

INTERACTIVE TRAVEL GUIDE

DESTINATION: *1 Samuel 1 – 15*

First Samuel recounts King Saul's rise to power and influence and his tragic fall. Saul's good looks, physical size and success in war made him an obvious choice from a human perspective. But the book of First Samuel highlights Saul's tragic flaw – he disobeyed God's commands. From the ashes of Saul's tragedy God raises up another king – King David.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

1380-1050 b.c.

Judges rule in Israel

1200 b.c.

Philistines occupy the Mediterranean coast

1100-1010 b.c.

Samuel's prophetic career

1050 b.c.

Saul becomes king of Israel

1018 b.c.

Samuel anoints David to be king

1010 b.c.

The conquest of Canaan

1003 b.c.

David's reign acknowledged throughout Israel

970 b.c.

David dies and Solomon becomes king

TRIP PLANNER:

The book of First Samuel can be divided into two sections.

The first section deals with the rise of Saul as King.

1. The role of Samuel

a. Samuel called – Chapters 1 – 2

b. Samuel confirmed – Chapters 3 – 6

c. Samuel commended – Chapter 7

2. The reign of Saul

a. Israel rejects God as King – Chapter 8

b. God chooses Saul as king – Chapters 9 – 12

c. God rejects Saul as king – Chapters 13 – 15

PLACES OF INTEREST:

Ramah - Five miles north of Jerusalem. The town today lies in ruins, but was the hometown of Samuel's parents and Samuel's birthplace. It was in Mt. Ephraim, within accessible distance of Shiloh, where Samuel's parents went up from year to year to worship and to sacrifice (1:3). From Ramah as a center Samuel went on circuit annually, to judge Israel, Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah (1 Sam 7:16).

Ashdod - One of the five chief cities of the Philistines. The name means stronghold or fortress, and its strength may be inferred by the fact that Psammetik I, of Egypt, besieged it for many years. It was still independent in the days of Samuel, when, after the defeat of the Israelites, the ark was taken to the house of Dagon in Ashdod (1 Sam 5:1).

Beth Shemesh - A town located about 8 miles east of Ekron and 15 miles west of Jerusalem. It was to Beth Shemesh that the Ark was returned to Israel. The name means "house of the sun" (1 Sam 6:12).

Kiriath Jearim - God killed many people in Beth Shemesh for looking inside the Ark. It was then moved to Kiriath Jearim. It is assumed that the location was about 10 miles west of Jerusalem, but the actual location is disputed (1 Sam 7:1).

Gibeah - Israel's first king Saul was from Gibeah. Only three miles north of Jerusalem, it was Saul's first capital and was the headquarters for his military campaigns. The city was destroyed by the Roman commander Titus at the same time as the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. No one has lived there since (1 Sam 10:26).

PEOPLE OF INTEREST:

Elkanah - He was from the tribe of Ephraim, the husband of Hannah and the father of Samuel (1 Sam 1:1).

Hannah - A barren woman who God blessed by opening her womb to bear a child. She became the mother of Samuel whom she had dedicated to the LORD even before his birth (1 Sam 1:27).

Eli - He was the high priest at this time. He had two sons (Hophni and Phinehas) who were wicked. Samuel came to live with Eli as a young boy (1 Sam 1:3).

Hophni - The oldest son of Eli. He was a wicked in his priestly duties and was later killed in battle as a divine judgment (1 Sam 4:11).

Phinehas - The younger son of Eli who was equally as wicked as his brother and also killed in battle as a divine judgment. He was the father (born after his death) of the child named Ichabod, meaning "the glory has departed out of Israel".

Samuel - He was the godly son for whom Hannah prayed. He could very well be considered a great religious statesman. He was the last of the Judges and the first of the Prophets. If you follow his travels, he was like a circuit riding preacher in the movies of the wild west (1 Sam 1:20; 7:15-17).

An unnamed man of God - A nameless prophet who warned Eli about his evil sons (1 Sam 2:27).

Phinehas' wife - When she hears the news that her husband, brother-in-law and father-in-law are dead, and that the Ark has been lost to the enemy, goes into labor and gives birth to a son that she names Ichabod, meaning "the glory has departed out of Israel" (1 Sam 4:19-22).

Dagon - A Philistine god, the harvest god, whose image fell to the ground in the presence of the Ark (1 Sam 5:2).

Abinadab - When the Ark was recaptured by Israel, they took it to the house of Abinadab who cared for it for 20 years (1 Sam 7:1).

FUN FACTS:

Saul's Family -

- a. **Saul:** The people of Israel demanded a king like the surrounding nations. Saul was chosen to be the first king. He was later rejected by God (1 Sam 9:2).
- b. **Ahinoam:** The daughter of Ahimaaz and Saul's wife.
- c. **Jonathan:** The oldest son of King Saul who becomes David's best friend. Jonathan was a brave, loyal and godly man (1 Sam 14:49).
- d. **Ishui:** Saul's next son (1 Sam 14:49).
- e. **Melchi-Shua:** Saul's third son (1 Sam 14:49).
- f. **Abinadab:** Saul's fourth son (1 Sam 14:49).
- g. **Merab:** The oldest daughter of Saul (1 Sam 14:49).
- h. **Michal:** The younger daughter of Saul and David's first wife (1 Sam 14:49; 18:27).
- i. **Kish:** Saul's father. When Kish had lost his donkeys, he sent Saul out to look for them. Through this event, Saul was anointed king by Samuel (1 Sam 9).
- j. **Ner:** Saul's uncle, probably Kish's brother, and the father of Abner who would become the commander of Saul's army.

FUN FACTS:

The Yearly Sacrifice - Samuel's parents traveled to the tabernacle at Shiloh each year to worship God. This celebration was actually the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. All Israelites were to observe this eight-day feast and in many cases they traveled to Shiloh to do so at the Tabernacle (1 Sam 1:3; 21).

The Menorah - This is the Golden Lampstand in the Tabernacle. Originally carved out of acacia wood, it was covered with 96 pounds of pure gold. The Menorah had a long straight stand and six branches curved out and up from the center, three on each side. The flames were an expression of God's presence (1 Sam 3:3).

Oxcarts - Living along the flat coastal areas, carts and wagons were very useful. The Ark, which had been captured by the Philistines, was returned to Israel on an oxcart. The oxcart had to travel over bumpy, rocky areas on the return trip. When it was going to tip over after hitting a bump, Uzzah reached up to steady the Ark and was struck down by God (1 Sam 6:1-7:2 Et 2 Sam 6:7).

Armor Bearer - During David's days, commanders always had an armor bearer who went into battle with them. He was a highly trusted man with great skills and courage. The armor bearer protected and defended the commander. His name comes from his other duties which were to carry any weapons that the commander needed to fight his battle (1 Sam 14:1).

MAP 1:

