

Samuel: A Character Study

How should we be like Samuel?
¿Cómo deberíamos ser como Samuel?

1. Let us _____ people to follow God.
_____ a la gente para que siga a Dios.

1 Samuel 7:3

Matthew 28:19-20 (Mateo 28:19-20)

2 Corinthians 5:20 (2 Corintios 5:20)

2. Let's _____ for God's people.
_____ por el pueblo de Dios.

1 Samuel 7:5

1 Samuel 12:23

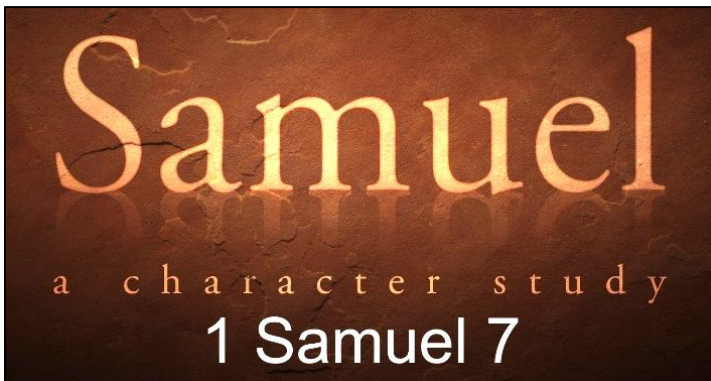
Ephesians 6:18 (Efesios 6:18)

2 Corinthians 1:11-12 (2 Corintios 1:11-12)

3. Let's _____ future generations to God.
_____ a las futuras generaciones hacia Dios.

1 Samuel 7:12

Psalms 78:1-4 (Salmos 78:1-4)



Discussion Questions and Notes

Week 8: October 4-11

Scripture: 1 Samuel 7

Samuel was just a young boy when God first called him (1 Sam. 3:4). The first message he received from the Lord was a prophecy of judgment against the high priest, Eli, and his sons, Hophni, and Phinehas. When God punished that corrupt priesthood, He also allowed the Ark of the Covenant to be captured by the Philistines. However, in 1 Samuel 6, the ark returns to Israel. 1 Samuel chapter 7 jumps ahead twenty years after the previous events. During those twenty years Samuel grew up and served Israel as a faithful prophet, priest, and judge. This chapter describes how God worked through Samuel to help the people of Israel turn away from their sin and draw near to God. As we read this chapter, we see several character traits in Samuel that will help us to be the people God is calling us to be.

Read 1 Samuel 7

1. Even though the ark was back in Israel, what was the mood of the Israelites? (7:1-2)
2. What did Samuel urge the people to do in verse 3?

James Smith writes,

The words If you are returning to the Lord suggest that the turning to Yahweh already had commenced inwardly; and the use of the participle in this clause suggests that this turning was an ongoing process. The phrase with all your hearts is emphatically placed in the Hebrew to emphasize that God required genuine repentance. When he sensed that the time was right, Samuel indicated that the inward turning of the heart should also be manifested outwardly. (Smith, 110)

3. How did the people respond to Samuel's exhortation? (7:4)

John Woodhouse notes,

The gospel Samuel proclaimed that day was a simple but wonderful promise: return to the Lord with your whole heart (which will mean putting away your pagan gods and setting your heart on the Lord alone), and he will save you from your enemies and from judgment. According to verse 4, Israel obeyed Samuel's gospel... This was a remarkably important moment for the people of Israel. We will miss the importance if we overlook the more than twenty years of apostasy that preceded it. At last, that era was brought to an end. (Woodhouse, 128)

4. What did Samuel do for the people at Mizpah? (7:5)
5. How did the people demonstrate their repentance? (7:6)
6. Why did the Philistines plan to attack the Israelites? (7:7)
7. What did the people ask Samuel to do in verse 8? Why? (See also 1 Sam. 12:23; Jer. 15:1)
8. What did Samuel do as the Philistines drew near? (7:9)
9. How did God defeat the Philistines that day? (7:10-11)
10. What did Samuel name the stone he set up between Mizpah and Shen? (7:12)

Smith comments,

He explained the significance of the name by proclaiming: Thus far has the Lord helped us! In these words, there is a plain indication of the need of further assistance... To name the memorial stone "Ebenezer" was no doubt intended to offset that other Ebenezer where Israel had been defeated and the ark captured some twenty years earlier (4:1-10). (Smith, 114)

11. How did God bless the Israelites throughout Samuel's lifetime? (7:13-14)

12. In addition to serving as a prophet and a priest, what other responsibility did Samuel have? (7:15)

Woodhouse observes,

While Samuel's "judging" the people may well include what follows, it is right to see this sentence as a summary of what he had done up to this point. He had called Israel back to the Lord and prayed for them. This is not what the word "judged" usually means in English, but the Hebrew word is used in the Old Testament for precisely this. Samuel set things right in Israel by his words to the people from God and by his words to God for the people. (Woodhouse, 130)

13. What cities did Samuel visit on his ministry circuit? (7:16)

14. Why did Samuel always go back to Ramah? (7:17)

15. Why did Samuel see Israel's removal of idols as a necessary first step to their deliverance?

16. How might the story have been told to future generations at the Ebenezer stone?

17. Who has prayed for you? What difference did it make?

18. How can we demonstrate that we are returning to the Lord with all our hearts?

19. How can you encourage others to follow God?

20. How could you tell future generations about the ways that God has helped you?

Sources cited:

Smith, James. *The College Press NIV Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*. Joplin, MO: College Press, 2000.

Woodhouse, John. *1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008.