



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

I SAMUEL

Week 1

Before You Begin Your Journey...

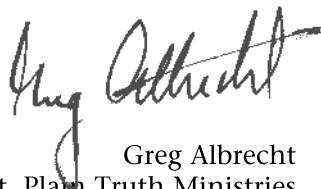
We are about to meet three great figures of strikingly different temperaments: Samuel, Saul and David—three individuals who were used by God, in spite of their weaknesses, to form the government of Israel.

It is Samuel who anoints Saul and David as kings, instituting a monarchy that will last for more than 400 years, and out of which the King of kings will emerge.

Saul is used by God to begin the process of liberating Israel from her oppressors. But in his 40-year reign, Saul does not prove faithful to his task. The aging prophet Samuel is called upon to find a replacement for Saul.

The replacement comes not in the form of a great leader of men, but a young shepherd boy who has learned to live by faith in the God of Israel. He is brave, he performs heroic exploits and he displays honor and character, contrasted with the contentious and capricious nature of Saul.

But David is also a murderer, an adulterer, a liar and a manipulator whose behavior is not unlike other historical leaders who became a law unto themselves. Yet David is accepted by God, not because of David's goodness, but because of God's grace—revealed to the world when the "Son of David" came to redeem not only Israel but the whole world. Through his work on the cross, God made grace available to us all (2Co 5:17-21).



Greg Albrecht
President, Plan Truth Ministries

How to Use the CWR Bible Survey...

1—Read and study at your own pace. This is a devotional. It is designed to help you consider and ponder the great truths of God's written revelation. It is designed to help you worship and come to know God. If you get behind, you can always catch up.

2—We suggest you set aside a special time for the *CWR Bible Survey* every day. We recommend allowing 30-45 minutes, but even if you can only spare 15 minutes, try to make it part of your regular schedule.

3—You will need a good Bible. This might be an excellent time for you to consider purchasing a new Bible. Plain Truth Ministries recommends the *New King James Study Bible* published by Thomas Nelson and the *New International Version Study Bible* published by Zondervan.

4—Always read the assigned passage of the daily lesson in your Bible first. Each daily lesson builds upon the portion of the Bible being covered that day. You may want to begin by praying about what God has in store for you as you read, and then look at the questions and background information.

5—Consider the format of each daily lesson. Almost every daily lesson will include:

• **Opening Up to the Word** —a section designed to help you open your mind to the teaching God has inspired.

• **Digging Into the Word**—this section will encourage you to get your nose into the Bible and think deeply about what it says.

• **Living Out the Word**—here you will be challenged to consider the practical implications for your life. How does this passage help you live?

• **Window On the Word**—will offer key insights to help you more clearly understand the daily Bible passage.

6—After you finish the daily lesson, take some quiet time. You may simply think, look out the window, take a walk, or even get down on your knees. But use this time to let this daily lesson sink in. Ask God to show you what he wants you to understand from your reading and study.

7—Consider the *CWR Bible Survey* for small groups in which you may be involved. Tell your friends about it. If you are involved in a small group that meets for prayer and Bible study, introduce your group to it. Many are seeking an easy-to-read guide to help them understand the Bible and to help them know God. the *CWR Bible Survey* can do that!

8—Remember that while we may refer to the Bible as the word of God—the Eternal Word of God is noneother than Jesus, who inspired the Scriptures to be written by human instruments. Words on paper may tell us about him—but it is not the words that we worship—it is Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word.

•Abbreviations Used in the *CWR Bible Survey*—

Genesis	Ge	Nahum	Na
Exodus	Ex	Habakkuk	Hab
Leviticus	Lev	Zephaniah	Zep
Numbers	Nu	Haggai	Hag
Deuteronomy	Dt	Zechariah	Zec
Joshua	Jos	Malachi	Mal
Judges	Jdg	Matthew	Mt
Ruth	Ru	Mark	Mk
1 Samuel	1Sa	Luke	Lk
2 Samuel	2Sa	John	Jn
1 Kings	1Ki	Acts	Ac
2 Kings	2Ki	Romans	Ro
1 Chronicles	1Ch	1 Corinthians	1Co
2 Chronicles	2Ch	2 Corinthians	2Co
Ezra	Ezr	Galatians	Gal
Nehemiah	Ne	Ephesians	Eph
Esther	Est	Philippians	Php
Job	Job	Colossians	Col
Psalms	Ps	1 Thessalonians	1Th
Proverbs	Pr	2 Thessalonians	2Th
Ecclesiastes	Ecc	1 Timothy	1Ti
Song of Songs	SS	2 Timothy	2Ti
Isaiah	Isa	Titus	Tit
Jeremiah	Jer	Philemon	Phm
Lamentations	La	Hebrews	Heb
Ezekiel	Eze	James	Jas
Daniel	Da	1 Peter	1Pe
Hosea	Hos	2 Peter	2Pe
Joel	Joel	1 John	1Jn
Amos	Am	2 John	2Jn
Obadiah	Ob	3 John	3Jn
Jonah	Jnh	Jude	Jude
Micah	Mic	Revelation	Rev

