

1 SAMUEL - A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. Who do you think wrote this book? Why aren't we given the name of the author? Does that lessen its authority? When was it written?

"First Samuel is actually the first half of a single book that was divided into two parts, 1 and 2 Samuel, because together they were too long to fit on one scroll. The books are named for one of the main characters, who was a prophet and also the last judge to lead Israel." (CEV)

"The theme of this book, like that of other historical writings in the Old Testament, is that faithfulness to God brings success, while disobedience brings disaster. This is stated clearly in the Lord's message to the priest Eli in 1 Samuel 2:30: 'I will honor those who honor me, and I will treat with contempt those who despise me.'

"The book records mixed feelings about the establishment of the monarchy. The Lord himself was regarded as the real king of Israel, but in response to the people's request the Lord chose a king for them. The important fact was that both the king and the people of Israel lived under the sovereignty and judgement of God (2.7–10). Under God's laws the rights of all people, rich and poor alike, were to be maintained." (GNB)

"The two Books of Samuel were originally one volume in the Hebrew text. Upon its translation into Greek (the Septuagint or LXX), Samuel was joined with the Book of Kings, and the total work was called "The Books of the Kingdoms." In order to keep the work from becoming too voluminous, it was divided at that time into the four divisions now found in the English text. The first two divisions bear the name of the prominent character Samuel—prophet, priest, and anointer of kings.
"AUTHOR: Unknown

"The Book of 1 Samuel is anonymous. Jewish tradition claims that the prophet Samuel wrote the Books of Judges and Samuel, while the prophets Gad and Nathan supplied supplementary information concerning the years following Samuel's death (25:1). Nevertheless, there is no reference to an author in the book. The biblical text does indicate that Samuel made some written records (10:25) and that prophetic figures (Samuel, Nathan, and Gad) chronicled many of the acts of King David (1 Chr. 29:29).

"DATE: 1120–1010B.C.

"First Samuel deals with the period of time between the birth of Samuel and the closing days of Saul's reign. It begins in a premonarchical setting of a loose, tribal organization and concludes with the death of the deranged King Saul, who ends his own life in the heat of battle with the Philistines. If the birth of Samuel (1:20) is dated c. 1120 B.C., and if David ascended the throne of Judah c. 1010 B.C., then the book covers more than a century of Hebrew history." (*Believer's Study Bible*)

"The books of Samuel have more than biographical and historical interest. The central theme of the books traces God's gracious and overruling sovereignty in the sad state of affairs in Israel at the end of the period of judges by His providential selection of righteous men (i.e., Samuel and David) who would weld the nation into an instrument of His will and a people for Himself. Despite Israel's rejection of God as King, He would prove faithful and eventually see to the appointment of

a godly king, David. With this one He would enter into an everlasting covenant that would affect the destiny of both Israel and all the world. For through David would come Israel's King *par excellence*, Israel's Messiah and the Savior of the world, the Lord Jesus Christ." (*King James Version Study Bible*)

"At the beginning of First Samuel, the nation of Israel was at a religious low point. Even the priesthood was corrupt (2:12–17). To make things worse, Samuel's sons who served as judges in Beersheba were also dishonest (8:2, 3). With such evil leaders as models, the people of Israel showed open disdain for the word of God and refused to listen to His prophet Samuel (8:19)." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

Although this book bears the name of Samuel, it includes events that occurred after his death. (See 1 Samuel 25:1 and 28:3) 1 and 2 Samuel were regarded as one book by the Hebrews and were a single volume in Hebrew Bibles until first printed in two parts—as we now have it— in 1517 A.D. In the earliest Greek translations 1st and 2nd Samuel were known as "First of Kingdoms" and "Second of Kingdoms". 1 and 2 Kings were labeled as "Third of Kingdoms" and "Fourth of Kingdoms". Samuel dominates the first part of this book as: The last judge; one of the greatest of the prophets; founder of the schools of the prophets; (*Education* 46) and the one who led out and laid down the principles for the foundation of the Hebrew kingdom. (1 Samuel 10:25) Jewish tradition suggests that Samuel wrote the first part of this two part volume and Nathan and Gad wrote the second part. (1 Chronicles 29:29) 2 Samuel probably should be called the book of "David". These two "books" represent a composite narrative with several authors, brought together under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Samuel died in 1 Samuel 25:1 and is not mentioned at all in 2 Samuel, so he could not have written both books that bear his name. 1 Samuel covers the period from 1100 to 1011 BC and 2 Samuel the forty years of Davids reign, 1011 to 971 BC.

