

SAUL: David's Rival

study #2



THE LIFE OF DAVID: Cultivating a Heart for God

Saul is one of the great tragic figures in all of the world's literature, with the added impact that he actually existed! The nation of Israel, out of insecurity, panic and worldly thinking, had asked the aging prophet Samuel to give them a king "like the other nations have." Thus Saul came to power. Neither he nor David "candidated" to be king of Israel; both came to the throne somewhat reluctantly. Both made grave mistakes during their reigns - and yet one is regarded as a disgrace, while the other is revered. What was the difference?

For the following study you will need a Bible dictionary and a concordance.

Saul is mentioned almost 300 times in the Old Testament, mostly in the historical books of 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles. What is the difference between 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Chronicles?











Saul appears 5 times in the Psalms. Using a concordance, find out which Psalms. What is common to each of those references? How is Saul portrayed each time?

How many times does Saul appear in the New Testament, and in what setting? (Note: you'll have to separate him from that other "Saul" who gets a name change!)

One of the best ways to study the Bible, especially when covering a lot of ground, is through a **chart**. Using the chart below, sketch in the major events in Saul's life by summarizing the contents of each chapter or group of chapters.

Chapter	1Sam 8-11	13	15	16	18 - 26	28	31
People							
Events							
Key idea							

“DEFINING MOMENTS” in the Life of Saul

-  **9:21 & 10:22** On a scale from 1 - 10, how would you rate Saul’s *ambition level*?
-  **10:9** What do you think happened to Saul spiritually at this point?
-  **11:13** Use an *adjective* to describe Saul’s response in this verse.
-  **13:11-12** What did Saul do here that was wrong?
-  **15:15** How does Saul blow it here? Is it the same mistake as before? Look up the **Amalekites** in a Bible dictionary. What is the history of their relationship with Israel?
-  **Read Numbers 20:10-12 and Deuteronomy 32:50-52** to see a related incident in the life of Moses. How did Moses fail and what were the consequences in his life?
-  **16:14** What happens to Saul spiritually at this point? How does it relate to what David writes in Psalms 51:11? How does it relate to our standing before God?
-  **18:8-12** Describe the range of emotions Saul experiences here. What choices (reflected in the following chapters) does he make on the basis of those emotions?
-  **Read 24:16-21 and 26:21-25.** How sincere do you think Saul’s repentance is in these cases?
-  What point in Saul’s life does **chapter 28** represent? (What do Leviticus 19:31 and 20:6 say about God’s attitude towards the occult?)

*To every man
there openeth
a way, and ways,
and a way,
And the high soul
climbs the High Way,
And the low soul
gropes the Low,
And in between on
the misty flats,
The rest drift
to and fro.
But to every man
there openeth
A High Way and a Low,
And every man
decideth
the way his soul
should go.*

John Oxenham,
English poet,



**LIFE RESPONSE:
What Does it Mean to Me?**

- ◆ What would you say was Saul's tragic flaw, (or was it merely a series of bad choices)?

- ◆ Do you see some of him in yourself?

- ◆ Despite all the grief that Saul caused David, what is David's response to Saul's death in 2 Samuel 1 & 2?

- ◆ What does that tell you about David?

- ◆ How do you tend to respond to someone who has wronged you?

- ◆ What does Romans 12:17-21 teach about this?