1 SAMUEL

Israel
Becomes a
Nation

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Introduction to 1 Samuel

Authorship: Hebrew tradition suggests Samuel the prophet as author of 1 Samuel. This is also indicated by 1 Chronicles 29:29. Samuel probably began compiling the story during the reign of Saul, and other writers and editors finished the job.

Date: Most historians place the beginning of the reign of King David at about 1000 B.C. Assuming this to be true, the ministry of Samuel would have begun a generation or so before that.

Setting and purpose: The book of 1 Samuel is a continuation of a narrative history of Israel that begins with Genesis and ends with 2 Kings. The action in 1 Samuel comes just after the chaotic period of the Judges. A major theme is the origin and establishment of the Israelite monarchy under Saul and David. At the beginning of 1 Samuel, Israel is a scattered collection of tribes eking out a precarious existence under the dreaded Philistines. 1 Samuel shows how David, a man of destiny, is sent to this loose collection of tribes. His rise to the throne is the major theme of 1 Samuel. The transition from the age of the judges to the age of the monarchy is complete by the end of the book.

Distinctive features: 1 Samuel is written in the Hebrew literary style called *narrative*. The purpose of narrative is not so much to teach doctrine as to illustrate doctrine.

One of the great themes of 1 Samuel is prayer. Deep, moving prayers abound in the text, from Hannah's petition in 1 Samuel 2:1-10, to David's experiences as the setting for many fervent prayers in the book of Psalms. The second half of the book focuses on the testing and afflictions of David, the young shepherd boy who becomes Israel's shepherd king. This takes on added interest for Christians because Jesus Christ was "the Son of David," and was King David's descendant (Lk 3:31; Mt 1:1).

The two books of Samuel in our English Bibles were designated by the Masoretic text as "The Book of Samuel." The Greek translators of the Septuagint Bible combined 1 and 2 Samuel

with 1 and 2 Kings as a four-sectioned “Book of the Kingdoms.” The Latin Vulgate version arranged them into the division and titles that are familiar to most Christians today.

The events recorded in 1 Samuel lay the groundwork for Israel’s golden age under Solomon. We meet Israel’s first two kings — Saul and David. When Israel rejects the gentle yoke of Samuel, God chooses as their king a tall Benjamite named Saul (8:1-6), whose reign ends in failure (31:4). There are assassinations and coups, military setbacks and defeats. This is the very stuff of life in human society—then and now—and the Bible includes many of the details.

The bluntness and honesty of this book is part of its value. David is portrayed as a man of great ability and charm but he also is shown to possess weaknesses and failures.

The book of 1 Samuel also tells us that even though God is allowing Israel to have a king, the Lord God is still the invisible King of Israel (12:18, 14:23). What made David superior to Saul in his fitness for the throne was his understanding of that fact (17:37).

