

BIBLE READING NOTES FOR MARCH 2023  
**Compiled by Rev Dr J Jack for the Congregation of Duddingston Kirk**

You will find reading the Bible rewarding and encouraging,  
but reading the Bible is not always easy!

These guidelines may help you.

Before you read each passage, ask God to speak to you through His Word.

Set aside a special time each day to read the Bible, and stick to it!

Make use of your Bible index to find readings – every Bible has a contents page.

Pray that what you have read will help you live according to God's wishes.

**March 1<sup>st</sup>                      1 Samuel 2:22-26**

Today we see that the sons of Eli the priest were men behaving badly. There is no excuse for anyone thinking that they can disobey the ways of God. Whither it is power, money or political influence- all of our lives are to be within the law. It is our God who has the final judgement and the final say!

**March 2<sup>nd</sup>                      1 Samuel 3:1-9**

God calls three times to the boy Samuel. It was the wise old Eli who recognized that this was a word from God. Sometime God can be calling us but we think that it is someone else and we ignore what God says. Here was Samuel in the very presence of the Almighty and did not know it.

**March 3<sup>rd</sup>                      1 Samuel 3:10-21**

We have to have certain sympathy with Eli that he is a man of God but clearly his sons were not. Although Eli tried to serve God in the temple his sons could only speak evil against God. It is the Lord who holds Eli responsible. As head of his household God holds Eli responsible for the wickedness of his sons. The Lord says, "Eli knew what they were doing but did not stop them".

**March 4<sup>th</sup>                      1 Samuel 7:3-13**

The root of the word Philistine in Hebrew is the same as the name Palestine. It was a Roman Emperor who dispersed the Israelites from Israel after the time of Christ and ordered that the land be renamed after the enemy of the Jews. Their long time enemy were the Philistines so the land was renamed Palestine. Today the Jews and the Palestinians still view each other with great suspicion in the Middle East.

**March 5<sup>th</sup>                      1 Samuel 8:4-22**

Even although Samuel explains to the people the downside of having a monarchy the people insist that that is what they want. We are told in v20 that they wanted to be like the other nations and have a king. It was not God's plan to be like the other nations. When God calls us it is often a call to be different and not to conform to the standards of this world.

**March 6<sup>th</sup>                      1 Samuel 12:20-25**

Samuel's whole ministry was repeating the message that the people should not abandon the ways of God. It would appear that they needed reminding again and again of their faith. We often forget the God of our ancestors in the sense that we have short memories of the times that we have been close to God in the past. Take a moment today to remind yourself of just one of those special times.

**March 7<sup>th</sup>                      1 Samuel 14:1-15**

Jonathan was the son of the first king. This young man was a man of faith whom we are introduced to as one who was fearless knowing that God was on his side in battle. Note the sensitivity that Jonathan has by the way he constantly refers to what he believes God will reveal to him through signs. Jonathan was someone who not only could believe in God but also trust God.

**March 8<sup>th</sup>                      1 Samuel 17:1-11**

The enemy had a secret weapon and that was Goliath. He must have been a terrifying sight and used his muscle to taunt the Israelite camp. Without God in our lives, we can face some terrifying situations. Sometime there can seem no way out and defeat seems the only possible outcome. But God provides us always with a way out.

**March 9                              1 Samuel 17:12-25**

The boy David is to be found on the battlefield taking supplies to his three big brothers. As a young boy, he was listening to the men in the Israelite camp and hearing their aspirations and fears. Unknown to David at that time, God was already preparing him for what was to come. For it is often in our everyday routine that God comes to meet with us and get us ready for that which lies ahead.

**March 10                            1 Samuel 17:26-33**

David's inquisitive mind had brought him to the attention of King Saul. Although he had been accused of being a "cheeky brat", he was showing not only remarkable courage but tremendous faith. Call him naive, but he did believe that no heathen could defeat the army of the Living God.

**March 11                            1 Samuel 17:34-40**

With his exaggerated boyish stories the King is entertained and seems to even poke fun at David by insisting that he be allowed to go out into battle wearing the king's armor. The king's armor of course is too big for David and we can imagine the King and his men having a good laugh at David's expense but David was not joking because his faith was real.

**March 12                            1 Samuel 17:41-47**

Now it is the turn of Goliath to make fun of David and he does this by mocking him. In the confrontation notice that Goliath can only talk of using physical power, which against a small boy would have been expecting to win. David speaks in terms of faith and the power of God. In this war of words it is the faith of the little boy that is mightier than all the force of the giant.

**March 13                            1 Samuel 17:48-54**

The victorious David had become a hero among his own. Single handed he had defeated the giant. But that is not true, for we know that it was only with faith in God was the child able to even contemplate taking on the prizefighter of the Philistine camp.

**March 14      1 Samuel 17:55-18:5**

David was from Bethlehem. This is why the Christmas story refers to the little town of Bethlehem because it had been prophesied that one of David's descendants would become the Messiah and be born in the town of David. David's popularity grew not least with Jonathan who became a great friend. Jonathan admired the godly character of David.

