically wanted to move the government forward. And so he did the wrong thing in the tabernacle. And he put the, the will of himself and the will of the state above the will of God. And this never works out well. So that's what we see. That's what we will see as we read it through this week in chapter 13.

Then we'll move to Chapter 14, where we meet a man named Jonathan, Saul's son. Saul's son is a good man. He almost gets killed because of a stupid vow that his father made. This is not the last stupid vow that we will see. In the Bible, we will see another extremely stupid vow happened before the time of the Kings is over.

We'll then move to chapters 15 and 16, where we will see that because of constant evil, and his bad decisions, God says, Okay, I'm not keeping Saul's lion on the throne any longer your sons will not become kings after you. Instead, the chapter 16 God tells Samuel to anoint their next king, and leads him to this little shepherd boy named David. The fulfillment of David becoming king even after he's been anointed as the next king by Samuel is many, many years away, and through many, many hard times, but for now, Saul gets so far from God and from sanity, quite frankly, that he becomes demon possessed, or at least demon oppressed.

We then go to one of the most famous vivid stories in all of the Bible First Samuel 17. We'll read the story again, of David and Goliath. It's one of those larger than life stories that

even non Bible readers have heard about even if they really aren't clear on the details. I encourage you To try to lay aside all your preconceptions about the story, some stories like The David and Goliath story are so big in our minds and in our hearts and in our common storytelling, that we anticipate things. And so we read things into it. So I, the only thing I'm going to tell you in advance about David and Goliath is trying to go when you get to it, say, Lord, help me to see this with new eyes. That's all, see it without preconceptions. And the Lord will speak something new to your heart, as you read it through this week in First Samuel 17.

We then go, we will then go to First Samuel 18 and 19, the last two chapters that we'll read this week, and we'll see that instead of rejoicing, in the great victory that David wins by killing Goliath, and the other battles that David wins as well, Saul doesn't rejoice in this Saul gets very, very jealous. And this starts a series of events in which David is nearly killed several times, he has the chance to kill Saul a couple times. But he doesn't, because he's not going to kill God's King, the person who's currently the king that's supposed to be in place. He is exiled from Israel, he in some of his fighting men. And that story of his exile only begins at the end of this week's reading.

So as we finish this week's reading, take, here's what to look for this week, as you're doing it, take note of what happens to David, between the time he's anointed. And how many years passed before he's crowned like we're not even going to get to that until the following week, in David's story, at this point actually feels an awful lot to me, every time I read it, like Joseph Story, where there's years and years between the promise that God has given them, and the fulfillment of the promise, and the years in between are brutal, they are hard. It's a great lesson for us.

First of all, about God's timing, God's timing is always different from our timing, almost always a lot longer than we want it to be. And the what we go through between God's call and the fulfillment of God's call is usually much harder than we expect. And some of it is because of our fault. Some of it is because of the sins of others. And a whole lot of it is because that's where the lessons are learned to be able to do what God has called us to do, we have to go through the difficult times to get there. So take note of that as we go through the story this week.

But before that, or even as you're doing that, when we're reading about the desire for a king, when they say we want a king, ask yourself this, how do I sometimes act like that? Do I sometimes put my desires ahead of God's desires? Do I look around and go other people have it and I want it even though it may not be the best thing for us? And then how can we put God's will and God's ways first, instead of our desires. Hope you take a look at that this week. A lot of great stuff this week is just those stories that just come alive on the page. I know we'll enjoy it this week, and I will see you next week.

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