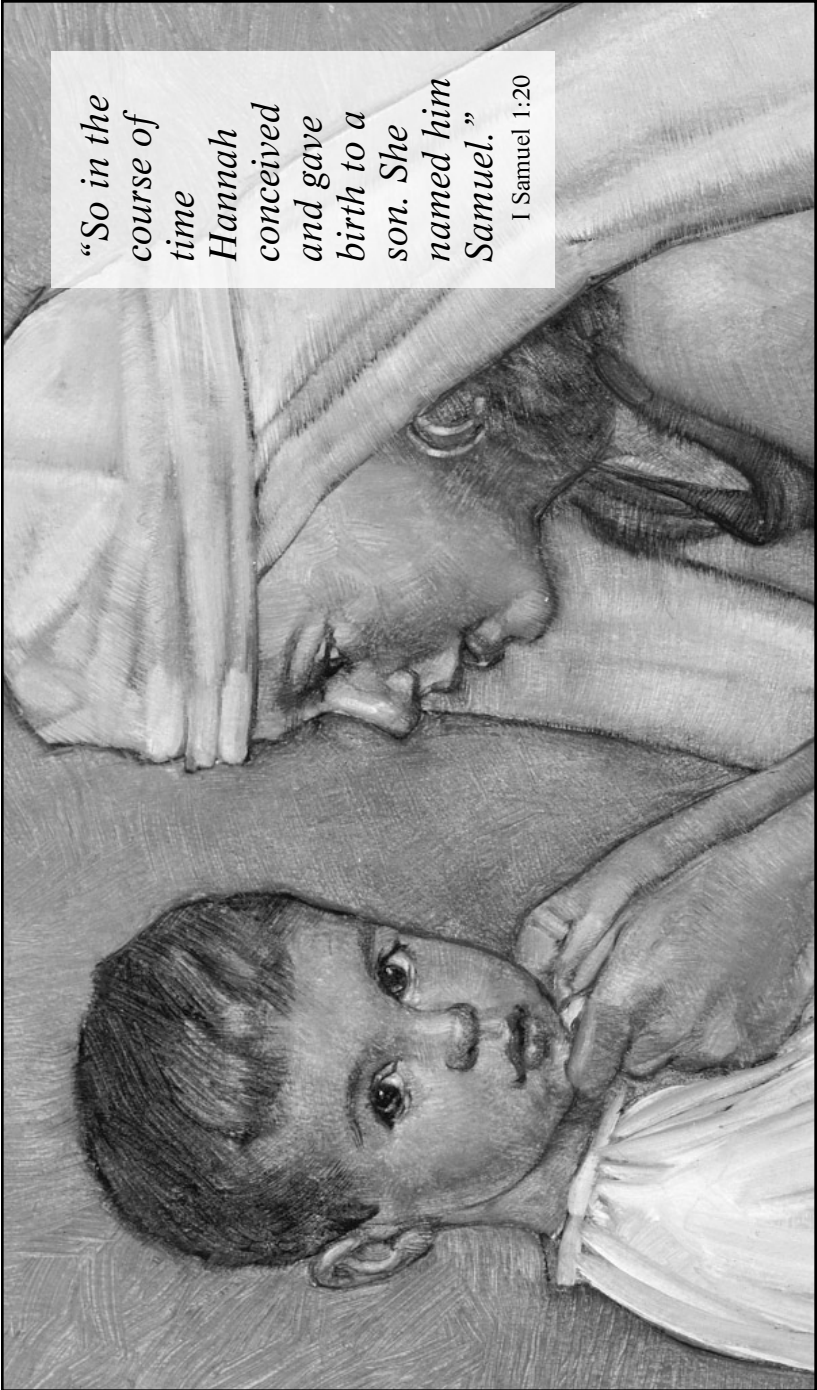
Another striking characteristic of this book is the way that the narrative fits the facts of history and geography. The Philistines and their cities are fixed in history, and sites such as Shiloh, Samaria, En Gedi and Ramah have been located by archaeologists.

Reading outline:

Day	Text	Theme
1-3	1 Samuel 1:1–3:21	A Mother and Her Son
4-5	1 Samuel 4:1–7:17	Finding the Lost Ark
6-9	1 Samuel 8:1–11:15	Long Live the King!
10-14	1 Samuel 12:1–15:35	The Tragedy of King Saul
15-20	1 Samuel 16:1–20:42	A Man Called David
21-25	1 Samuel 21:1–26:25	The Outlaw King
26-28	1 Samuel 27:1–28:25	Strange Interludes
29-30	1 Samuel 29–31	Darkness Before Dawn

*“So in the
course of
time
Hannah
conceived
and gave
birth to a
son. She
named him
Samuel.”*

1 Samuel 1:20



A Bargain with God

DAY 1

1 Samuel 1:1-28

Can you specify any life lessons that your family may have passed on to you? _____

1. How did Elkanah show his love for God and for his family (vs. 1-5)?
2. What special promise did Hannah make in prayer if God would give her a son (v. 11)?
3. Did Eli jump to a conclusion concerning Hannah's actions? Did this reveal a lack of discernment on his part (vs. 12-14)? How?
4. How did Hannah revealed her deep devotion to God (vs. 21-28)? _____

1. The family has been called the most important institution in our society. How does this chapter affirm that principle? Do you have any personal experience with parenting?
2. Hannah confirmed her request with a vow. Jesus indicated this is not necessary under the new covenant (Mt 5:33-37). Why? _____

Shiloh, center of the early action in 1 Samuel, is some 15 miles north of Jerusalem inside the borders of ancient Ephraim. Judges 18:31 reminds us that the Tabernacle of God had been erected there. The city was fortified in the time of the Judges but excavations show the city was destroyed by fire, presumably at the hands of the Philistines. This event may be alluded to in

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

DAY 2

Psalm 78:60 and Jeremiah 7:12-14.

A Prayer

and a Prophecy

1 Samuel 2:1-36

OPENING
up to the Word

Prayer is an integral part of Christian life (Mt 6:5-14). Have you experienced your prayers being answered—with a “yes,” “no,” “maybe” or “wait”?

