



Series: Bible Survey

Lesson: 14. Samuel A

- **Introduction**

- Author: Unknown, possibly based on writings by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (cf. 1 Chron. 29:29)
- Date: Covers ~1105–971 BC (birth of Samuel to David's 'last words'); written sometime between the division of kingdom and the Exile
- Remember that it's _____!
- Context:
 - The time of the judges showed that Israel needed leaders to govern itself, but the judges' temporary nature kept getting Israel back into trouble.
 - Without a central leader, the nation was loosely affiliated, susceptible to attack, and not carrying forward God's redemptive purposes.

- Main themes:
 - God's sovereignty – both providence *and* authority
 - The establishment and nature of the monarchy – seen in contrast between Saul and David
 - The Davidic Covenant – the climax of all that Samuel teaches about the monarchy
 - The nature of sin and repentance – only *perfect* obedience is 'good enough,' and repentance is more than 'feeling bad'

1 Sam. 15:22–23 – Samuel said,
*"Has the Lord as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
 As in obeying the voice of the Lord?
 Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,
 And to heed than the fat of rams.
²³For rebellion is as the sin of divination,
 And insubordination is as iniquity and idolatry.
 Because you have rejected the word of the Lord,
 He has also rejected you from being king."*

- **Interpretive Challenges in 1 Samuel**

- Is the _____ good or bad?
 - God always intended for Israel to have a king (i.e., Deut. 17:14–20), so the negative portrayal in 1 Samuel 8 is not because of the *system*—it's the reasons the people demanded it and the worldly criteria that would please them.

- The nature of the filling of the _____ during the Old Testament
 - Old Testament believers were not all indwelt the same way New Testament believers are.
 - In 1 Samuel, He comes onto various individuals to empower them to do extraordinary things, including prophesy.
 - Episodes like Balaam (cf. Num. 24:2) and Saul having the Spirit of God on them make it murky whether or not true salvation was required for these divine anointings.

- The ' _____ ' that tormented Saul
 - It is an earthly judgment on Saul for faithlessness and is part of his slow descent from being king to clear the way for David.
 - Job illustrates how God in His sovereignty can be said to 'send' evil things because they can't happen without His permission, yet He never personally performs it.
 - Music has enormous emotional and spiritual power, so we shouldn't take it lightly in church (though this can be taken too far since these were unique circumstances).

- The _____
 - The text doesn't make clear whether Saul really spoke to Samuel or to a demonic apparition.

- References to the occult in the Old Testament would generally lead one to believe this is the latter, but the content of the vision and the woman's reaction seem to suggest that God allowed Samuel's spirit to speak.
 - This shouldn't lead us to believe God will normally disturb the rest of His saints, but He may have made an exception because of the unique circumstances.
- Was Saul really _____?
 - There is no clear indication in the text, but there are plenty of reasons to argue for or against it.

Discussion:

1. Why did God wait so long after the formation of Israel to establish the monarchy?
2. How should we handle hard-to-interpret texts in the Bible?

Blanks: one book, monarchy, Holy Spirit, evil spirit, séance, saved