



SAUL BECOMES KING IN ISRAEL

1 Samuel 8-10

In the meantime, Samuel had grown very old. He instructed his sons to ensure there was law and order in the land. However, they did not act in a God-fearing manner, but disobeyed their father Samuel. So the elders of the people of Israel came to Samuel and asked him to appoint a king for Israel. Samuel prayed and received the answer from God to fulfil the wish of the people. But God also told him that the wish for a king meant that the Israelites no longer looked up to God as their only true king. After all, He had always been their leader and had shown them the way in all circumstances.

According to God's will, Samuel explained to the people what rights the future king would have:

- 1. to enlist men for military service,
- 2. to have women and men work for him,
- 3. to claim the best fields, vineyards, and olive groves for himself, and
- 4. to collect the tenth of the harvest as taxes.

Despite these stringent rights, the people wanted such a king.

Through special signs, God directed Samuel to Saul from the tribe of Benjamin. Samuel anointed him king and then introduced him to the people. They cheered and cried, "God save the king!"



SAUL'S DISOBEDIENCE

1 Samuel 13

One day Samuel came to Saul and said, "God gives you the following commission: The Amalekites banned the way at the time of the people of Israel's exodus from Egypt. You go now, defeat the Amalekites and kill all of them, along with all of their domestic animals."

Saul assembled a great army and defeated the Amalekites throughout their land. He only spared the life of their king, Agag, and took the best of the sheep and cattle along to Israel. When taken to Saul by Samuel, Saul professed he wanted to offer these animals to God. Samuel replied, "Do you think God is as pleased about an offering as with obedience? Obedience is better than sacrifice. And because you have rejected the Lord's word, He has also rejected you."

Saul regretted his disobedience and said to Samuel, "I have sinned because I listened to the people more than to God's word. Please forgive me this sin."

But things remained unchanged. God had rejected Saul because of his disobedience.

GIDEON

Judges 6-8

The Israelites had already suffered under the Midianites for seven years when God, through an angel, called Gideon to be a judge and liberator of Israel.

Gideon destroyed the altars of idolatry which had been erected. He asked God twice for a sign to confirm His calling.

With 300 men whom God had selected from among 32,000, the superior power of the Midianites was crushed in a wonderful manner. This brought Israel forty years of calm and peace.



SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1-3

Samuel was a prophet and the last judge in Israel.

His parents were Elkanah, a Levite, and Hannah. Both had been unhappy for many years because they did not have any children. In her grief, Hannah went into the temple and, under tears, prayed for a son. She vowed that, if God would grant her a son, she would dedicate him to the Lord. God heard her request.

Hannah had a son. She called him Samuel which means "heard of God".

Samuel was still a boy when Hannah brought him to the high priest Eli, who taught and raised him. God already revealed Himself to the young Samuel. His whole life long, Samuel kept to God's instructions. All of Israel recognized that Samuel was a prophet and judge of the Lord.



DIVISION OF THE LAND UNDER JOSHUA

Joshua 13-22

According to God's instructions, Joshua allocated a certain area of Canaan to each of the twelve tribes of the Israelites. Joseph's sons Manasseh and Ephraim received Joseph's area.

The tribe of Levi did not receive a consolidated area, but only 48 cities, four from each tribal area, and pastures for its herds.

For the time being, the tabernacle of the congregation was erected at Shiloh. Later it also was at other places such as Bethel and Gilgal. The temple in Jerusalem was only built centuries later.

The tribes moved to the areas assigned to them with the commission to destroy the inhabitants and settle there.

THE TIME OF THE JUDGES

After Joshua and the high priest, Eleazar, had died, the Israelites no longer adhered to the commandment to destroy all inhabitants of Canaan. In the course of time, they began to worship the idols of the Canaanites. They forgot God's commandments and adopted pagan customs and practices.

This resulted in their no longer being successful in battles against their enemies, since they no longer sought God's help. Some of these military conflicts continued for many years. God now permitted the enemies to gain power over the Israelites. The rule of other powers brought great misfortune for the people of Israel. Quarrels among the tribes also arose.

Whenever the Israelites' suppression by foreign rulers, as permitted by God, became unbearable, they cried to God.

Then God chose judges, predominately men, who, according to His instructions, freed the people of Israel from the hands of the enemies.

During the lifetime of the respective judge there was peace in the land. After his death, the Israelites turned away from God again, and He permitted renewed suppression.

The Bible reports about several judges, including one female judge:

OTHNIEL, EHUD, DEBORAH, GIDEON, JEPHTHAH, SAMSON, SHAMGAR, TOLA, JAIR, EZAN, ELON, ABDON, ELLI, SAMUEL.

EXERCISE 1



The cited Bible passages will help you to complete the text correctly.

Extract from Gideon's diary:

The Midianites have been fighting against us for _____ years already.
(Judges 1: 1)

They did not leave us any _____
(Judges 1: 4)

While I was secretly threshing wheat, _____ appeared to me.
(Judges 1: 12)

Then the Lord instructed me to _____ (word from the hand of the Midianites).
(Judges 1: 14)

There I asked for a sign for my election.

First time _____ grain _____ pieces of wool.
(Judges 1: 18)

Second time _____ grain _____ pieces of wool.
(Judges 1: 19)

I gathered 32,000 men, but the Lord ordered me
to use a peculiar election process. Only _____ men remained.
(Judges 2: 2)

I was to introduce the following for the battle _____
(Judges 2: 6)

We put up with three groups, and at night crept up to the camp of the enemy.

We then the _____ and broke _____
(Judges 2: 10)

In a panic, the enemy fought against me another and fled.

Then we lived in peace for _____ years.
(Judges 2: 18)

SAUL'S END

1 Samuel 28-31

After Samuel had died, the Philistines once again invaded the land. Saul was afraid and asked God for advice about what he should do now. But God did not answer him.

Saul turned to a woman in the city of Endor who conjured up the dead. He knew that it was a grave sin to contact Samuel who was dead. In spite of this, Saul made this demand and Samuel appeared.

Samuel confirmed that Saul had been rejected by God and prophesied that he and his sons would die the next day.

When the fighting with the Philistines broke out, Saul's sons were killed and he himself was wounded. He then took his own life by falling upon his own sword.

THE DIVISION OF CANAAN

The list contains the names of Jacob's sons out of whom the twelve tribes of Israel came.

REUBEN	
DAN	
GAD	
ISSACHAR	
SIMEON	
JUDAH	
NAPHTALI	
ASHER	
ZEBULUN	
BENJAMIN	
JOSEPH -	
His sons MANASSEH and	
EPHRAIM received his	
portion of the land	
LEVI	