DIGGING
into the Word

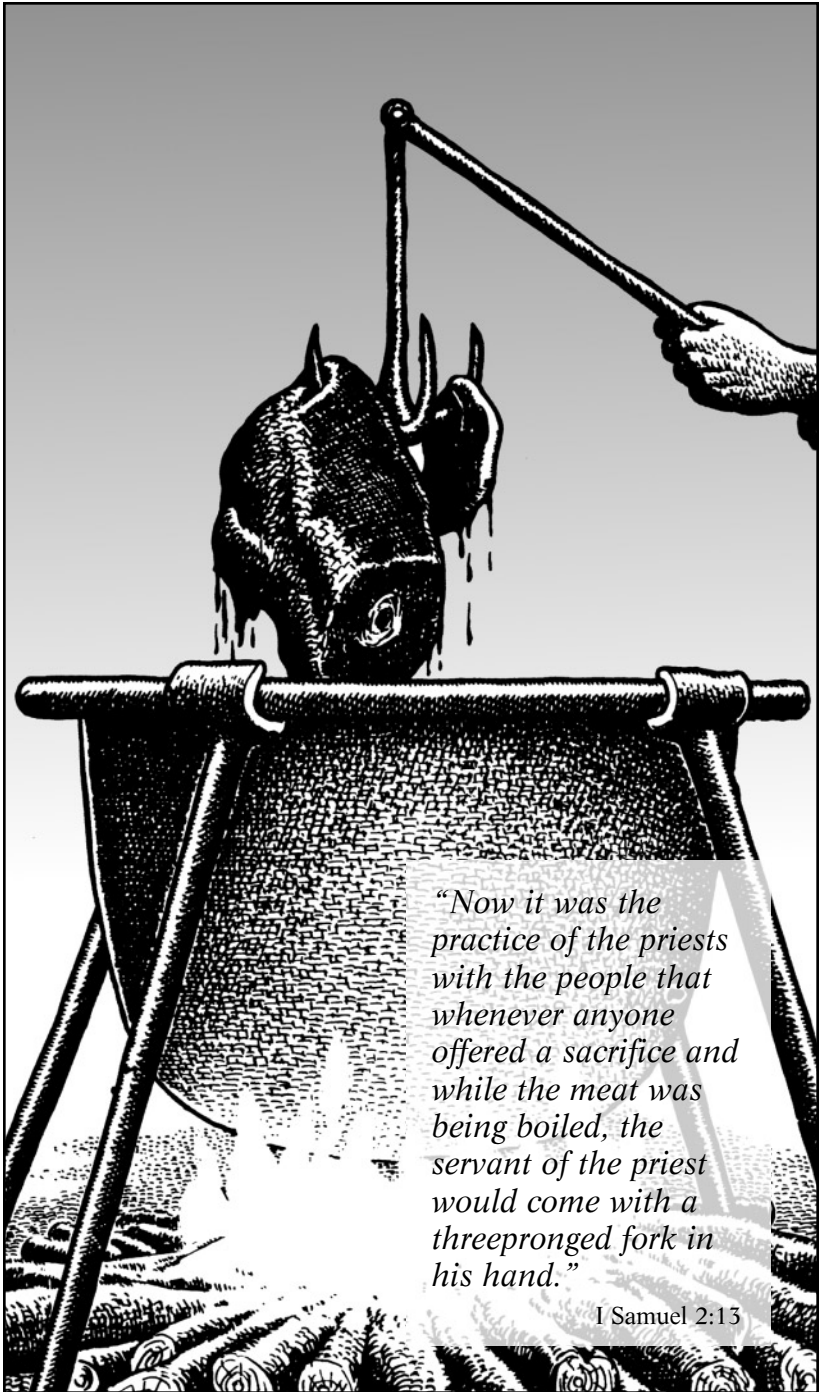
1. How did Hannah’s prayer reflect faith in God (vs. 1-3)? In light of 1 Samuel’s focus on the rise of the Israelite monarchy, in what sense is Hannah’s prayer prophetic (v. 10)?
2. How does Hannah’s prayer compare with the song of praise by Mary (Lk 1:46-55)?
3. God was not pleased with Eli and his sons. What did they do to deserve such stern punishment (vs. 12-17, 22-25)?
4. God wanted Eli’s attention, so he sent a messenger to announce the penalty for Eli’s actions (v. 27). What was the sign that the punishment would be from God (vs. 34)?

LIVING
out the Word

Have you ever received a direct warning from someone in authority? Did you think it was justified? How did you react?

WINDOW
on the Word

Hannah’s prayer, bold and assertive, demonstrates that women in ancient Israel had a relationship with God. Does this agree with your views concerning the biblical perspective on



“Now it was the practice of the priests with the people that whenever anyone offered a sacrifice and while the meat was being boiled, the servant of the priest would come with a threepronged fork in his hand.”

