



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

BIBLE FOUNDATIONS

SAMUEL

Hearing God, Speaking Truth, and Faithfully Serving Through a Changing World

The Short Answer

Samuel lived during one of Israel's great transition periods. He was born in answer to Hannah's prayer, dedicated to the LORD, raised near the tabernacle under Eli, called by God while still young, recognized as a prophet, and used by God as Israel moved from the era of the judges into the monarchy. Samuel listened when God spoke, delivered difficult messages, called Israel away from idolatry, prayed for the people, confronted Saul when the king disobeyed, and later anointed David. Yet Samuel's story is not a simple hero story. He grew up amid corrupt religious leadership, his own sons later failed to walk in his ways, Israel demanded a king, and Saul's failure revealed that Israel needed more than better human leadership. Samuel's life teaches listening, obedience, truth-telling, prayer, and faithful service through change. His story moves toward David and ultimately toward Jesus, the true and eternal King.

1 Samuel 1-8 • 10 • 12 • 15-16 • 28:3-25

Opening Memory Anchor

Faithfulness means listening to God, obeying His Word, and speaking His truth - even when people would rather hear something else.

WELCOME

This guide is meant to send you back to Scripture

Samuel's story spans the transition from the final years of the judges to Israel's monarchy. Part One follows his life from Hannah's prayer through David's anointing. Part Two addresses the harder interpretive and theological questions and traces the storyline toward Jesus.

Foundational truth

Samuel was a faithful servant, but God was the true King. The study of Samuel should increase confidence in God's Word and God's faithfulness, not merely admiration for a human leader.

How to use this study

- Open and read the cited passages rather than relying only on summaries.
- Distinguish what Scripture explicitly teaches from theological inference.
- Use the Memory Anchors to retain major ideas.
- Where Scripture leaves mystery, do not manufacture certainty.

PART ONE

BEGINNER GUIDE

Samuel, the Prophet Who Learned to Listen

1. WHO WAS SAMUEL'S MOTHER?

Samuel's mother was Hannah. She was deeply distressed because she had no children and was repeatedly provoked by Peninnah. At Shiloh Hannah prayed in deep anguish and promised that if God gave her a son, she would dedicate him to the LORD. Eli initially misunderstood her silent prayer, but God did not. God answered, and Hannah gave birth to Samuel.

Memory Anchor

God sees suffering that other people may misunderstand.

2. DID HANNAH REALLY GIVE SAMUEL TO GOD?

Yes. After Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to Shiloh and said, "I asked the LORD to give me this boy, and he has granted my request. Now I am giving him to the LORD" (1 Samuel 1:27-28). Samuel remained there serving before the LORD. Hannah still brought him a small robe each year. Her story combines prayer, gratitude, sacrifice, and trust.

3. WHY IS HANNAH'S SONG IMPORTANT?

First Samuel 2 celebrates God's holiness, justice, and power and introduces a major biblical pattern: God humbles the strong and raises the weak. Near the end Hannah speaks of God's king and His "anointed" even before Israel had a human king. Her prayer is not a detailed prophecy of Jesus, but it introduces themes of God's anointed king that grow through Saul, David, and ultimately Christ.

4. WHAT KIND OF RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT DID SAMUEL GROW UP IN?

Samuel served under Eli, but Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas abused their priestly position, treated offerings with contempt, and slept with women serving at the Tabernacle entrance. Eli rebuked them verbally, but God held him accountable for failing to restrain the corruption. In contrast, "Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD" (1 Samuel 2:21).

Pastoral safeguard

Spiritual position never places someone above accountability. Religious leaders who exploit people, misuse authority, or engage in sexual misconduct should not be protected simply because they hold respected positions.

5. HOW DID GOD CALL SAMUEL?

One night Samuel heard someone calling his name and assumed Eli was calling. After three times, Eli realized the LORD was calling Samuel and told him to answer, "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). God called again, Samuel listened, and this became a defining pattern in his life.

Memory Anchor

Before Samuel became known for speaking God's Word, he had to learn to listen.

6. WHAT WAS THE FIRST MESSAGE GOD GAVE SAMUEL?

It was difficult. God announced judgment on Eli's household because of the corruption associated with Eli's sons and Eli's inadequate response. Samuel was afraid to tell Eli, but he faithfully delivered the message. First Samuel 3 closes by saying all Israel recognized Samuel as a prophet of the LORD.