There was a lot of political unrest from 1200 to 900 BC which began with the migrations of the "Sea Peoples" to that area. They settled in the coastal areas and grew stronger and stronger intermingling with the Philistines who apparently were there before them. At first the Israelites were left fairly free to pursue local disputes but then began a long conflict with the Philistines from the days of Samson to the times of David.

2. What is meant when it says that the Lord closed Hannah's womb? (1 Samuel 1:5) Did Hannah make a wise choice in giving her son to be raised by Eli? After seeing Eli's sons, would you? (1 Samuel 2:12-17) If you had been Eli would you have accepted this "gift?" If you had been Elkanah would you have accepted Hannah's decision?

Once again we note the concept that any unexplained event is automatically attributed to God whether or not there is any evidence that He was involved. (See **Judges Teacher's Guide #13 and #14**) Hannah gave her son to the Lord and the sanctuary as a sort of thank offering to the Lord and not primarily because she had evaluated Eli's competence as a parent! Eli accepted the gift as it was given. We don't know if either of them considered **Leviticus 27:28,29** as applicable in this case. Since Hannah regarded the child as a gift from the Lord in answer to her prayer, she felt she must dedicate him to the sanctuary as promised and Elkanah honored her promise.

3. What do you think of the way Eli's sons were treating the worshipers and even their respect for the sacrifices that were being offered? (1 Samuel 2:12-17,22) Why do you think Eli's sons wanted to grab some of the meat before the fat was removed and before it was boiled? Was it really the Lord's will that they be put to death? (1 Samuel 2:25)

Eli's sons were so rebellious and their actions so despicable that they were destroying people's

respect for the sacred services. People hesitated even to go to the sanctuary to worship. They apparently had developed an appetite for the portions of the offerings that were supposed to be dedicated to the Lord and which were also unhealthy as items of food. They had no concern whatever for God or His instructions and they were rapidly spreading their disrespect to others. See the extensive discussion of their deaths in **Major Study Questions for 1 Samuel #1**.

4. Who was the “man of God” who came to bear the message to Eli? (1 Samuel 2:27) Are there other unnamed “prophets” in the scripture? Who was the faithful priest predicted in the prophecy spoken to Eli? (1 Samuel 2:35)

There are many unnamed prophets in the Old Testament, both good and evil! (See 1 Kings 13 and 18 for examples). God apparently chose to use one of these prophets who may even have had an illustrious career serving God, but because of not leaving any writings that were preserved, has not been remembered by name. There have been several suggestions as to the name of the priest mentioned in the prophecy. Some have suggested that it was Samuel himself, others Zadok (see 1 Kings 2:27,35) and others that this refers ultimately to Christ.

5. Why do you think the soldiers, including Hophni and Phinehas decided to bring the ark into battle? (1 Samuel 4:3) Are they the only ones who did it? (Compare Numbers 10:33-36; 1 Samuel 14:3,18)

Since the ark was regarded as very sacred and even housing God’s presence, it was felt that taking it into battle would force God to act on their behalf and give them the victory. This is a very good example of why God doesn’t want to be portrayed as some sort of idol. As soon as we “idolize” our God then we feel that we can manipulate Him. God will never allow Himself to be manipulated! God at times allowed the ark to be taken into battle as a symbol of the fact that He was in charge of the events that were taking place. (Joshua 6) This was obviously not the case when Hophni and Phinehas carried the ark into battle.

6. What do we learn from the whole story of the “ark vs. dagon?” Try to imagine yourself as a Philistine there observing all this. Could you kneel down and worship a cemented-together “god?” (1 Samuel 5:1-5) What do you think of the Philistine’s comments about Pharaoh’s hardening of his heart? (1 Samuel 6:6)

This is a very interesting section of the book. As we have mentioned before, it was the custom in those days to rate “gods” based on the outcome of the battles between their followers. But here was a case where Israel was defeated but their God was clearly more powerful! This must have been a real eye opener for the Philistines! But they remembered what had happened hundreds of years before to Pharaoh and they did not intend to repeat that mistake! (1 Samuel 6:6) There are many lessons to be learned about God by considering the full story of the capture of the ark and its eventual return to Jerusalem. See **2 Samuel Teacher’s Guide #5** and #19; **1 Chronicles Teacher’s Guide #8**.