I Samuel 2:13

DAY 3

women? Compare Genesis 1:27-28 with Galatians 3:28.

A Faithful

Priest

1 Samuel 3:1-21

One of the major themes of the Bible is leadership by service. Can you think of times in your nation's history when leaders have betrayed the people they serve? How did that affect your country or community?

1. Verses 1-10 relate one of the many examples in the Bible where a man or woman is prepared for ministry. Do you know of any others?

2. Samuel had bad news for the house of Eli (vs. 11-14)? Did he deliver it (vs. 15-18)?

3. Did this faithfulness to an unpleasant task help confirm Samuel as a true priest and prophet (Isa 30:10)?

In the midst of a faithless society, even when there was spiritual corruption, as evidenced by Eli's wicked sons, Hannah's son Samuel appears as a breath of fresh air. Can you think of other examples of God's provision of capable leadership for a corrupt and depraved society?

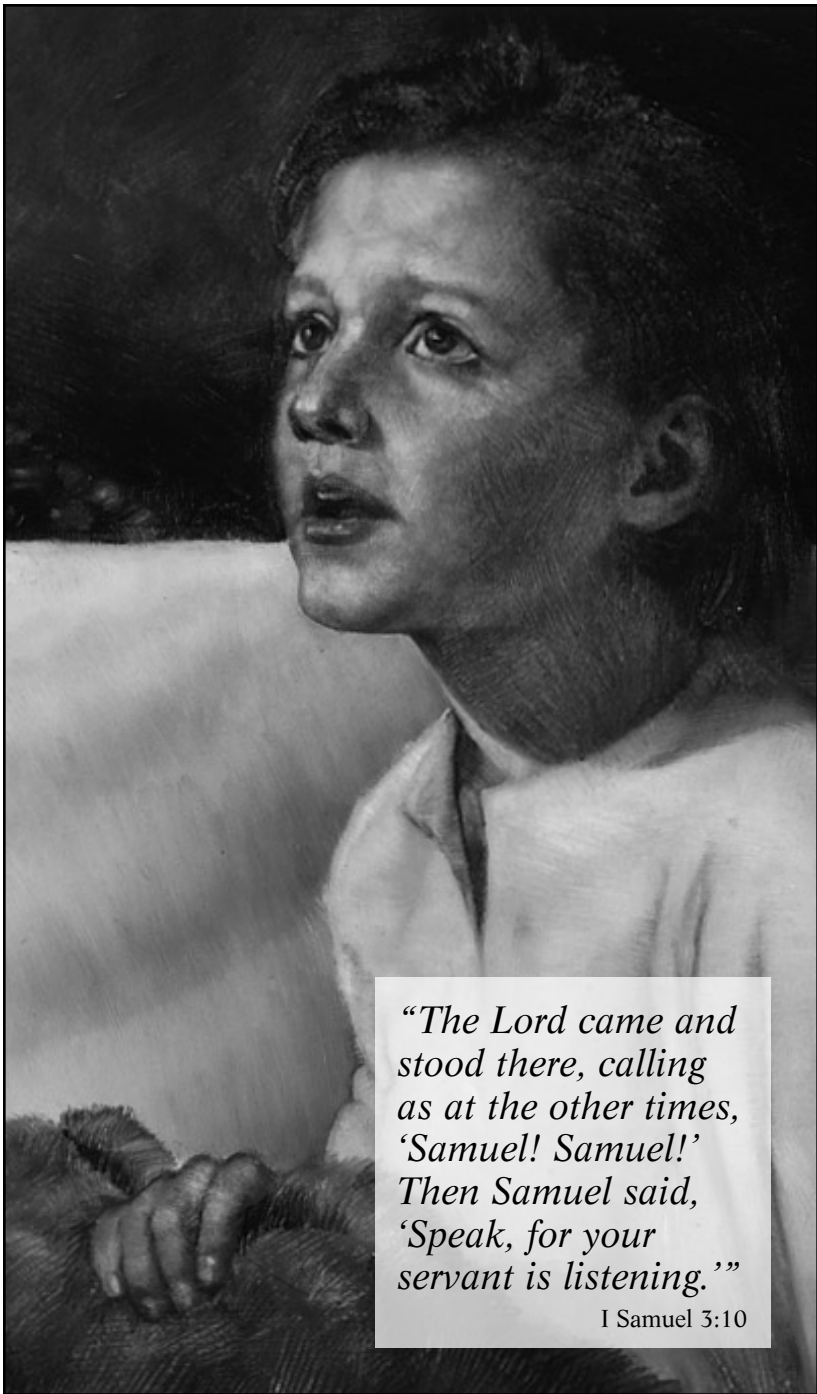
Samuel's priesthood was not his by choice, but determined before he was born. He honored his mother's agreement with God by honorably fulfilling his duty—and God honored him by fulfilling his duty to Samuel. His mother had also dedicated him as a **Nazirite** (Nu 6:1-21), a person who displayed extra devotion to God under the Law of Moses. Samson and John the Baptist were two other notable Nazirites.

