



Reading the book of 1 Samuel

DID YOU KNOW ?

1. Although 1 Samuel begins with Samuel's biography, it talks more about David. This book tells the story of Samuel's life, Saul's life and the beginning of David's life from the day he was anointed. (1 S. 16)
2. A descendant of Levi, Samuel was both priest and prophet; some consider that he inaugurated the prophetic era: "All the prophets who have successively spoken, beginning with Samuel." (Ac. 3:24; cp. Ac. 13:20; He. 11 :32. Samuel's ministry links the period of the judges and the period of the monarchy with the establishment of the kingdom.
3. Shiloh was a locality in the tribe of Ephraim north of Jerusalem (1 S. 1:3). It was an important place of worship. Its destruction occurred as a punishment for the sin of Israel. (Je. 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9; Ps. 78:60).
4. An ephod is a garment worn by priests in their office of presenting the offering before the altar to the Lord. This garment was to be sewn according to a ritual given by the Lord Himself (Ex. 28:6-14, 1 S. 2).
5. During the period of time that Eli the priest was in office, God did not reveal Himself through prophets and visions because the people and the house of this priest lived in disobedience (1 S. 3:1).
6. The Philistines had taken the Ark of the Lord, which symbolized his presence because of God's judgment on Israel and specifically on the house of Eli the priest (1 S.4).
7. The presence of the Ark of the Lord in the land of the Philistines caused sickness and death because God could not co-exist with idols (1 S. 5).
8. When the Ark of the Lord returned to Israel only the priests were qualified to touch it according to the law of Moses (1 S. 6:14).
9. Like the sons of Eli, the sons of Samuel did not walk according to the law of the Lord. However, God did not treat Samuel as He had treated Eli. This is probably because Samuel did not honor his sons more than God (1 S. 8).

10. Saul, who was in search of donkeys, was certainly not looking for an opportunity to become king. Saul was so ignorant of political life that he did not even know the great Samuel. Similarly, Samuel received God's call when he was only a little boy (1 Samuel 3), and David was anointed king while he was still tending sheep.
11. The choice of the people of Israel to have a human king to rule over them, like the other nations, marked the end of God's direct reign over them. Thus the transition from theocratic to a human government was made (1 S. 9).
12. The fact that Saul prophesied among the prophets did not make him a true prophet. But it was one of the confirmations given by God designating him as the future king of Israel (1 S. 10).
13. Saul's victory over the Ammonites was God's confirmation of the establishment of his royalty over the people of Israel (1 S. 11).
14. The rain that fell following Samuel's invocation of the Lord's name was a wonder because normally rain did not fall during the harvest period (1 Samuel 12).
15. Saul disobeyed the law of the Lord by offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving himself without the help of a priest (1 S. 13). According to the Law of Moses, only priests were anointed to perform this duty.
16. The influence of Samuel had preserved Israel from the occupation of the Philistines (1 S. 7:13). However, no one could doubt the military supremacy of the Philistines. They had military posts in several cities in Israel (1 S. 10:5, 13:3) and, more importantly, they had a complete control over the manufacture of iron weapons because they had banished the blacksmiths from Israel (1 S. 13:19).
17. Samuel asked the whole family of Jesse, David's father, to sanctify themselves because it was an act of preparation for God's intervention (1 S. 16:5, Ex. 19:10).
18. In ancient times, wars were fought by "representative warfare" (1 S. 17:4). The champions on each side fought a battle in which the outcome of the war depended on it. According to the belief of that time, the outcome depended much more on the power of the gods of the warriors than on the military power of the combatants. Saul had no faith in God. His terror had demoralized the army of Israel. David, on the other hand, had just as much faith in God as Goliath had contempt for God's people.
19. The showbread was the loaves of face bread offered to God every Saturday on the golden table in the Holy Place (Ex 25:10). They were twelve (12) in number and were square with four (4) faces covered with gold leaf. They were unleavened bread that had to be presented warm on the Sabbath day.

20. Fearing that Saul would take his family hostage, David, for safety reasons, brought his parents to Moab (1 S. 22:3), a neighboring kingdom. Why Moab? Perhaps because he had a distant relative in that land. His great-grandmother, Ruth, was Moabite.
21. David was remorseful after cutting off Saul's mantle (1 S. 24:5). Why was this? Perhaps because at that time a man with his garment cut off looked ridiculous. (See 2 S. 10:4, 5 which mentions a case where the cutting off of someone's garment was considered a deliberate insult and could likely lead to war).
22. Whenever a candidate for royalty managed to gain the upper hand over his rival, it was normal for him to exterminate his opponent's entire family. The aim was to reduce the likelihood that a rival family member would attempt to regain the throne. Jonathan, David's best friend, asks David not to follow this rule when he becomes king. Because of this relationship, David preserved the life of Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son (2 S. 9).
23. While it is true that David went to war with 600 men against the Amalekites, it is important to note that he defeated them with about 300 men (1 S. 30:9-10).
24. Saul's very first military operation as king was to rescue Jabesh Gilead (1 S. 11). The inhabitants of this city had never forgotten this action. When they had received news of the dishonorable state in which the bodies of Saul and his sons were in, they undertook a rather dangerous night mission. They stole the bodies and buried them with dignity (1 S. 31:11-13).