

Lesson 1: Comfort



Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The two books of Samuel follow Ruth in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament: History

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel and the books of 1 and 2 Kings tell the story of Israel as a united nation and the subsequent division into north and south kingdoms. Part of the biblical books of History, some of this same content is repeated in 1 and 2 Chronicles in a more abbreviated form.

Biblical Time Period: Transition

In the time prior to the Monarchy, God raised up the great prophet Samuel to guide his people in faith, but the people clamored for God to give them a king like the other nations around them (1 Samuel 8). God relented, but warned the people that having a king could easily lead to tyranny.

Such was the case with Israel's first king, Saul. While he did bring some stability to the land, he liked to do things his own way rather than God's way, and because of this, he suffered the consequences.

Introduction

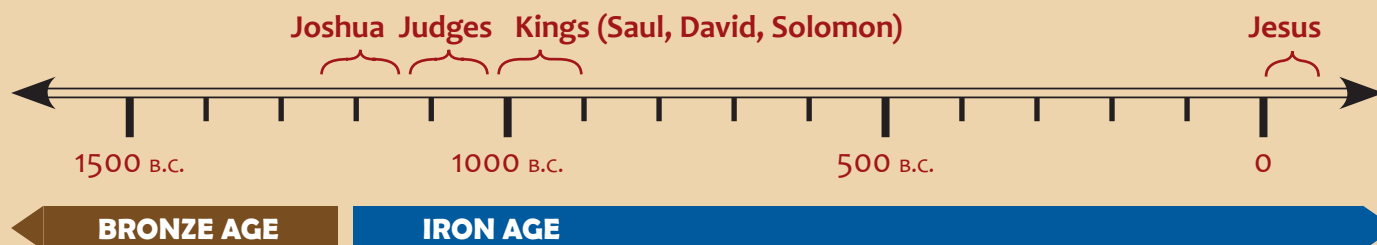
King Saul was the first ruler of the united monarchy in Israel. Because of his disobedience to the Lord, Saul was often troubled by a spirit of guilt and frustration. His advisors suggested he bring in a musician to cheer him up. That is how the young man David first came to the court of Saul.

Read: 1 Samuel 16:14-23

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

When in Time?

The transition from the Pentateuch into the History books of Scripture roughly corresponds to the transition from the historical Bronze Age into the historical Iron Age (around 1200 B.C.). Changes in technology and metalworking brought about the decline of long-standing civilizations and gave birth to new ones. It was in this time that Israel grew to be an independent nation.



Discuss: 1 Samuel 16:14-23

1. In what sense was Saul was experiencing more than just a bad mood? What were the underlying spiritual issues that Saul was dealing with at this point in his life?
2. Scripture says that the source of Saul's torment was a "harmful" (ESV) or "evil" (KJV) spirit sent from God. Why do you think God *wanted* Saul to feel bad? Have negative feelings (guilt, regret, sadness) ever resulted in a positive change in your life?
3. David's music had a genuine effect on Saul. Have you ever been cheered up or calmed down by listening to music? What style or kind of songs do that best for you?
4. Martin Luther said, "Next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in the world." Do you agree? Do you think this is only

something a musician can appreciate? Why or why not?

5. Spiritually speaking, how do words and music complement one another? With regard to faith and worship, what can music convey better than words alone? What is instrumental music alone not able to convey?
6. Many of the songs we find in the Book of Psalms are attributed to David. Page through the Psalms to find an example. What is that Psalm about? What promise does it convey from God?
7. Read Luke 11:24-28. What is Jesus telling us about spiritual warfare? Is faith a "quick fix"? In our lives of faith, why is it necessary to continually "hear the Word and keep it"?

Where in the World?

The map to the right shows the Land of Canaan, often referred to as the "Holy Land" or "The Promised Land." This area was originally home to the ancestors: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. At the time of the united monarchy, it would become the Kingdom of Israel.

On the map to the right find these locations:

- a) **Gibeah**, in the land of Benjamin, was Saul's hometown and was the capital city from which he later ruled.
- b) **Bethlehem**, in the land of Judah, was David's hometown, where his father Jesse lived.
- c) **Jerusalem** later became King David's capital city. During the reign of Saul, it belonged to the Jebusites.

DID YOU KNOW?

People don't realize how small the land of Israel really is. The towns of Bethlehem and Gibeah are only about six miles from Jerusalem — within walking distance!