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

LIVING
out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word



“The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, ‘Samuel! Samuel!’ Then Samuel said, ‘Speak, for your servant is listening.’”

I Samuel 3:10

Has Anyone Seen the Ark?

1 Samuel 4:1-22

OPENING
up to the Word

The books of Samuel are rife with wars, intrigues and conflicts. What wars or conflicts are raging as you read this? Do you see any higher purpose at work in these seemingly senseless events?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. You will remember from your study of Leviticus that the ark of the covenant was one of the nations' sacred symbols. Yet symbols and sacred relics can be horribly misused. Did Israel fall into this trap (vs. 1-11)? How?

2. There is an old saying, "The mills of God grind slowly," which is much like a more modern saying, "The wheels of justice turn slowly." Given what we read about Eli's family, how does this statement apply (vs. 12-22)? How does it illustrate the proverb enunciated in Galatians 6:7?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What leadership problems in Israel are suggested by the story about Eli and the stolen ark?

2. The Bible's opposition to idolatry begins in Genesis 1:1 when it announces God as the Creator of the natural world. Is idolatry still with us today? What forms can you think of?

3. One definition of an idol is anything that comes between you and God. Is it possible for a church, a Christian leader or even the Bible to become an idol?

WINDOW
on the Word

Shiloh's destruction as a judgment for sin becomes a prophetic warning for later generations (Jer 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9; Ps 78:60). Later chapters show that **Eli's family** moved to Nob, just north of Jerusalem, where they lived in the days of David (1Sa 21:1-9). At that time Ahimelech, one of Eli's great grandsons, presided at the Tabernacle (1Sa 14:2-3). Ahimelech's son, Abiathar, later served as priest to David (1Sa 22:20-23; 30:7-8). In Solomon's early days, Abiathar backed a rebellious faction and was dismissed from the priesthood (1Ki 2:26-27). The prophecy against Eli's house came true.

Dagon Meets His Match

DAY 5

1 Samuel 5:1-12

Superstitions, the occult and magic have been a part of human worship of false gods from the very beginning. What examples of present-day occultic habits and behaviors can you think of?

1. How did the God of Israel humiliate the Philistine god Dagon (vs. 1-5)?
2. What three cities hosted the ark (vs. 1-12)? What finally persuaded the Philistines to return the ark (vs. 11-12)?

1. God is not visible to humans as are the gods created by religion. How does this chapter illustrate this principle?

2. The power of pagan gods was thought to be limited to specific geographic locations. However, here we see that God reveals himself as the one true God of the universe—the God who has no boundaries or limits. This fact was a great source of comfort and encouragement to his people. Can you recall other events in biblical history that demonstrate this principle? Consider it's ultimate fulfillment in Colossian 1:15-20; 2:15.

***Dagon** is an ancient pagan deity appearing earlier in the account of Samson in the book of Judges. Dagon was worshiped in northern Iraq and the eastern Mediterranean region. A great temple of Dagon was found at Ugarit, one of the main centers of ancient civilization near Lebanon. Ashdod had a temple of Dagon in use as late as 150 B.C. Worship of Dagon went back to the third millennium before Jesus. An ancient word for grain is dagan, so it is thought that Dagon was a god of grain, a fertility god.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