7. DOES SAMUEL'S CALL TEACH CHRISTIANS TO EXPECT AN AUDIBLE VOICE FROM GOD?

Samuel genuinely heard God call him, but this was an extraordinary prophetic call. It should not be turned into a promise that every Christian will hear an audible voice. Scripture is the authoritative written Word by which teaching, impressions, experiences, and claims of divine guidance must be tested. The central application is not "learn to hear a voice," but become ready to hear, believe, and obey what God has revealed.

8. WHAT HAPPENED TO ELI AND HIS SONS?

Israel went to war with the Philistines. Hophni and Phinehas brought the Ark of the Covenant into battle as though its presence guaranteed victory. Israel was defeated, the two priests died, and the Ark was captured. When Eli heard the news - especially that the Ark was taken - he fell backward and died. God could not be manipulated through possession of a sacred object.

Memory Anchor

God cannot be reduced to a formula, ritual, object, or technique.

9. WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ARK AFTER THE PHILISTINES CAPTURED IT?

Read 1 Samuel 5-6. The Philistines placed the Ark near the image of Dagon, but the narrative shows the LORD demonstrating His holiness and superiority. Dagon fell, severe affliction came upon Philistine communities associated with the Ark, and eventually the Philistines returned it. The Ark later came to Kiriath-jearim. Israel could not manipulate God with the Ark, and the Philistines could not possess or control Him by capturing it.

10. WHAT ROLE DID SAMUEL HAVE IN ISRAEL?

Samuel served as prophet, judge, intercessor, and spiritual leader. He also became the person God used to anoint Israel's first kings. Samuel lived at a turning point: the era of the judges was ending and the monarchy was beginning.

11. WHAT HAPPENED AT MIZPAH?

In 1 Samuel 7 Samuel called Israel to put away the Baals and Ashtoreths and return to the LORD. When the Philistines moved against Israel, the people asked Samuel to keep praying. Samuel cried out to God, God answered, and Israel prevailed. Samuel then raised a stone called Ebenezer, saying, "Up to this point the LORD has helped us!" (1 Samuel 7:12).

Memory Anchor

Remembering God's past faithfulness can strengthen trust for present obedience.

12. DID SAMUEL'S OWN SONS FOLLOW GOD?

Not faithfully. When Samuel became old, he appointed Joel and Abijah as judges, but they were greedy, accepted bribes, and perverted justice (1 Samuel 8:3). Samuel was a faithful prophet; his adult sons still made sinful choices. Scripture does not provide enough information to reconstruct Samuel's parenting or assign complete responsibility for their behavior.

13. DID SAMUEL MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AS ELI?

There is a sobering similarity: Eli's sons were corrupt priests, and Samuel's sons became corrupt judges. But Scripture does not describe the situations as identical. God explicitly rebuked Eli for honoring his sons above God and failing to restrain serious priestly abuses. The text does not give the same explicit condemnation of Samuel. Leaders must take corruption seriously, but readers should not claim more than Scripture says.

14. WHY DID ISRAEL ASK FOR A KING?

Israel's elders told Samuel, "You are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have" (1 Samuel 8:5). Their concern about succession was legitimate, but their request went deeper: they wanted to be like surrounding nations. God told Samuel that the people were rejecting Him as their King.

15. WAS HAVING A KING ITSELF SINFUL?

No. Deuteronomy 17 had already anticipated a future king, and Genesis 49 anticipated royal authority connected with Judah. The problem in 1 Samuel 8 was not monarchy itself but the motives behind Israel's demand - distrust of God's kingship and imitation of the nations. God allowed the monarchy and would use it in His redemptive plan, but Israel's motives still mattered.

16. WHO WAS ISRAEL'S FIRST KING?

Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin. He was physically impressive, but Samuel made clear that both king and people remained under God's authority. A king did not replace the LORD. Israel's king was supposed to obey Him.

17. WHAT DID SAMUEL SAY WHEN HE STEPPED BACK FROM LEADERSHIP?

First Samuel 12 records Samuel's farewell-style address. He invited the people to testify if he had cheated, oppressed, or taken bribes. They affirmed that he had not. He reminded Israel of God's faithfulness and confronted the seriousness of demanding a king, yet he did not abandon them: "I will certainly not sin against the LORD by ending my prayers for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness sometimes means continuing to pray for people even when their choices bring grief.

