

**BIBLE READING NOTES FOR SEPTEMBER 2024**  
**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.**

**September 1<sup>st</sup>**                      1Samuel 1:1-8

Despite regular worship this family lacked fulfillment. Hannah's barrenness was seen as an act of God, but her real sorrow was due to Peninnah's speech and conduct. Here was a woman who, regular in worship, acted in a way that tormented and humiliated the other. Regularity of worship is, in itself, no guarantee of Godly behaviour.

**September 2<sup>nd</sup>**                      1Sam.1:9-18

Once Hannah's distress was so great that she cried bitterly as she prayed. She did not wish a son for her own good, but that she might glorify God. Her prayer was so intense and prolonged, that Eli the priest thought she was drunk!

**September 3<sup>rd</sup>**                      1Sam.1:19-28

Hannah's pregnancy is seen as a direct answer to prayer. Note the link between human action and divine action. For the next few years she devoted herself to preparing her son for his life's mission. Although he was dedicated to God he still required a mother's care and love. There is no thought of giving HER son to God; she is merely dedicating to God what God has given to her.

**September 4<sup>th</sup>**                      1Sam.2.1-11

In similar circumstances we might have been tempted to consider how generous and noble we had been. Hannah can think of nothing other than God's goodness and protection. Here is a woman so devoted to God that all she thinks of is seen in terms of God's purpose and glory.

**September 5<sup>th</sup>**                      1Sam.2.12 - 17

Though Eli's sons served in the Temple *they paid no attention to the Lord, and treated the offerings to the Lord with disrespect*. Here were men who lived and worked in a religious atmosphere, yet they treated it with disdain.

**September 6<sup>th</sup>**                      1Sam.2.18-21

Peninnah is not mentioned! Whether yet alive or already dead, she has no part in God's plans; Hannah whom she despised, is further blessed.

**September 7<sup>th</sup>**                      1Sam.2.22-26

Eli's sons had every opportunity to succeed their father in his godly task. Instead, their conduct became more and more shameful so that now they stood under God's judgement.

**September 8<sup>th</sup>**                      1Sam 2.27-31

A prophet can see as God sees. Eli is seen as sharing in his son's misconduct. Though innocent himself, and a good man, he is condemned because care for his sons led him to

neglect that which belonged to God. The wrong we fail to stop can be seen as serious as the wrong we actually do.

**September 9<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 2.32-36

Faithfulness and obedience are of greater consequence than native ability or frenzied activity. When one person, or generation, fails God, then God bypasses that person, or generation, and raises another. God's work may be hindered, but never halted.

**September 10<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 3.1-10

This was a time of spiritual aridity. God never withdraws power or presence, but we, through lack of faith, may be unaware of God's power or presence. The call came so clearly that Samuel thought Eli spoke. In spite of his faults Eli still had enough spiritual maturity to recognise what Samuel was hearing, and advised him accordingly. A spiritually mature person is a great asset in any congregation.

**September 11<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 3.11-18

Is it possible to imagine Samuel's thoughts? What a solemn message for a young boy to bear. Did Eli know in his heart what the message might be?

**September 12<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 3.19-21

There were very few messages from the Lord in those days. Samuel's own godliness was the cause of a revival. Consider the tremendous pressure such "success" would place upon him.

**September 13<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 4.1-4

The Israelites suffer a crushing defeat at the hands of the Philistines. They still recognise that God controls such matters, but cannot understand why God should fail them now. They still have confidence that God will save them, and arrange for the Covenant box to be with them on the battlefield.

**September 14<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 4.5-11

Confidence in the Covenant Box was misplaced. Not only are the Israelite troops destroyed, but the sacred Covenant Box is captured, and Eli's sons killed. Defeat could hardly be more total.

**September 15<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 4.12-18

Eli could be said to personify the nation of Israel. Basically good himself, he was destroyed by the evil of his own sons. The final blow was not the news of their death, but of the capture of the Covenant Box which represented the whole history, culture and faith of his people. This seemed to him to signal the end of Israel – an end that found expression in his own collapse – his whole life lay in ruins.

**September 16<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 4.19-22

Israel's disaster touches the unborn! The result of man's sin is not confined to himself but reaches out much wider than realised. If Eli's death was the end of a chapter in Israel's history, the birth of his grandson marked a new era, one in which God's glory would be absent.