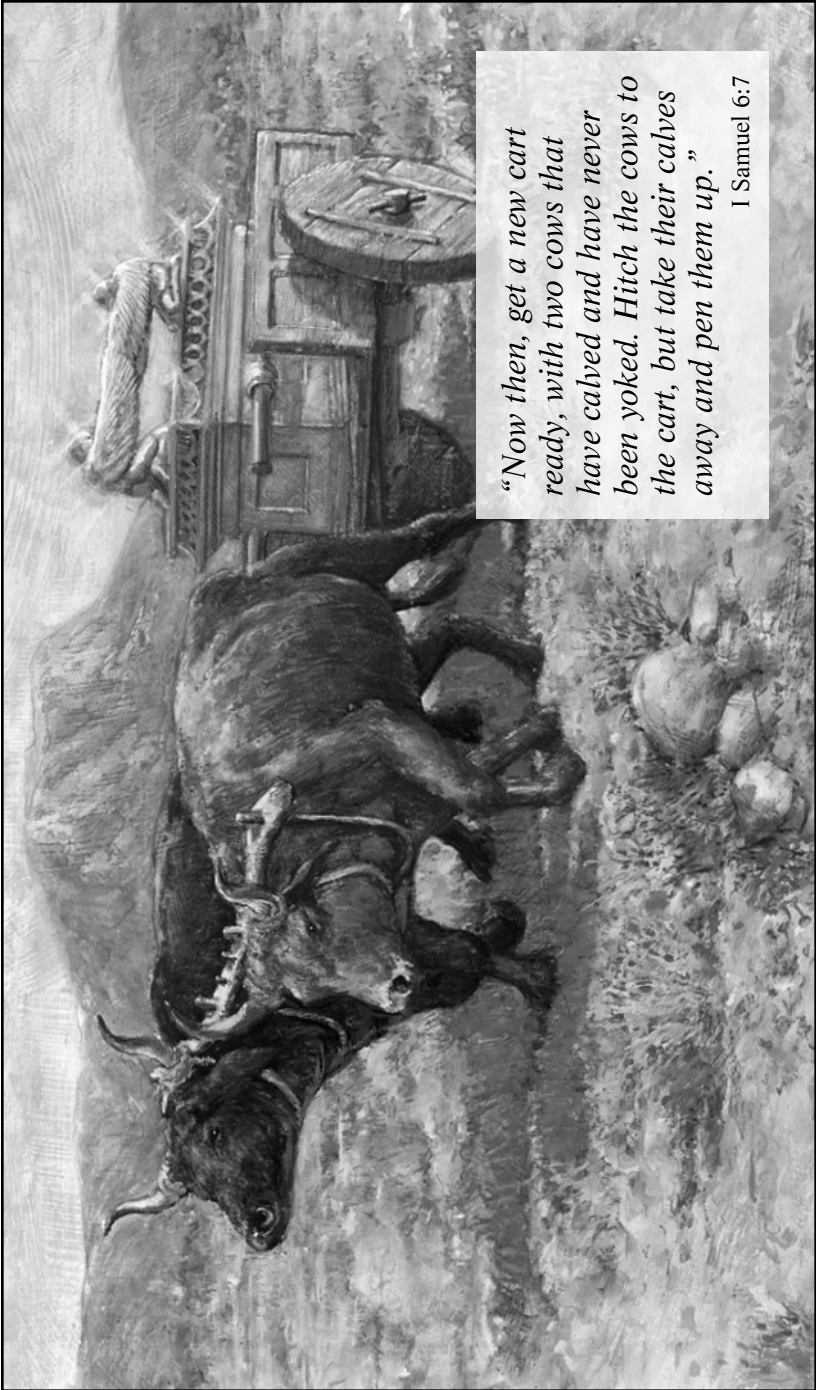
into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word



“Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up.”

1 Samuel 6:7

Paraders of the Lost Ark

DAY 6

1 Samuel 6:1-21

Have you ever been at an event of great national or civic celebration? Do you remember how you felt?

1. What instructions were given to the Philistines to “appease” the God of Israel (vs. 1-12)?
2. The Israelite priests cited the example of the Pharaoh and the Egyptians, who “hardened their hearts” (v. 6, KJV) against God’s instructions. Were the Philistines more cooperative? Why?

1. “God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they had looked into the ark of the Lord” (v. 19). Can you imagine Jesus doing such a thing? What questions might arise from this event, as we consider the new and old covenants?

2. How do you feel that the idea of “appeasing” God (vs. 1-12) runs contrary to the gospel?

3. The cart the Philistines made was to be pulled by two cows still nursing their young (vs. 7-9). For nursing cows to leave their young and head directly for an Israelite city might be intended as a sign that the cows were being led supernaturally and that the plagues had been a judgment from Israel’s God.

*The use of the phrase **guilt offering** in verse 3 suggests the use by the Philistines of “sympathetic magic” in which people made a representation of the curse they wished to avoid or the blessing they hoped to attain. Archaeologists have found the remains of kilns and other light industrial installations in the site of Ekron. A large building with a crucible to heat and shape silver was found near a gold double-coiled hair ring attesting to the kind of minute and skilful craftsmanship that could carve replicas of rats and tumors.*

OPENING
up to the Word

DIGGING
into the Word

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out the Word

WINDOW
on the Word

Repentance and Restoration

1 Samuel 7:1-17

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you been at a meeting or conference where great things were being planned or implemented? What kind of atmosphere was fostered?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Idolatry was always one of the prominent sins of ancient Israel—the craving to worship gods that could be seen, which often included the seductive rites that accompanied pagan festivities. How did Samuel instruct the people to eliminate this threat (vs. 2-4)?