7. Why does God appear to give the impression that the ark was some sort of Magical Box with mysterious powers? Why were so many Israelites killed for looking into the ark? (1 Samuel 6:19) How many were actually killed? (See different translations)

While God did everything that He could to impress upon the Israelites that He could not be represented by any earthly “thing”, He apparently felt it was necessary to respond when His “ark” was treated in a disrespectful way by those who should have known better. God seems to be constantly struggling with ways to get us to take Him seriously without being afraid. God’s ideal requires reverence and respect without fear, but that seems to be very difficult to achieve.

See **Major Study Questions for 1 Samuel #3 and #4.**

8. Notice that the Lord threw the Philistines into a “panic” and caused a “great destruction”. (1 Samuel 5:9 (compare Deuteronomy 7:20,22 and Joshua 10:10; 24:12; Judges 4:15; 8:12; 20:41; 1 Samuel 5:9,11; 7:10; 14:15; 2 Chronicles 20:22) How does this relate to the “hornets” in Exodus 23:27,28?

Since “power” was the only thing that these pagans really understood, God demonstrated His “power”! This is a clear example of what God could have done for the benefit of the Israelites on many occasions if they had only trusted in Him. If they had remained loyal to God and kept their attention on the true worship of the only true God, they would have been able to “conquer the world” for Yahweh! It is quite possible that many nations would have recognized the superiority of Israel’s God and would have been ready to consider worshiping the true God. Unfortunately, none of this happened because the Israelites did not fulfill the conditions under which God could bless them in such a signal way. They seemed to be more interested in what people thought about them and their military prowess than they were about what people thought about their God!!

9. What were the people asking for and what choices did they have when they asked for a king? Where did Samuel get his information about what a king would do to them? Considering the story of the Levite and his concubine (Judges 19-21) and what happened subsequently, would you as an Israelite have been happy to appoint a Benjaminite as the first king? (1 Samuel 8; 9:1)

Unfortunately, Samuel’s sons seemed to follow the example of Eli’s sons rather than the example of their father! This put the people in a real bind. They saw what other nations were doing and they wanted to be like them, and they were sure that they didn’t need any more of Samuel’s sons. In addition to observing what was happening in the nations around them who had kings, Samuel at least was aware that God had given very specific warnings about having a king. (See Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 1 Samuel 10:25-27; compare 1 Samuel 8:4-22)

The Benjaminites had been known as famous warriors for a long time. If Israel was primarily looking for someone to fight their battles for them, then perhaps this was a good choice. They also were very much impressed by the outward appearance of Saul (1 Samuel 9:1,2; 10:23; but contrast 9:21; 1 Samuel 16:7). Moral considerations were not apparently foremost in their minds!

10. Why didn’t every adult male in Israel, including Saul, know Samuel when he saw him? (1 Samuel 9:14-19) Hadn’t he been attending the ceremonies? (Deuteronomy 16)

They clearly should have know who the prophet Samuel was. It appears that the regular temple services as recommended in Deuteronomy 16 had been largely abandoned. Samuel was busy establishing the schools of the prophets in several different locations and was probably away from Ramah for extended periods of time. (1 Samuel 7:16,17) Ramah was no more than seven or eight miles from Gibeah, the home of Saul, so Saul should have known the prophet.

11. If God was able to change Saul into a different person, why didn’t He make the change a little more permanent? (1 Samuel 10:9) Why would God choose someone like Saul if He knew what he would do? What was the reason or purpose for giving all the apparently miraculous signs at the time of Saul’s anointing? (1 Samuel 10:2-16) Why did God communicate so often by the use of “signs” in those days? (Saul–1 Samuel 10:1-13; Jonathan and his armor-bearer–1 Samuel 14:6-15) If we had more faith, would God give us more signs today? Why would God use such unusual methods to defeat the purposes of Saul as those found in 1 Samuel 19:18-24? Would you respect a king who acted in this way?