18. WHAT WENT WRONG WITH SAUL?

Saul's reign revealed serious patterns of disobedience. In 1 Samuel 13 he acted rather than waiting as Samuel had instructed. In 1 Samuel 15 he failed to carry out God's command concerning Amalek completely. Saul claimed obedience, but the evidence contradicted him, and he blamed the people. Samuel responded: "**Obedience is better than sacrifice.**" Religious activity cannot substitute for obedience to God.

19. DID SAMUEL HATE SAUL?

No. Samuel confronted Saul strongly, but he also grieved over him. First Samuel 15:35 says Samuel mourned for Saul. Faithfulness sometimes requires confronting sin while still grieving over the person involved. Truth and compassion do not have to be enemies.

20. WHY DID SAMUEL ANOINT DAVID?

After Saul's rejection, God sent Samuel to Jesse's household in Bethlehem. Samuel initially assumed Eliab must be God's chosen king, but God corrected him: "People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). David, the youngest and a shepherd, was brought in and anointed. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David, while the next verse says the Spirit departed from Saul. The royal trajectory was moving from Saul toward David.

21. HOW DID SAMUEL'S LIFE END?

First Samuel 25:1 says Samuel died and all Israel gathered for his funeral. He had been born in answer to prayer, served at Shiloh, witnessed Eli's house collapse, led Israel as judge and prophet, prayed for the people, anointed Saul, confronted Saul, and anointed David. He did not live to see David's reign fully established, but he faithfully served the transition God gave him.

PART TWO

WANT TO GO DEEPER?

INTERMEDIATE

Interpretive posture

Where Scripture speaks clearly, believe it. Where Christians draw inferences, identify them as inferences. Where Scripture leaves mystery, trust God's character and obey what He has made clear.

22. WHAT DOES "SPEAK, LORD, YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING" MEAN FOR CHRISTIANS TODAY?

Samuel's words express availability and submission. For Christians today, the safest primary application is approaching God's revealed Word with a willing heart: teach, correct, redirect, and give grace to obey. Listening biblically is not merely receiving information; it includes faithful response.

23. WHAT CAN ELI'S FAILURE TEACH ABOUT SPIRITUAL ABUSE AND ACCOUNTABILITY?

Hophni and Phinehas exploited religious positions. Eli rebuked them verbally, but God's message showed his response was inadequate. Protecting a ministry, institution, family reputation, or leader must never become more important than truth and righteousness. Spiritual authority is stewardship, not immunity.

Pastoral safeguard

When credible allegations of abuse, exploitation, criminal conduct, or serious misconduct arise, victims should not be pressured into silence to protect a church, ministry, family, or leader. Appropriate pastoral care, accountability, safeguarding, and lawful reporting obligations should be taken seriously.

24. DOES SAMUEL'S EXPERIENCE PROVIDE A METHOD FOR HEARING GOD'S VOICE?

Not in the sense often claimed. Samuel's prophetic call was extraordinary. Christians should be careful about turning it into a technique in which quietness guarantees an audible voice. Christians differ on guidance and spiritual impressions today, but Scripture remains uniquely authoritative and every claimed impression, dream, prophecy, or experience must be tested by it.

25. WHY IS SAMUEL REMEMBERED AS AN INTERCESSOR?

Prayer was a defining part of Samuel's ministry. At Mizpah he cried out for Israel; in 1 Samuel 12 he said he would consider it sin to stop praying for the people. Psalm 99:6 remembers Samuel among those who called upon the LORD, and Jeremiah 15:1 places Samuel alongside Moses as a notable intercessor. Samuel spoke God's truth to people and repeatedly carried people before God in prayer.

Memory Anchor

Faithful leadership speaks God's truth to people and carries people faithfully before God in prayer.

26. WHAT DO 1 SAMUEL 4-6 TEACH ABOUT GOD'S HOLINESS?

The Ark narratives expose two opposite mistakes. Israel treated the Ark as though possessing it could force God to give victory. The Philistines treated its capture as though Israel's God had been defeated. Both ideas were wrong. Israel lost despite carrying the Ark; then God demonstrated His authority in Philistine territory without an Israelite army rescuing Him. Sacred symbols can point toward God but must never become substitutes for trusting and obeying Him.