**September 17<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 5.1-12

The capture of the Covenant Box was a hollow victory for the Philistines. Put in what they thought a place of honour, it led to the strange destruction of a statue honouring a pagan god.

A strange outbreak of disease was also thought to be caused by it. The Philistines were so sure that the Covenant Box was responsible that they called for it to be sent back to Israel.

**September 18<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 6.1-12

When a sin has been committed not only must it be acknowledged, but some compensation must be offered. Hence the whole system of sacrifices. Christians believe that the sacrifice offered by Christ on Calvary covers all sin, when it is confessed.

**September 19<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 6.13-19

The people of Beth Shemesh were delighted by the return of the Covenant Box though it brought disaster to them also. We might think it natural for them to look into the Box to check that it was in order, yet 70 died through their presumption. Was God unfair in allowing this to happen? Perhaps we need to be reminded that divine truth can be known only as God reveals it to us. It is not for us to force our way into that which belongs to God alone.

**September 20<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam 6.20 -7.4

Though the Covenant Box was now back in their keeping, it did not bring the expected peace and security. Samuel saw that the possession of the Box alone was not enough. The Israelites had to get rid of everything connected with pagan cults. God is a jealous God. God demands all of our attention.

**September 21<sup>st</sup>** 1Sam. 7.5-11

In this incident are compressed truths that are often so widely apart in time that they are not understood. There is first a great turning to God, recognizing that “we have sinned against the Lord”. Second, this gave an opportunity for their enemies to attack, and so great fear came amongst them. Third, in their fear they realized that their only hope lay in prayer. Fourth, God intervened and scattered the enemy, resulting in a totally unexpected victory.

**September 22<sup>nd</sup>** 1Sam 7.12-17

How valuable are places and monuments that mark some past event, especially of a spiritual nature? This is a problem for many Christians. It is good to mark a place that was significant in our spiritual development. Yet such “marks” so easily become idols to be worshipped instead of the God of heaven. It is wrong to forget the past, yet the past should be remembered only as it enables us to prepare for the future.

**September 23<sup>rd</sup>** 1Sam 8.1-9

Like Eli before him, Samuel discovers that his sons “did not follow their father’s example”. Here is a problem many Christian parents have had to face. Do parents pay so much time and effort to Church work that their responsibilities as parents is neglected? Do children detect a double standard in their parents? Is there an element of rebellion? In requesting a King the Israelites seemed to be rejecting Samuel who had given all his life to his nation. Yet it was really God, whom he represented, who was rejected.

**September 24<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam 8.10-22

In spite of Samuel’s warnings the people of Israel were insistent that they wanted a king, and God granted their wish! There are times when God allows his people to get what *they* want, not because that is what God sees to be best for them, but because of their insistence.

**September 25<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam 9.1-8

In one sense this has nothing whatever to do with the previous chapter, yet here we see God beginning a new approach which will lead to the choice of a king. Even disappointments and apparent failures or setbacks can be the start of a new chapter in God's eternal purpose.

**September 26<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam 9. 9-14

A prophet was at that time, called a "seer". In any generation there are always those who can "see" where others cannot. Men and women of devotion are more attuned to the will and purpose of God than others who rely solely on intellectual perception. For this reason their words and advice are usually rejected. Even God's own Son, who was the way, the Truth and the Life, was crucified because others could not "see" as He "saw" so clearly.

**September 27<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 9. 15-25

God prepared Samuel for Saul's visit. Now we can see that the lost donkeys were merely God's way of bringing Saul to Samuel. An apparently trivial incident was the opening for a most important chapter in Israel's history.

**September 28<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 9.26-10.8

What a shock for poor Saul! A simple venture to find lost donkeys leads to a sign that *the Lord has chosen you to be the ruler of His people*. Samuel even predicts events that will convince Saul that he was telling the truth. Here is a clear example of the way God reveals thoughts to those whose lives are dedicated to God.

**September 29<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 10.9-13

Not only did all that Samuel predict come true, so confirming his promises, but Saul's very nature was changed so that he was equipped for the task to which God was calling him. When God calls a man or woman to service, God provides them with the means by which to serve.

**September 30<sup>th</sup>** 1Sam. 10.14-16

Saul's father was naturally anxious to know where his son had been, but Saul felt it wise not to say anything openly meantime. There are times when it is right to speak, and times when it is right to be quiet.