God was cooperating with the children of Israel by doing His best to provide the kind of king

they wanted. God knew very well what the result would be, but He needed to let events play themselves out so the people could learn from the consequences of their choices. God even performed several “miracles” to further confirm the people’s trust in the new king. God was doing what He could to make the system work. This is not an evidence that there was more faith in those days but rather just the opposite! The Holy Spirit was working with and for Samuel and David and used this unusual method to protect the lives of these two faithful men. If Saul had been more responsive to the Spirit he may have been given a “new heart” as he was earlier in a similar situation (1 Samuel 10:9). But Saul was now selfish and determined to have his own way and was not looking for evidence of God’s leading.

12. Notice the big difference between Samuel’s attitude towards bribes etc. (1 Samuel 12:1-5) and that of his sons earlier? (1 Samuel 8:1-2) What do you think of Samuel’s entire speech? (1 Samuel 12) Why didn’t Samuel arrive at Gilgal on time? (1 Samuel 13:8) Was the Lord involved in this?

After listening to Samuel’s speech, Israel was beginning to see the consequences of their choice of a king. Samuel had been a faithful and hard-working leader, but now they had chosen Saul. No doubt God took this opportunity to test Saul’s patience which was never very good. When a man decides to take things in his own hands instead of waiting for God or even His prophet, it is clear that he has abandoned the guidance of God.

13. What do you think of Saul’s rash demand that they eat no food? (1 Samuel 14:28) What was the ultimate result when they actually got some food? (1 Samuel 14:31-33)

Once again Saul’s impetuous and rash nature made things more difficult for those who were actually trying to help him. He was in a rush to conquer his enemies, but they would have been able to do a better and more thorough job if they had been allowed to eat along the way. As a result they were too hungry to wait for the meat to be properly prepared and ate like scavengers on a carcass.

14. If the Lord refused to answer Saul’s prayer earlier, why did He apparently guide the casting of lots to choose the one who had eaten? (1 Samuel 14:37-43) Notice the response of the people in saving Jonathan (1 Samuel 14:45; Compare the stories of Jephthah’s daughter, [Judges 11:29,-40]; and Salome when she requested the head of John the Baptist [Matthew 14:6-12]).

The use of chance methods to determine God’s will has often been attractive to humans. It is clearly not God’s ideal. (See 2BC 247; 6BC 1054) God however specifically instructed them to use this method at times. (See Numbers 26:52-56) The casting of lots was one of God’s crisis interventions used to accommodate people who refused to use God’s better methods. Even though God apparently guided the “lots” in this case to the selection of Jonathan, even the people refused to carry out the rash dictates of Saul. God was trying to teach Saul something but Saul was not ready to learn.

15. Compare Samuel’s predictions about what a king would do (1 Samuel 8:11-18) with what Saul actually did (1 Samuel 14:52). Why do you think Saul failed to carry out the specific orders of God? Was it just greed?

Saul almost immediately fell into all the usual habits of “kings”. See # 9 above. Saul was repeatedly doing things to establish his own reputation and popularity rather than to strictly follow God’s instructions. It appealed to his sense of pride to arrive home with all these “trophies” of his conquests. And when he wasn’t thinking of himself he was thinking of his children and trying to establish his future dynasty. Even though God gave him a new heart for a while it is apparent that it didn’t last very long.

16. What do you think of Samuel's and Saul's conversation at Gilgal (1 Samuel 15:10-35) and the rejection of Saul. With His foreknowledge, why did God choose Saul in the first place? What about Samuel's comments about God in the light of all that had been happening?

It should be quite clear from this passage that Saul obeyed God only when it fit in with his own plans. Such a person could never be used by God as a spiritual leader of His people. Clear instructions had been given about what was to happen if the people should choose to anoint a king. (See Deuteronomy 17:14-20; 33:5; Judges 8:2,23; **1 Samuel 8:5-22**) In the light of these passages it should be clear that God knew what was coming. Perhaps God chose Saul, a person such as the people thought would be just right as a king, so that when God chose the person He wanted (1 Samuel 13:14) they would be more willing to accept God's choice!

17. Is it true that God does not change His mind? (1 Samuel 15:29; Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6) If so how do you explain 1 Samuel 15:10; 15:35—"The Lord was sorry that he had made Saul king" and "the Lord changed his mind about punishing the people"? (2 Samuel 24:16,25) What should we do with passages in the Old Testament suggesting that God "repents"? Repentance suggests changing one's mind. Could this ever apply to God? (See Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:14; Judges 2:18; 10:16; 1 Samuel 15:11,35; 2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Jeremiah 26:13,19; Ezekiel 24:14; Joel 2:13,14; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:9,10; 4:2; Compare Psalms 2:12).