27. WERE SAMUEL'S SONS HIS FAULT?

Scripture does not answer fully. Samuel appointed his sons as judges and their corruption affected his leadership, but the text does not explicitly accuse him of the same failures for which Eli was condemned. Two extremes should be avoided: assuming a faithful prophet could not have made parenting mistakes, and assuming sinful adult children prove a parent was unfaithful. Parents have real responsibilities; adult children also have real moral agency.

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness means taking responsibility for what God has entrusted - not claiming control over another person's heart.

28. WAS ISRAEL WRONG TO WANT POLITICAL STABILITY?

Not necessarily. Samuel was aging and his sons were corrupt, so succession was a legitimate concern. But legitimate concerns can be pursued with sinful motives. Israel did not merely ask how justice would continue; they demanded a king "like all the other nations." A reasonable desire can become distorted by fear, envy, distrust, pride, or cultural imitation.

29. IF GOD PLANNED FOR ISRAEL TO HAVE A KING, HOW COULD THEIR REQUEST BE WRONG?

God's sovereign plan and human motives can operate at the same time. Scripture had anticipated kingship, and God would later establish David's dynasty, yet Israel could still desire a king for sinful reasons. God's ability to incorporate human decisions into His purposes does not make those decisions righteous.

30. WHY IS "OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE" SO IMPORTANT?

Saul tried to justify incomplete obedience by pointing to sacrifice. Samuel rejected that reasoning. Worship and obedience belong together. Church attendance cannot compensate for dishonesty. Giving cannot purchase permission to mistreat people. Public ministry cannot excuse private sin. Religious activity must never become camouflage for rebellion.

31. WHY DID GOD REJECT SAUL BUT CONTINUE USING OTHER IMPERFECT PEOPLE?

The Bible does not teach that God removes everyone after a single sin. The issue with Saul involves a larger pattern of disobedience, self-justification, and failure to respond rightly to God's commands. Leadership carries serious responsibility. Forgiveness of sin and qualification for a particular leadership role are not identical questions; forgiveness can be real while consequences remain.

32. WHY IS 1 SAMUEL 15 AND THE JUDGMENT ON AMALEK SO DIFFICULT?

God commanded Saul to carry out severe judgment against Amalek, including destruction of people and animals. The background reaches back to Exodus 17 and Deuteronomy 25, where Amalek attacked Israel, including vulnerable people at the rear. First Samuel presents the later event as divine judgment rather than ordinary expansion. The emotional difficulty remains.

Important safeguard

No modern nation, church, pastor, political leader, or individual has biblical authority to identify contemporary ethnic, religious, national, or political enemies as "Amalekites." This passage must never be weaponized to justify religious violence, genocide, terrorism, or personal vengeance.

33. DID SAMUEL PERSONALLY KILL AGAG?

Yes. First Samuel 15:33 records Samuel executing Agag within the context of the divine judgment Saul had failed to complete. This should not be turned into a model for Christian leadership. Samuel's role occurred within Israel's unique covenant and judicial setting. Christian ministers are not Samuel, and Jesus' kingdom does not advance through executions or religious violence.

34. DID SAMUEL EVER MAKE MISTAKES?

Samuel was faithful, but Scripture does not present him as omniscient. When he saw Eliab he assumed, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!" God corrected him. A genuine prophet could still make an ordinary human assumption when God had not spoken. Never give human judgment the authority that belongs to God's Word.

35. WHAT HAPPENED WITH THE MEDIUM AT ENDOR?

First Samuel 28 records one of the Bible's strangest episodes. Saul was terrified, Samuel was dead, and Saul sought a medium at Endor. He asked her to bring up Samuel. The woman then saw Samuel - or an appearance the narrative identifies as Samuel - and the message announced judgment rather than escape. The prophecy that Saul and his sons would die was fulfilled.

36. WAS IT REALLY SAMUEL AT ENDOR?

Christians have proposed several interpretations. Some believe God sovereignly allowed the actual Samuel to appear; others propose deception or demonic activity. The most straightforward narrative reading is that the figure is Samuel because the text repeatedly calls him Samuel and his message continues Samuel's earlier judgment. The passage does not explain the mechanics and certainly does not portray the medium as controlling Samuel or overriding God.

