

The Story

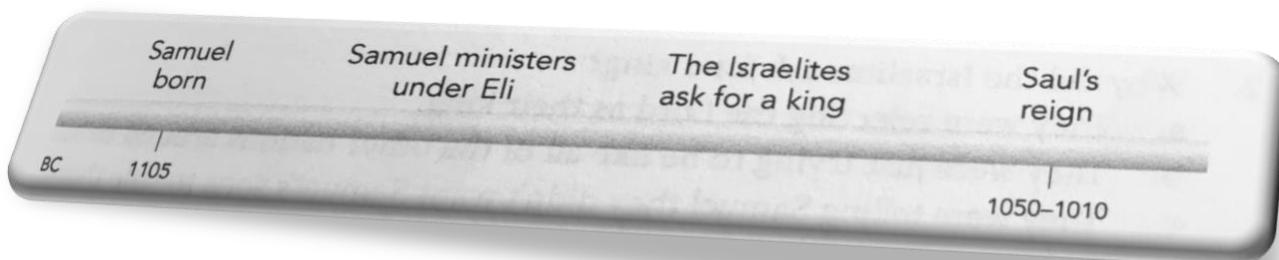
Session 11: "Standing Tall, Falling Hard"

Buhler Mennonite Church Sanctuary (and BMC YouTube live-stream) – March 3, 2021

*"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's; on them God has set the world.
The LORD will guard the feet of his faithful servants, but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness."*

1 SAMUEL 2:8-9 (NIV)

1. Opening & Praying



2. Introduction: WATCH THE SCRIPTURE VIDEO

*"Keeping up with the Joneses is never a good idea,
but it is particularly dangerous when the Joneses are a bad example!"*

- **Reflect on it/Talk About It:** Describe yourself as a middle schooler. What were you into, what styles did you wear, what music did you like, and who were the big influences in your life?

Think about a time when you caught up with "the Joneses" and it wasn't all that you thought it would be.

3. **Review:** As we go through *The Story* together, we want to learn how to tell the story. This week we begin a focus on Movement 2 portion of *The Story*. Read through Movement 1 in review & then begin to commit Movement 2 to memory.

MOVEMENT 2: *God builds a brand-new nation called Israel. Through this nation, God will reveal his presence, power, and plan to get us back. Every story of Israel will point to the first coming of Jesus --the One who will provide the way back to God.*

Picture	Portion of The Story	Portion of the Bible
	The Story of the Garden	Genesis 1–11
	The Story of Israel	Genesis 12–Malachi
	The Story of Jesus	Matthew–John (Gospels)
	The Story of the Church	Acts–Jude
	The Story of a New Garden	Revelation

4. Know the Story: Pop Quiz

- What did Eli tell the boy Samuel to say when he heard the voice in the night?
 - a. "Speak LORD, for your servant is listening."
 - b. "Nothing can harm me while I am in the house of the LORD."
 - c. "Never mind that noise you heard. It's just the beast under your bed, in your closet, in your head."
 - d. "If that is you LORD, make yourself known to me."
- Why did the Israelites ask for a king?
 - a. They were rejecting the LORD as their King.
 - b. They were just trying to be like all of the other nations around them.
 - c. They were telling Samuel they didn't want his sons to rule them.
 - d. All of the above.
- How did Saul make his first public appearance as king over Israel?
 - a. He met with a group of prophets and prophesied in public.
 - b. He was chosen by Samuel as their king in the presence of all the people.
 - c. He called men publicly to join him to rescue the people of Jabesh Gilead.
 - d. He had a coronation ceremony where a crown was placed on his head.
- What act caused the kingdom to be taken away from Saul?
 - a. He lost a major battle with the Philistines at Mizpah.
 - b. He had his kingdom taken away by the people of Israel.
 - c. He offered a sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel to do it.
 - d. He blasphemed the LORD, and the Lord abandoned him.

5. Understand the Story: Video with Randy Frazee

Video Guide: As you watch the video use the following outline to record anything that stands out to you.

- **God hears Hannah's cry: *Samuel is born***

Samuel means " _____ *by God.*"

- **The Israelites want to be like all the other nations:**

This is not the perfect will of God but rather God's _____ will.

- **Israel's first king is Saul:**

The warning is, "*You have to _____ God.*"

- **Samuel tells Saul that God has rejected him as king:**

Saul said that he kept the best sheep to offer up a _____ to God.

- **Israel had a _____ desire to be like everyone else.**

6. Video Discussion/Journaling: Write down your answers.

- First Samuel 1 (*THE STORY*, pp. 129-131) tells Hannah's heartbreaking story of not being able to have children and how her prayer for a child is finally answered. *What strikes you about Hannah's character and faith?*

God opens the womb of Hannah and provides her with the child she longed for in the Lower Story. God loves to do stuff like that for us. Hannah appropriately names him, "Samuel," which in Hebrew means "heard from God."

- *What does Eli teach Samuel about listening to God (1 Samuel 3:1-10; THE STORY, pp. 131-132)?*

What can we learn about communicating with God as we see Samuel's story unfold?

- God's Upper Story is for God to rule as King over his people. In the Lower Story, the people insist on having an earthly king as their ruler. God gives in to their request. *Do you believe God still allows us to have our way (on occasion) even if it is not God's perfect will for us? If so, give an example of what this can look like?*
- God's desire is to reveal his **presence**, **power**, and **plan** to the world and thus restore people's relationship with him. *How do you see God do each of these in this chapter of THE STORY?*
 - * Reveal God's **PRESENCE**:
 - * Display God's **POWER**:
 - * Execute God **PLAN** to get us back:

7. Personal Reflection:

The human capacity to self-deceive and rationalize sin is staggering. This pattern costs Saul his kingship. **Reflect this week** on any patterns in your life where you tend to rationalize sin. *If God convicts you of an area of your life where this is happening, honestly confess it and ask for God strength to change (repent).*

8. Personal Action:

Just like the Israelites in Samuel's day and JH kids today, we are prone to imitate and follow bad examples. Think through your behaviours, practices, shopping patterns, clothing choices, language, hobbies ... anything you might do because someone else does it. If you identify something that is unhealthy, ungodly, or offensive, commit to ending that behaviour!

*"God is not looking for people who want to be like everyone else;
God is looking for people who want to be like Christ."*

9. Double Check Your Pop Quiz [a/d/b/c]

Video Notes Answer Key: heard / permissible / follow / sacrifice / misplaced

10. Next Week: *Session 12: "From Shepherd to King (1 Samuel 16:7)*

THERE WILL BE NO SESSION MEETING on Wednesday, March 17