

May 2023

Memory Verse and Bible Reading Plan

For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together
in my mother's womb.



I praise you,
for I am fearfully
and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
Psalm 139:13-14

Reading I and II Samuel

Originally in the Hebrew Bible I and II Samuel were just one book. They contain some of the truly great and best known stories in the Bible, stories that have inspired movies, books and sports analogies (David and Goliath; see last years college basketball tournament when lowest rank University of Maryland Baltimore County beat number 1 University of Virginia).

The two books are probably written by Samuel, Nathan and Gad, and cover a time in history from about 1115 to 964 BC.

The period of the judges continues into the books of Samuel. Samuel is a judge in Israel. The story of God's redemptive purposes for history takes some huge steps forward in these two books. These two books include the transition from the leadership of the last judge (Samuel) to the beginning of (under King Saul's leadership) and establishment of (under King David's leadership) the kingdom.

We will follow the lives of three important characters in the Bible, Samuel, Saul and David. These two books and the rest of the OT show us what happens when Israel rejects God as their king (lessons that apply to us today).

But God is sovereign over all the events and He uses the monarchy to ultimately point the way and pave the way for Jesus who is called the son of David, who will establish the throne of David forever, and whose kingdom will never end. God is the faithful, steadfast God who keeps His promises and accomplishes His purposes.

Two things to learn and remember.

First, our greatest heroes of the faith are all flawed sinners. Saul started well and then disobeyed. David fell deeply into serious sin (adultery and murder). No human being is perfect, which is why we need a perfect Savior and should place our trust only in Him.

Second, no human government is perfect. The people thought they would be better off if they had a king like all the other nations. We think we will be better off if our party is in office. Why else do we celebrate like we do when our candidate is elected, or get frustrated when their candidate wins?

Despite all the sin and failure, God is not stumped. "God draws straight with crooked lines."

Outline of I and II Samuel.

Picture climbing a mountain up to point D and then falling back down the other side. Notice how similar the path up and the path down are.

A Samuel succeeds the elderly Eli and rules (1 Sam. 1-7)

B Saul fails (1 Sam. 8-15)

C David's rise under Saul (1 Sam. 16-20)

D The Hinge: God reverses the fortunes of Saul and David (1 Sam. 21-31)

C' David's rise under God (2 Sam. 1-8)

B' David fails (2 Sam. 9-20)

A' Solomon succeeds the elderly David and rules (2 Sam. 21-1 Kings 2)

I and II Chronicles

Like Samuel, the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles were originally one book, possibly written by Ezra. In the Hebrew Bible it is the last book, written after the exile of God's people as they are returning to Israel and rebuilding their lives and their temple. Kings focused on the relationship between the kings and the prophets (hence all the stories about Elijah and Elisha). Chronicles focus on the relationship between the kings and the priests.

That's one of the key reasons for those long, seemingly boring genealogies in the first nine chapters of I Chronicles. Why would God waste so much space on so many names?

The genealogies begin with Adam and stretch to the descendants of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, the kingly and priestly tribes, who made up most of those who returned to the land after exile.

Chronicles might seem like just a repeat of Samuel and Kings, but careful reading will show it is not. Chronicles adds to and omits many stories, with a focus on the faithful remnant of Judah. It is sort of like the difference between John's Gospel and the other three, a different focus.

The Chronicles emphasis on the interaction of kings and priests also explains the huge emphasis on the Temple. We have David's preparation for Temple-building, Solomon building and dedicating the Temple, Hezekiah insisting on a cleansing and refurbishing of the Temple, and then holding a great celebration of Passover there. And a few generations later, we see Josiah restoring the Temple. All of this is written as an encouragement to the returning post-exile Jews faced with the great task of rebuilding the Temple and Jerusalem.

Notice the emphasis throughout of the centrality of worship by showing us repeated situations where music, gladness, joy, and worship all come together.

Reading the genealogies (even if you find yourself skimming them) remind us God is sovereign over all of life and over our lives, He knows all our names, He is a faithful covenant-making and covenant-keeping God even to thousands of generations. And genealogies remind us our lives are fragile and short and we soon pass away. These names are the roots, branches and fruit of a great genealogical tree that we a part of. The genealogies in 1 Chronicles remind us where history is headed, in the fulfillment of the royal and priestly line in the coming Son of David, seated on the throne of the universe, the true and better Priest King of Israel.

Reading Chronicles reminds us how God is writing history and it all points to and leads to Jesus. It reminds us that like Israel we are also exiles and pilgrims on this earth for a brief time, who must not grow weary, but persevere to the end. It reminds us of the great importance of godly leadership and faithful worship (kings and priest again). We are shown again and again both good examples and bad examples.

Finally, reminds us to pray. Toward the end of the book, the Chronicler tells us, "The people of Judah came together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him." Reread David's great prayer in I Chronicles 29 and pray if for yourself, your family, our church, our nation and future generations. Remember II Chron. 7:14, one of the most remembered verses.

(over)

II Chronicles 7:14 If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Outline of I and II Chronicles

The Book of Genealogies (I Chronicles 1-9)

The Book of David (I Chronicles 10-29)

The Book of Solomon (II Chronicles 1-9)

The Book of the Kings of Judah (II Chronicles 10-36)

Bible Reading Plan - May

1	1 Samuel 1-3	Psalm 97
2	1 Samuel 4-6	Psalm 98
3	1 Samuel 7-8	Psalm 99
4	1 Samuel 9-10	Psalm 100
5	1 Samuel 11-13	Psalm 101
6	1 Samuel 14-15	Psalm 102
7	1 Samuel 16-17	Psalm 103
8	1 Samuel 18-20	Psalm 104
9	1 Samuel 21-23	Psalm 105
10	1 Samuel 24-25	Psalm 106:1-23
11	1 Samuel 26-27	Psalm 106:24-48
12	1 Samuel 28-29	Psalm 107
13	1 Samuel 30-31	Psalm 108
14	1 Chronicles 1-2	Psalm 109
15	1 Chronicles 3-4	Psalm 110
16	1 Chronicles 5-6	Psalm 111
17	1 Chronicles 7-8	Psalm 112
18	1 Chronicles 9-10	Psalm 113
19	2 Samuel 1-2	Psalm 114
20	2 Samuel 3-4	Psalm 115
21	2 Samuel 5-6	Psalm 116
22	2 Samuel 7-8	Psalm 117
23	2 Samuel 9-10	Psalm 118
24	2 Samuel 11-12	Psalm 119:1-8
25	2 Samuel 13-14	Psalm 119:9-16