

UNION BAPTIST CHURCH  
BIBLE STUDY – CHRISTIANITY 101

TUESDAY, April 8, 2025

Stan Campbell, *Bible to Go: Genesis to Revelation in One Hour*, (New York: Faith Words, 2006)

**King Saul (I Samuel chapters 8-31)**

After the era of the judges, a prophet-judge named Samuel becomes God's choice of leader. But by this time, the people are demanding a king because "then we will be like all the other nations" (I Samuel 8:20). The Law that was handed down from Moses has provided for a human king (Deuteronomy 17:14-20), although God is supposed to be Israel's King. But God tells Samuel to do as the people have asked (Samuel 8:7).

The first king is Saul, described as "an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites – a head taller than any of the others" (I Samuel 9:2). The Philistines are still around and are a constant threat to Israel. Saul has some early military victories (I Samuel 11:4-11), and so does his courageous son, Jonathan (I Samuel 14). But Saul's faith seems to wane in his later years, and he isn't as obedient as he should be (I Samuel 15:10-23). So, God begins to prepare another king "after his own heart" (I Samuel 13:14) to replace Saul. Saul even consults a witch (medium) for advice (I Samuel 28:3-25), and soon afterwards he kills himself after being wounded in a lost battle.

**David (I Samuel chapters 16 through 2 Samuel 24)**

David is God's choice to replace Saul, but the switch isn't quick or easy. First David makes a name for himself by killing the giant Goliath and then winning a number of battles against the Philistines (I Samuel 17). Saul's jealousy intensifies to the point where he repeatedly tries to kill David (I Samuel 19). But David refuses to fight back, even though he twice has an ideal opportunity to kill Saul (I Samuel 26:9-11).

After Saul's death, David unites the tribes of Israel and establishes Jerusalem as the capital of the combined kingdom (2 Samuel 5:1-5). David sees Bathsheba taking a bath, sends for her, and sleeps with her (2 Samuel 11). When she conceives a child while her husband is away at battle, David arranges to have her husband killed (2 Samuel 11:14-17). God sends a prophet to confront David (2 Samuel 12:1-7), and the child of the affair dies (2 Samuel 12:18).

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In addition, David's life is never again the same. One of his sons (Ammon) rapes his half-sister (2 Samuel 13:1-14), and another son (Absalom) kills Ammon (2 Samuel 13:28-33). In time, Absalom even tries to take over the kingdom from David and dies as a result (2 Samuel 18:1-17).

But David repents of his sins (Psalms 51). Many of the Psalms are attributed to him, and Psalm 51 is a stark and humble confession of his affair with Bathsheba. Later, David and Bathsheba have another son, Solomon (2 Samuel 12:24-25), who will become the next king (I Kings 1:32-39).

### **Solomon (I Kings chapter 1-11)**

David has united the kingdom and conquered Israel's enemies. Solomon begins his reign with peace and quickly establishes a period of prosperity unlike any other in Israel's history. Early on, God offers to give Solomon anything he asks for. Because Solomon asks for wisdom to lead his people, rather than for riches or honor, God gives him wisdom *and* riches *and* honor (I Kings 3:1-15).

Solomon's great wisdom quickly becomes evident in everything from lawsuits between prostitutes vying for child custody to visits from the queen of Sheba. He writes thousands of proverbs and songs. People come from all over the world just to listen to him. And the wealth of Israel reaches the point where "the king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones" (I Kings 10:27). Under Solomon's rule the boundaries of Israel extend further than ever before, or since.

Solomon's most significant accomplishment is the building of the temple in Jerusalem. It is a magnificent building dedicated to God. Following the design of the tabernacle, it has a Holy Place, where only priests can enter, and a Most Holy Place where only the high priest can go, and then only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, in order to offer a sacrifice for the sins of the nation (I Kings 6).

But later in life Solomon turns to idolatry. He has married seven hundred wives and also has three hundred concubines. Because of devotion to his wives and their gods, "his heart was not fully

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devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been (I Kings 11:4). As a result, God decrees that the kingdom will soon be divided (I Kings 11:31-32). Israel is never again the same. It is a sad finish to a remarkable life.

Other good stories from this part of the Bible include:

- Ruth, Naomi, Boaz provide a poignant love story during the time of the judges (the book of Ruth)
- Samuel receives a call from God (I Samuel 3)
- David defeats Goliath (I Samuel 17)
- Strong bonds of friendship between David and Saul's son Jonathan (I Samuel 20)
- David spares Saul's life – twice! (I Samuel chapters 24, and 26)
- Saul visits a medium at Endor (I Samuel 28)
- The death of Absalom (2 Samuel 18)
- Solomon suggests cutting a baby in half (I Kings 3:16-18)
- The queen of Sheba visits Solomon (I Kings 10:1-13)

**Next Week's Focus:** Wisdom Literature: Songs, Stories, Sayings, and Sex

- Book of Job
- Book of Psalms
- Book of Proverbs

**Note:** Please continue to read from the above books in preparation of our Bible Study's discussion. Your thoughts and feedback help to develop group understanding of the material covered. Please feel free to ask questions, send follow-up emails, and text for further discussion.