

(Week 64) March 15 – 21, 2010
1 Samuel

Messages:

- There are consequences for not disciplining inappropriate behavior of our children
- God judges by outward appearances
- Jealousy can ruin relationships and lives

Overview

The book of First Samuel covers the life of the judge and prophet Samuel, the installation of Israel's first king Saul, the rise of David in God's favor, a jealous Saul's failed attempts to kill David, and the death of Saul and his sons. In between are frequent battles with the Philistines, including the infamous killing of the giant Goliath by the young shepherd boy David. The timeframe was around 1000 BC. Review map showing the territory of Saul.

Notes:

- Saul is of the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel, and reigns for 42 years.
- David is of the tribe of Judah, the grandson of Ruth and Boaz living in Bethlehem. He was the youngest of 8 sons.

Consequences of not providing discipline – a biblical example

A little background. God blesses a barren wife Hannah with a son named Samuel. Hannah dedicates Samuel to the Lord's service (under Eli's tutelage) from birth in fulfillment of a promise to God for enabling her to become pregnant. Through his complete obedience to God, Samuel becomes the last Judge and first great prophet in Israel. Note: Hannah prayed to God in deep anguish while crying bitterly...she came to God in desperation but obviously believed God could do something (1:10); Samuel's father was a poor role model (1:8)...for a chuckle.

Unfortunately, both Eli and Samuel have sons that don't live up to their own standards and they abuse the privileges of being priests, much to God's displeasure. Read 2:22,29 (p353); 8:1-3, p.359. Because the Israelites lacked confidence in Samuel's sons, they request that Samuel give them a "king" as a judge (8:4,5 p.359). God told Samuel that he was displeased with this request because it meant they were rejecting Him, but he allows it to happen. The result is much hardship and sorrow for the Israelite Nation for many years to come.

God does not judge by appearances

The failures of Saul vs the successes of David illustrate the dangers of judging, selecting, and idolizing individuals based on appearances....which is the way the World judges today. Who are the people the World looks up to nowadays? Examples: athletes, movie stars, rock stars, kings, presidents. People who do not look good (e.g. short, overweight, bald, imperfect facial features) are looked down on. But, God uses individuals who often are not the people's choice (e.g. Moses who had a speech impediment, David a

shepherd boy, the disciples who were uneducated fisherman, Paul who was physically unattractive and longwinded).

In 1Samuel, we have the examples of Saul and Goliath who were imposing in their appearances, but both failed without God on their side. Read 9:2 (about Saul) but he turned out to be weak and possessed with jealousy over David. Read 17:4-7, p.372 (about Goliath) and he underestimated the danger of a sling-shot and stone in the hands of a boy. Worse, he used a lot of “trash talk” for 40 days in front of the Israelite army and when he faced David 17:41-44, p.373.

And what about David’s appearance? Read 16:6-7,12. Why did Saul let a boy represent the Israelites in a winner take-all fight to the death with Goliath? First, Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin which were known as skillful, accurate “slingers” (Judges 20:16, p.340). I suspect Saul asked David to demonstrate his slinging skills! Second, and more importantly, I believe Saul saw that David and God had a great relationship and that God would be on his side....David had strong faith and was confident God would be with him in the fight against an opponent who defied God 17:36-37 p.373. He obviously had lot’s of quiet time to meditate and talk to God while watching sheep. My guess is that he experienced many examples of answers to prayers to convince him that God existed and was on his side (such as saving him when attacked by wild animals, etc).

By the way, isn’t it interesting that David was born in Bethlehem and died in Jerusalem.

Jealousy can ruin relationships and lives

After the death of Goliath, the people begin praising David and describing his exploits as greater than Saul’s which makes Saul concerned that they might want David to be king...which makes Saul jealous (18:7-9, p. 374). It didn’t help that David “continued to succeed in everything he did, for the Lord was with him” (18:14, p.374). He also became afraid of him and became an enemy for life when he realized how much God was with David and that Saul’s daughter Michal loved him (18:28-29). Finally, when David became very famous because of his victories over Philistine attacks, Saul wanted David assassinated and he became obsessed with killing David (18:30, 19:1). What were the consequences:

- Saul lost his relationship with his son Jonathan (20:30-33, p. 377
- Saul’s focus became revenge and not on serving God, even killed 85 priests and their families claiming they conspired against him by helping David 22:18-19, p. 379
- Saul was defeated by the Philistines and he and his sons were killed

Saul lost God’s support early on for not following His instructions: 15:10-11, p.369; 15:35, p. 370; 16:1 p.370