This is a particularly significant chapter. It makes sweeping statements about God which seem to be almost immediately contradicted. How do you put together the following statements from 1 Samuel 15:

15:10,11: "The LORD said to Samuel, 'I am sorry that I made Saul king; he has turned away from me and disobeyed my commands.' Samuel was angry, and all night long he pleaded with the LORD." (GNB)

15:29: "Israel's majestic God does not lie or change his mind. He is not a human being—he does not change his mind." (GNB)

15:35: "As long as Samuel lived, he never again saw the king; but he grieved over him. The LORD was sorry that he had made Saul king of Israel." (GNB)

Compare also other passages about God "repenting". (Genesis 6:6,7; Exodus 32:14; Deuteronomy 32:36; Judges 2:18; 2 Samuel 24:16; 1 Chronicles 21:15; Psalms 106:45; Jeremiah 26:3,13,19; 31:19; 42:10; Hosea 11:8; Joel 2:13,14; Amos 7:3,6; Jonah 3:9,10; 4:2; *Contrast* Numbers 23:19; Psalms 110:4; Jeremiah 4:28; 15:6; 18:8,10; Ezekiel 24:14; Amos 7:8; Zechariah 8:14)

Was it God's idea for the people to have a king? Certainly not! God was to be their King. But God, realizing the demands of the people did assist in choosing the kind of king they wanted. So the above statements are in fact consistent! This is not a case of God being initially happy that He had chosen Saul as king, and later because of the way things worked out, He became sorry He had done so. God was in fact sorry He had to choose Saul in the first place! Saul wasn't chosen because God thought it would be a wonderful idea! Saul was chosen because of the demands of the people. God knew in advance what would happen, and He expresses His feelings in Scripture using human language so we can try to understand Him. God knows the end from the beginning. He is not caught unexpectedly by surprise because of the way things work out here on planet earth.

18. What should we conclude from the question that the people of Bethlehem asked Samuel when he came to anoint David? (1 Samuel 16:4) What do you think they were expecting?

Was God encouraging Samuel to be less than truthful about why he had come? The coming of an important official was a great event in those days as transportation was much more difficult and communication as well. When the prophet came to offer a sacrifice, they may have wondered if some great tragedy had taken place. They didn't know the real reason for his coming, so they could only speculate. As far as they knew Saul was still king and they had not heard of any great reason for Samuel to be visiting them. Considering their attitude toward God (See Exodus 20:18-20) they may have been actually afraid!

19. If the Lord doesn't look at the outward appearance, but only at the heart (1 Samuel 16:7) why did He choose Saul? Why did Samuel anoint David fairly openly, when he had anointed Saul secretly? (1 Samuel 9:24-10:1)

God did not "choose" Saul in the usual sense that we think of. He picked him out because He realized that he was the kind of person the people wanted and could "look up to!" Saul was anointed somewhat secretly because God's plan to establish a monarchy had not yet been made public. On the other hand, when Samuel anointed David, Saul was clearly king, and in considerable favor with the people. Thus it was necessary for David to be anointed fairly publicly since Samuel would soon be dead and there would be some question about the anointing of David if it had not been witnessed by others.

20. What is the meaning of the expression, "an evil spirit from the Lord tormented Saul?" (1 Samuel 16:14,15,16,23; 18:10; 19:9; 20:33; contrast 10:9-11; 11:6; 16:14; 19:20-24)

As we have noted before, in the ancient polytheistic societies, there were "good gods" and "bad gods". If something good happened, it was usually attributed to the actions of one of the "good gods". If something bad happened, it was blamed on one of the "bad gods". But Israel had only one God. (Deuteronomy 6:5) In light of this, when something bad happened it was assumed that God must still be responsible. We would agree even today that nothing could happen if God did not allow it. Thus God in a sense was responsible for the evil spirit that tormented Saul. This was certainly not God's idea or ideal, but He did not prevent it. Saul had been given great privileges and great blessings, and he himself chose to ignore God's instructions to him. Thus he rejected God and not *vice versa*. And when God's true Spirit is withdrawn from someone, Satan is free to fill the vacuum.