2. What important military office was revived under Samuel (vs. 15)?

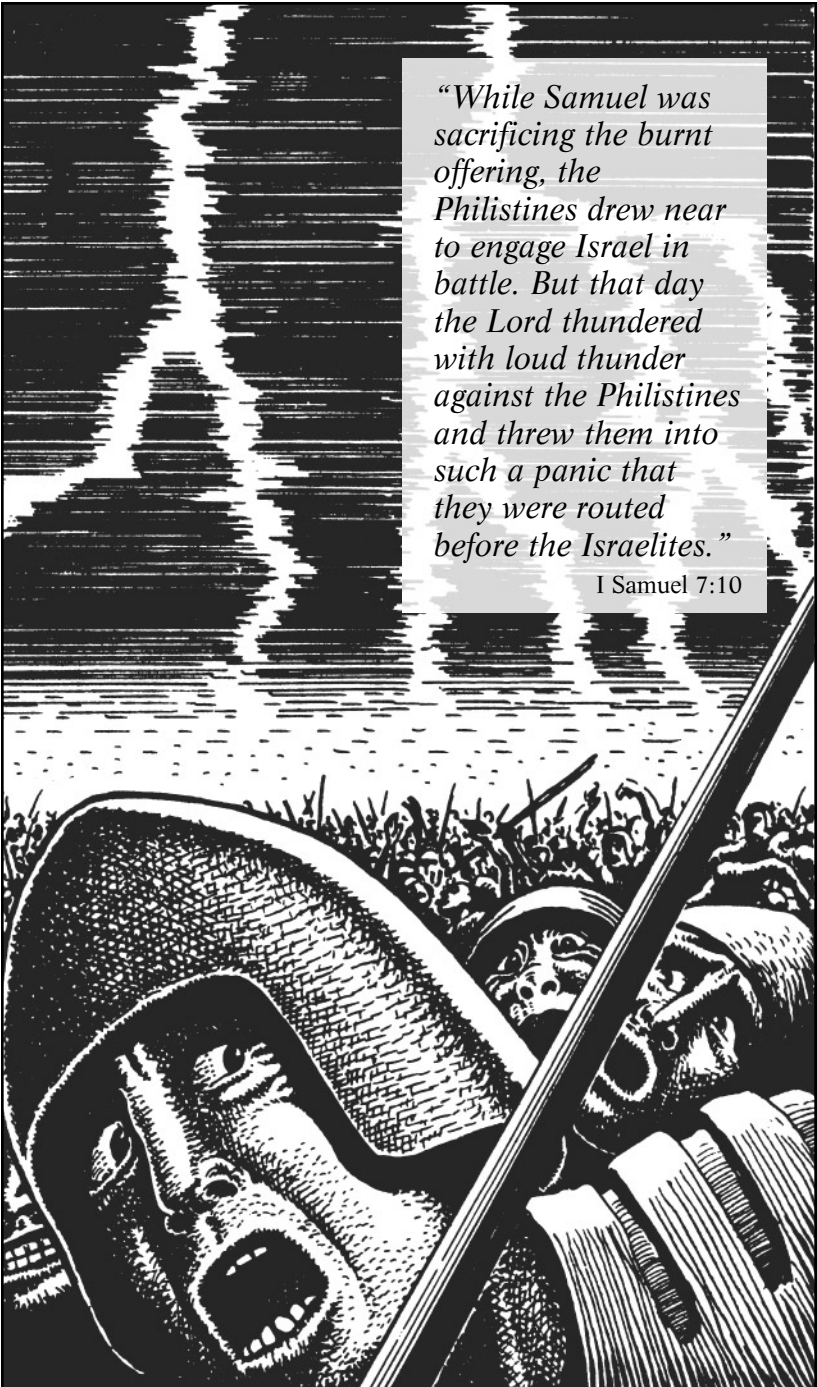
LIVING
out the Word

1. Do you believe that Jesus sometimes uses difficult experiences to help lead us into a closer relationship with him? Have you seen this in your own life?

2. Have you ever prayed a prayer of repentance such as Israel prayed in this chapter? How might Jesus living his life in you enable you to pray a similar prayer with sincerity and meaning?

WINDOW
on the Word

*The persistent **Philistines** are known to historians as a branch of the “Sea Peoples” who poured into Egypt and Palestine around 1200 B.C. Vigorous and talented, these people established a thriving civilization in their core city states—Gath, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron and Ashdod. Excavations reveal their technological advances over Israel: Philistine soldiers carried iron weapons into battle and their farmers were familiar with iron tools (1Sa 13:19-22). Along with beautifully decorated pottery featuring exquisite swan designs, archaeologists have uncovered evidence of a thriving metallurgy industry.*



“While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the Lord thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites.”

I Samuel 7:10