37. DOES THE MEDIUM AT ENDOR MEAN PEOPLE CAN CONTACT DEAD LOVED ONES?

No. Scripture explicitly prohibits occult attempts to contact the dead (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). First Chronicles 10:13 identifies Saul's consultation of a medium as part of his unfaithfulness. The Endor episode is descriptive, not prescriptive.

Pastoral safeguard

Grief can create a powerful desire to communicate with someone who has died. The Bible does not direct grieving people toward mediums, seances, psychics, spirit guides, divination, or attempts to summon the dead. Christians are directed toward God for comfort, truth, and hope.

38. HOW DID SAMUEL HELP PREPARE THE WAY FOR DAVID?

Samuel's ministry stands at the hinge between two eras. He closes the period of the judges, anoints Israel's first king, announces Saul's rejection, and then anoints David. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David while the narrative immediately notes that the Spirit departed from Saul. God later promised David that his royal line would have enduring significance. The New Testament identifies Jesus as the Son of David and promised Messiah.

39. IS SAMUEL A TYPE OF CHRIST?

The New Testament does not explicitly identify Samuel as a type of Christ, so it is better not to make that claim. Similarities can be noticed: Samuel served as prophet, intercessor, and kingmaker; Jesus is God's ultimate revelation, perfectly intercedes, and is the eternal King. The strongest Christ connection is Samuel's place in redemptive history: Samuel anointed David, God established the Davidic covenant, and Jesus came as the promised Son of David.

40. HOW DOES SAMUEL'S STORY POINT TO JESUS?

Samuel's story reveals the limits of even faithful human leadership. Eli failed. Eli's sons were corrupt. Samuel was faithful but grew old. Samuel's sons were corrupt. Saul failed. David would be better, but even David would sin. Israel needed more than another judge, prophet, priest, or ordinary king. Jesus hears and obeys the Father perfectly, speaks truth perfectly, never abuses authority, judges rightly, is the promised Son of David, and lives forever.

Memory Anchor

Samuel helped prepare the way for David. David's line prepared the way for the King Israel truly needed - Jesus.

SAMUEL'S JOURNEY

Samuel's Life	What God Was Teaching
Hannah prayed for a son	God saw her suffering and heard her prayer.
Hannah dedicated Samuel	Answered prayer produced gratitude and surrender.
Samuel grew beside corrupt priests	Faithfulness is possible in an unhealthy spiritual environment.
God called Samuel	Samuel learned to listen before becoming known for speaking.
Samuel delivered judgment to Eli	Faithful truth-telling is not always comfortable.
The Ark was captured and returned	God could not be manipulated or controlled.
Israel repented at Mizpah	Samuel called God's people away from idols.
Samuel interceded for Israel	Prayer was a defining part of his leadership.
Samuel's sons became corrupt	Faithful leadership cannot control another person's heart.
Israel demanded a king	A legitimate concern can be distorted by sinful motives.
Samuel anointed Saul	Israel's king remained accountable to God.
Samuel confronted Saul	Religious activity cannot substitute for obedience.
Samuel mourned Saul	Truth and grief can exist together.
Samuel anointed David	God looked beyond outward appearance.
The Spirit came upon David	God was advancing His covenant purposes.
Samuel died before David reigned	Faithfulness does not require seeing the completed outcome.

Samuel's Life	What God Was Teaching
Jesus came through David's line	God ultimately provided the righteous and eternal King.

WHAT SAMUEL'S STORY DOES - AND DOES NOT - TEACH

Samuel's story teaches:

- God sees suffering that others may misunderstand.
- Prayer matters.
- Faithfulness is possible even in corrupt surroundings.
- Spiritual leaders remain accountable to God.
- Listening to God includes obeying what He has revealed.
- God cannot be manipulated through religious objects or rituals.
- Intercession is an important form of leadership.
- Parents and leaders cannot control another person's heart.
- Legitimate concerns can be pursued with sinful motives.
- Religious activity cannot replace obedience.
- Truth and compassion can exist together.
- God sees beyond outward appearance.
- Faithfulness may involve serving through major change.
- Israel ultimately needed a righteous King.
- Jesus is the promised Son of David and eternal King.