21. What was the army of Israel doing for 40 days listening to Goliath's speech every day? (1 Samuel 17:16) What do you think of David's speech to Goliath? (1 Samuel 17:45) Who do you think inspired the ladies to sing that song which led to such jealousy on the part of Saul? (1 Samuel 18:7; 21:11) It was obviously an exaggeration, David was just a young boy?

It must have been very degrading to listen to someone like Goliath brag every day, several times a day and have no response readily available! David's attitude to the whole matter was so obviously different than anyone else in the army that it was probably quite a shock at first. David was a man of little experience with military matters but plenty of experience with God as his protector. It is hard to image that anyone but the devil himself was responsible for the songs of those women. There was nothing to be gained by this exaggeration except the anger of Saul! It is certain that Saul didn't need any more reasons for jealousy.

22. What do you think of the price that Saul asked for the hand of his daughter? (1 Samuel 18:25-27—the foreskins of 100 dead Philistines) What was Saul hoping would happen?

It is quite clear that Saul's hope was that David would be slain in the attempt to collect these

foreskins. This was a barbarous suggestion!

23. Why were there idols in David's home? (1 Samuel 19:9-17) Why was lying apparently done so frequently and so casually? What about Michal's lying? (1 Samuel 19:17) What about David's lying to the priests? (1 Samuel 21:1-2) What about David's lying to the king of Ziklag on multiple occasions? (1 Samuel 27:8-12)

"1 Samuel 19:13: The Hebrew word for **image** is used elsewhere in Scripture to indicate household idols (see Gen. 31:19, 30–35; Judg. 18:17–26; 2 Kin. 23:24; Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2). Some have suggested that here the word means a life-sized object of a man. However, there is no evidence that ancient Israelites kept such objects in their homes. The **cover of goat's hair and clothes** was used to make it appear that David was still in bed." (*Nelson Study Bible*)

"1 Samuel 19:13 an image. The Hebrew same term is translated "household idols" in Gen. 31:19, 34, 35; Judg. 18:14. The Genesis references imply small objects, while the present reference suggests something larger." (*New Geneva Study Bible*)

"13. An image. Heb. *teraphim* (see on Gen. 31:19; Lev. 19:31). An image of sufficient size to be mistaken for a man is most unusual." (*SDA Bible Commentary*)

David's sense of truthfulness may not be up to the standards that some would wish for the most famous king of the Israelites! David felt on each of these occasions that the "untruth" was justified. He felt that he must "fight the Lord's battles" no matter what he had to do to accomplish it. It is hard to imagine why David would have an "idol" in his house. It may have belonged to Michal. We have no way of knowing where it came from or why David had it in his home. Some have suggested that the "pillow" that she used to form the shape of a man may have been a kind of "mosquito net."

24. Was it right for David to eat the "consecrated bread"? (1 Samuel 21:1-6; Compare Matthew 12:3,4; Mark 2:25,26; Luke 6:3)

This bread was supposed to be reserved exclusively for the priests. David was not even of the tribe of Levi. By all normal standards he was not allowed to eat the bread. Whether the priest in offering it recognized that David was desperate and perhaps even in a life-threatening situation is hard to know. Perhaps he felt that the bread was his and he had the right to use it as he pleased—in direct contradiction to the Scripture. Notice Jesus' comments about this occasion.

25. Didn't David trust God enough to take care of him? Why did he have to feign madness? (1 Samuel 21:10-15)

This is another example of David taking things into his own hands. God worked with him even though He realized that David was not doing what was best. Somehow between David and God it worked out okay.

26. Why did the Lord refuse to answer Saul and thus drive him to seek the "witch of Endor" to call up "Samuel" for him? (1 Samuel 28:6-16 Compare 1 Chronicles 10:13)

God had repeatedly instructed Saul in what He wanted Saul to do. Repeatedly, Saul had done what he wanted to instead of strictly following God's directions. In such circumstances God apparently did not feel it was appropriate to respond to Saul's demands. Saul, not being a man of patience, instead of "waiting on the Lord", went to the Witch of Endor. The consequences were terrible. Saul sealed his own doom by repeatedly acting in rash ways without waiting for God's direction.

