

## I Samuel

*This is part of an ongoing series of short articles designed to help us understand what scripture is and what is **in** each book of scripture. Previous articles can be found at [www.openarms-communityofchrist.org](http://www.openarms-communityofchrist.org).*

There are a number of familiar stories in this book, beginning with the birth of Samuel, one of Israel's greatest prophets. His mother, Hannah, pleaded with God for a son, promising to give him to the Lord, and when Samuel was weaned, he began living with Eli, the chief priest. As a young lad, he had an experience with the Lord calling him at night and giving him a warning message for Eli.

The ark of the covenant (the holder of sacred items) was captured by Israel's enemies, the Philistines. The news of this disaster caused Eli to fall and break his neck. However, the Philistines did not keep the ark because they were stricken with a plague. At its return, Samuel challenged the people to serve only God and prayed for victory over the Philistines.

In Samuel's old age, the people asked him to give them a king. Samuel didn't want to, but because of the people's insistence, God told him to do so—and Samuel chose Saul to be Israel's first king.

Saul was a good king for several years, but he was impatient and offered a priestly sacrifice before one battle—a decision that led Samuel to tell Saul that his kingdom would not continue through his son Jonathan.

The Israelites continued at war with the Philistines, ultimately being challenged by the giant Goliath. No one was brave enough to fight him until a young shepherd boy, David, trusted God and killed the giant with a slingshot.

At first Saul loved David, but he was later possessed by an evil spirit and sought to kill David. Saul's son (Jonathan, who also loved David) warned David who fled and served as a mercenary for the Philistines for a few years against many enemies, but not the Israelites.

Eventually Saul and his sons were killed in battle with the Philistines, effectively ending Saul's kingdom.

This book effectively leads us from the time of Israel's judges through the transition into monarchy and the story of Saul, Israel's first king.