Samuel's story does NOT teach:

- Every unanswered prayer reflects weak faith.
- Christians should expect to hear God's audible voice.
- Personal impressions carry the same authority as Scripture.
- Religious leaders should be protected from accountability.
- Parents are automatically responsible for every sinful choice made by adult children.
- Sacred objects can force God's blessing.
- Human government is inherently sinful.
- God's sovereign plan makes sinful motives righteous.
- Religious activity can replace obedience.
- Old Testament judgment commands authorize modern religious violence.
- The medium at Endor legitimizes attempts to contact the dead.
- Samuel was flawless.
- Samuel is explicitly identified as a type of Christ.

REVIEW

1. Who was Samuel's mother?

Hannah.

2. Where did Samuel serve as a boy?

At Shiloh under Eli.

3. Who were Eli's corrupt sons?

Hophni and Phinehas.

4. What did Samuel say when God called him?

"Speak, LORD, your servant is listening."

5. What was Samuel's first difficult prophetic assignment?

Telling Eli about God's coming judgment.

6. What did Israel wrongly assume about the Ark?

That possessing it guaranteed God's favor and victory.

7. What happened after the Philistines captured the Ark?

God demonstrated His holiness and power, and the Ark was eventually returned.

8. What did Samuel name the memorial stone?

Ebenezer.

9. What ministry did Samuel repeatedly carry out for Israel?

Intercession and prayer.

10. What was wrong with Samuel's sons?

They accepted bribes and perverted justice.

11. Why did Israel demand a king?

Samuel was old, his sons were corrupt, and Israel wanted to be like other nations.

12. Who was Israel's first king?

Saul.

13. What famous principle did Samuel tell Saul?

"Obedience is better than sacrifice."

14. Did Samuel celebrate Saul's rejection?

No. He mourned for Saul.

15. Who did Samuel anoint after Saul?

David.

16. What happened after David was anointed?

The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David while the narrative says the Spirit departed from Saul.

17. What did Saul do at Endor?

He consulted a medium.

18. Does that passage approve contacting the dead?

No.

19. How does Samuel's ministry move the story toward Jesus?

Samuel anointed David, whose royal line ultimately leads to Jesus, the promised Son of David and eternal King.

THINK ABOUT IT

1. Hannah was misunderstood while praying. How can assumptions about another person's suffering cause unnecessary harm?

2. Samuel grew up around corrupt spiritual leaders without following their example. What helps someone remain faithful in an unhealthy environment?

3. Why is "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening" incomplete if someone is willing to hear Scripture but unwilling to obey it?

4. What can Eli's story teach churches about protecting reputation instead of confronting serious wrongdoing?

5. Israel treated the Ark as though possessing a sacred object guaranteed God's favor. What religious routines or symbols can become substitutes for trusting God?

6. Samuel repeatedly interceded for Israel. What does faithful prayer for difficult or disappointing people look like?

7. Samuel's sons made sinful choices despite his faithful ministry. How can someone distinguish responsibility from trying to control another person's heart?

8. How can fear turn a legitimate concern into an unfaithful response?

9. Where can the desire to be like everyone else quietly shape Christian decisions?

10. Where is it easiest to substitute religious activity for actual obedience?

11. Samuel confronted Saul but also mourned him. What does it look like to hold truth, accountability, grief, and compassion together?

12. What outward qualities can cause people to assume someone must have God's approval?

13. Samuel did not live to see David's reign fully established. Where might faithfulness require doing today's assignment without seeing the eventual result?
14. What unchosen changes can make faithful service more difficult?
15. Why does the repeated failure of priests, judges, prophets, and kings increase the need for Jesus?

FINAL MEMORY ANCHORS

Memory Anchor

God sees suffering that other people may misunderstand.

Memory Anchor

Before Samuel became known for speaking God's Word, he had to learn to listen.

Memory Anchor

Faithful truth-telling is not always comfortable.

Memory Anchor

God cannot be reduced to a formula, ritual, object, or technique.

Memory Anchor

Faithful leadership speaks God's truth to people and carries people before God in prayer.

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness means taking responsibility without claiming control over another person's heart.

Memory Anchor

Religious activity cannot substitute for obedience.

Memory Anchor

Truth and compassion do not have to be enemies.

Memory Anchor

God sees beyond outward appearance.

Memory Anchor

Faithfulness does not require seeing the completion of everything God begins.

Memory Anchor

Samuel helped prepare the way for David. David's line prepared the way for Jesus.