Ellen White Comments

The Reward of Faithfulness.--During the first three years of the life of Samuel the prophet, his mother carefully taught him to distinguish between good and evil. By every familiar object surrounding him, she sought to lead his thoughts up to the Creator. In fulfillment of her vow to give her son to the Lord, with great self-denial she placed him under the care of Eli the high priest, to be trained for service in the house of God." (*Review & Herald* Sept. 8, 1904). {2 *SDA Bible Commentary* 1008.6}

"Further provision was made for the instruction of the young, by the establishment of the schools of the prophets. If a youth desired to search deeper into the truths of the word of God, and to seek wisdom from above, that he might become a teacher in Israel, these schools were open to him. The schools of the prophets were founded by Samuel, to serve as a barrier against the wide-spread corruption, to provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the future prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. In the accomplishment of this object, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. These were called the sons of the prophets. As they communed with God, and studied his word and his works, wisdom from above was added to their natural endowments. The instructors were men not only well versed in divine truth, but those who had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of his Spirit. They enjoyed the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety.

"In Samuel's day there were two of these schools, --one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim, where the ark then was. Others were established in later times.

"The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded a crime to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. By the command of God, every child was taught some trade, even though he was to be educated for holy office. Many of the religious teachers supported themselves by manual labor. Even so late as the time of the apostles, Paul and Aquila were no less honored because they earned a livelihood by their trade of tent-making." *Christian Education* 61 (1893,94)

"To meet this growing evil, God provided other agencies as an aid to parents in the work of education. From the earliest times, prophets had been recognized as teachers divinely appointed. In the highest sense the prophet was one who spoke by direct inspiration, communicating to the people the messages he had received from God. But the name was given also to those who, though not so directly inspired, were divinely called to instruct the people in the works and ways of God. For the training of such a class of teachers, Samuel, by the Lord's direction, established the schools of the prophets. {46.1}

"These schools were intended to serve as a barrier against the wide-spreading corruption, to provide for the mental and spiritual welfare of the youth, and to promote the prosperity of the nation by furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God as leaders and counselors. To this end, Samuel gathered companies of young men who were pious, intelligent, and studious. **These were called the sons of the prophets.** As they studied the word and the works of God, His life-giving power quickened the energies of mind and soul, and the students received wisdom from above. The instructors were not only versed in divine truth, but had themselves enjoyed communion with God, and had received the special endowment of His Spirit. They had the respect and confidence of the people, both for learning and for piety. In Samuel's day there were two of these schools—one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim. In later times others were established.

"The pupils of these schools sustained themselves by their own labor in tilling the soil or in some mechanical employment. In Israel this was not thought strange or degrading; indeed, it was regarded as a sin to allow children to grow up in ignorance of useful labor. Every youth, whether his parents were rich or poor, was taught some trade. Even though he was to be educated for holy office, a knowledge of practical life was regarded as essential to the greatest usefulness. Many, also, of the teachers supported themselves by manual labor. {47.1}

"In both the school and the home much of the teaching was oral; but the youth also learned to read the

Hebrew writings, and the parchment rolls of the Old Testament Scriptures were open to their study. The chief subjects of study in these schools were the law of God, with the instruction given to Moses, sacred history, sacred music, and poetry. In the records of sacred history were traced the footsteps of Jehovah. The great truths set forth by the types in the service of the sanctuary were brought to view, and faith grasped the central object of all that system--the Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world. A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were the students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellect brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song. {47.2}

"These schools proved to be one of the means most effective in promoting that righteousness which "exalteth a nation." Proverbs 14:34. In no small degree they aided in laying the foundation of that marvelous prosperity." *Education* 46,47 (1903); *Patriarchs and Prophets* p. 593

"In Samuel's day there were two of these schools,--one at Ramah, the home of the prophet, and the other at Kirjath-jearim, where the ark then was. Two were added in Elijah's time, at Jericho and Bethel, and others were afterward established at Samaria and Gilgal." *Fundamentals of Christian Education* p. 96,97 (1923)

"The schools of the prophets, established by Samuel, had fallen into decay during the years of Israel's apostasy. Elijah re-established these schools, making provision for young men to gain an education that would lead them to magnify the law and make it honorable. Three of these schools, one at Gilgal, one at Bethel, and one at Jericho, are mentioned in the record. Just before Elijah was taken to heaven, he and Elisha visited these centers of training." *Prophets and Kings* 224,225 (1917)