**March 15      1 Samuel 18:6-16**

Almost immediately after a glorious victory we find King Saul jealous of the boy David. Saul wanted the glory all for himself and resented the women singing David's praise. Often after a time of glory comes a time where spiritual opposition will try to erase what good has been achieved. Verse 10 tells us that it was because of an evil Spirit that causes Saul to go mad. This was a spiritual problem that needed a spiritual answer.

**March 16      1 Samuel 19:1-10**

It was the intervention of Jonathan that persuaded the King to spare David. Sometimes we find that those who ought to know better find it impossible to recognize the good in others. A spirit of criticism can creep in and a situation can develop that soon gets out of hand. The king now wants to kill David even although David has done only good for the king.

**March 17      1 Samuel 20:1-8**

David and Jonathan's friendship was strong. David was able to share his problem with his friend and they hatch a plan together that will avoid the king should he be angry. The relationship between David and the prince is one of great tenderness and reveals to us how through a common bond of faith we can have close fellowship with one another where class or wealth does not interfere.

**March 18      1 Samuel 20:27-42**

Both David and Jonathan were dismayed at the king's reaction to David. What had started as a form of jealousy had become an obsession with the king who now wanted to kill the very one who had brought stability and peace to the nation. The king was in charge but saw a threat from the one whom even his son trusted. Instead of being at one with David the king decided to get rid of him.

**March 19      1 Samuel 22:1-8**

Whilst David is finding support from those around him, he continues to seek out God's will for his life. By contrast, Saul plays with his spear and is forever becoming more and more paranoid about David. Instead of finding strength from God to deal with his problem, Saul festers away. There is no mention of Saul's relationship with God, which seem to have all but vanished.

**March 20      1 Samuel 23:14-29**

Jonathan admired David's faith so much that politically he is prepared to abdicate in favor of David to become the next king. When others look at us do they see someone who, like David, has faith in God or do they see someone who, like Saul, can mention God but not with any sincerity?

**March 21                    1 Samuel 24:1-7**

David had Saul within his grasp and could have killed him but David recognized that this was not the will of God. It can be a very difficult thing to recognize the will of God. Sometimes, only with hindsight do we see God at work in any given situation. But it is possible for the believer to know within our hearts what it is that God would will us to do.

**March 22                    1 Samuel 24:8-15**

Although three thousand soldiers are hounding David he discards his hide and confronts the king. David proved once again that he is not out to harm or undermine the king. Because he followed God's way David was given an opportunity to resolve the problem. God creates opportunity for us all of the time. We need to recognize those opportunities and be bold enough to take them.

**March 23                    1 Samuel 24:16-22**

Saul is brought to realize that he is wrong and is prepared to publicly admit so. He, like his son Jonathan before him, sees qualities in David that he now recognizes are the qualities of great leadership. David is invited to become Saul's successor and to promise that he will allow Saul's family to continue to serve him. In worldly terms David would have had no chance of becoming king. But in spiritual terms David had proved that his faith in God was capable of any match.

**March 24                    1 Samuel 26:1-17**

Another opportunity arises, rather like the last, for David to prove his loyalty to the king. Yet again the king can only be left to admire the way in which David has acted. As we go through life we can take for granted friendships and relationships. Sometimes those relationships need to be reaffirmed. It is good to recognize that which we take for granted and to strengthen it by valuing it.

**March 25                    1 Samuel 28:3-15**

In an act of desperation Saul consults a medium. Saul recognizes that the Lord had abandoned him for his ways had departed from the Lord's. Saul needed to know what to do and he was void of all help. He consults the medium in the darkness of night and in disguise for he knew that it was against God's will to do such a thing.

**March 26                    1 Samuel 28:16-25**

Saul gets an answer. It was not the answer he wanted. He had abandoned his faith to go his own way and yet he still expected God to honor him. He had risen above his station and had become arrogant, thinking himself infallible. But it was too late. Not only did the medium see through his disguise, God had seen through his shame and pretense that his life had become.

**March 27                    1 Samuel 31:1-7**

Saul comes to a sticky end! He commits suicide and three of his sons, including Jonathon, are killed. Things work out as God had revealed to David. Our God always gets the last say! The Psalmist says “As for us, our life is like grass. We grow and flourish like a wild flower; then the wind blows on it and it is gone- no one sees it again. But for those who honor the Lord, his love lasts forever, and his goodness endures for all generation of those who keep his covenant and who faithfully obey his commands.”

**March 28                    1 Samuel 31:8-13**

It is ironic that the dead body of Saul ends up in the temple of the idols. It is as if this king who was chosen by God and who had abandoned God’s way was allowed to fall into the worship place of idols. Here was the final insult for Saul.

**March 29                    2 Samuel 1:17-27**

Even after they die David honors the names of Saul and Jonathan. David writes a lament to be sung by his people that they should remember this family to whom he had been adopted and whom he loved, even although at time they did not respond to him with love.

**March 30                    2 Samuel 2:1-11**

David’s first act of kingship was to consult the Lord through prayer. Often we only think about prayer when we have trouble to face in our lives. But in David’s example we see someone who was of such faith that he wanted to consult with God on all occasions and about all subjects.

**March 31                    2 Samuel 5:1-12**

A new chapter begins in the story of the people of God when David is anointed their king. David’s military conquests were impressive but it is his faith that is a constant throughout. Look again at verse 10. It was because he remained within the presence of God that he was such a great and prosperous king.