CONTINUE STUDYING

- 1 Samuel 1 - Hannah's prayer and Samuel's birth
- 1 Samuel 2 - Hannah's song, Eli's sons, and Samuel's growth
- 1 Samuel 3 - God calls Samuel
- 1 Samuel 4-6 - The Ark, the Philistines, and God's holiness
- 1 Samuel 7 - Repentance at Mizpah, intercession, and Ebenezer
- 1 Samuel 8 - Samuel's sons and Israel's demand for a king
- 1 Samuel 9-10 - Samuel and Saul
- 1 Samuel 12 - Samuel's address and commitment to pray
- 1 Samuel 15 - Saul, Amalek, Agag, and obedience
- 1 Samuel 16 - Samuel anoints David
- 1 Samuel 28:3-25 - Saul and the medium at Endor
- Deuteronomy 17:14-20 - Israel's king
- Deuteronomy 18:9-22 - Occult practices and true prophets
- 2 Samuel 7:8-17 - God's covenant with David
- Psalms 99:6; Jeremiah 15:1 - Samuel remembered as an intercessor
- Luke 1:32-33; Acts 13:20-23 - David's line and Jesus

CLOSING THOUGHT

Samuel's story begins before Samuel can speak. It begins with Hannah - a woman carrying grief that others do not fully understand. She prays. Eli misreads her pain. God does not. A son is born, and Hannah remembers that the child she desperately wanted ultimately belongs to God.

Samuel grows up at Shiloh, but Shiloh is not spiritually healthy. Hophni and Phinehas hold priestly titles while dishonoring the God they supposedly serve. Samuel is surrounded by religious failure, yet Scripture keeps repeating a different story: Samuel serves before the LORD. Samuel grows. Samuel learns.

Then one night a voice calls, "Samuel!" Eventually he responds, "Speak, LORD, your servant is listening." That sentence becomes a picture of his life. But listening will not always be comfortable. His first message concerns judgment on Eli's household. Samuel is afraid to say it. He says it anyway.

Israel then learns that the Ark cannot be used as a spiritual weapon. The Ark is captured, but the Philistines discover that capturing the Ark does not mean capturing Israel's God. Dagon falls. Judgment comes. The Ark returns. God is holy and sovereign; He cannot be reduced to an object, ritual, or formula.

Samuel grows into leadership. He calls Israel away from idols. He prays for the people. Again and again prayer becomes part of his service. Later Scripture remembers Samuel among those who called upon God. He does not merely speak God's Word to Israel; he repeatedly carries Israel before God.

Then Samuel grows old, and the story becomes painfully personal. His own sons do not walk in his ways. Israel's elders see a real leadership problem, but legitimate concern becomes mixed with the desire to be like the surrounding nations. They demand a king. God tells Samuel that the people are rejecting Him as King.

Samuel anoints Saul. Saul looks impressive, but appearance is not character. Over time Saul refuses full obedience. Samuel confronts him: "Obedience is better than sacrifice." Then Samuel mourns. He can tell the truth without enjoying another person's collapse.

Next God sends Samuel to Bethlehem. Samuel sees Eliab and assumes he must be the chosen king. God corrects him: "People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." David, the youngest and overlooked shepherd, is brought in. Samuel pours the oil. The Spirit of the LORD comes powerfully upon David, and the narrative tells us the Spirit departs from Saul. A transition is underway.

Samuel dies before David becomes king. That might look unfinished. But faithfulness does not require seeing the end of everything God begins. Samuel's assignment was to serve faithfully within the part God gave him - to listen, obey, speak, pray, and trust the rest of the story to God.

Yet Israel still had a deeper problem. Eli failed. Eli's sons failed. Samuel's sons failed. Saul failed. David would be better, but David would fail too. Israel did not merely need another human leader. It needed the righteous King.

The story Samuel helped advance through David eventually leads to Jesus. Jesus does not obey imperfectly. He obeys the Father completely. Jesus does not exploit authority. He uses authority to serve. Jesus does not need a successor because death cannot end His reign. He is the Son of David whose kingdom will never end.

Samuel lived through a changing world. Priestly leadership collapsed. The era of the judges ended. The monarchy began. One king was rejected. Another was anointed. Samuel remained faithful through the transition. Circumstances changed. God did not.

Final Memory Anchor

Listen carefully to God's Word. Obey what He makes clear. Speak truth with courage and compassion. Pray faithfully. Serve through change. And trust God with the parts of the story you may never live long enough to see completed.

Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus