



August 2024

The Lighthouse

Interpreting the Book of Samuel Considering the Tanakh

As we begin a new study of the book of 1 Samuel, I wanted (for my own benefit) to create a document that would guide me in my interpretation and application of the book to our church family and visitors as I preach it from week to week. I thought it might be helpful to share it with you...

The Hebrew Bible is arranged differently than our Old Testament. All the books are the same, but they are in a different order in the Protestant Old Testament. The way the books are grouped in the Hebrew Bible can be informative for how we understand and interpret them.

The Hebrew Bible is called the “Tanakh” which is an acronym (TNK – there are no vowel letters in the Hebrew alphabet) for the three sections of the Hebrew Bible: 1) “Torah” which means “Law”, 2) “Nevi'im” which means “Prophets”, and 3) “Ketuvim” which means “Writings”.

The Torah consists of the books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy) and is in the same order as our Old Testament.

The Nevi'im, or Prophets is the second section of the Tanakh and consists of two groups: 1) “The Former Prophets” (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and 2) “The Latter Prophets” (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets).

The final section is the Ketuvim, the Writings, and consists of three groups: 1) “Sifrei Emet” or “Documents of Truth” (Psalms, Proverbs, Job); 2) “Hamesh Megillot” or “Five Scrolls” (The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Ruth); and 3) the remaining books of Daniel, Ezra/Nehemiah and Chronicles. (Note that in the Hebrew Bible, Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra/Nehemiah are not divided as they are in the Protestant Old Testament.)

As I mentioned above, the way the books are grouped in the Hebrew Bible can be informative for how we understand and interpret them. This is true of the book of Samuel. It may be surprising to find Samuel (along with Joshua, Judges, and Kings) grouped with the Prophets. These books are narrative histories that give us the account of the history of Israel from the entrance into and conquest of the Promised Land, through the period of the judges into the period of the monarchy, the division of the kingdom, until finally the conquest of Jerusalem and Exile. These books do have a number of prophets prominently featured, but they are nothing like Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah or the Minor Prophets which are all records of actual prophecies (except Jonah). Joshua through Kings reads much like a history book. Why then are these books grouped with the prophets?

Ronald F. Youngblood in The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 Samuel–2 Kings states concerning Joshua-2 Kings, "Told from a prophetic viewpoint (cf. 2 Ki 18:13, 17–37; 19:1–20:19 = Isa 36:1–38:8; 39:1–8; cf. 2 Ki 25:27–30 = Jer 52:31–34), the story proclaims the central truth that Israel could anticipate the Lord's blessing only so long as she remained faithful to the stipulations of the Sinaitic covenant and to the laws and decrees that explicated them."

Basically, the book of Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal document that expounds the Sinaitic Covenant given to the people by God to Moses at Mt. Sinai. In Deuteronomy, Moses is expounding this covenant to the second generation of Israelites who were born during the wilderness wanderings before they entered and conquered the Promised Land. In Deuteronomy Moses reminded this second generation that they had been redeemed from slavery by God to be his people, his treasured possession (Deut. 14:2). If they continued to trust in the Lord and follow his ways, then they would be blessed.

So, the books of Joshua through 2 Kings tells the story from a prophetic standpoint how successful or not successful they were at trusting in the Lord and walking in his ways; about how faithful they were to live in that covenant relationship they had with God. Also, it shows God's consistent faithfulness to his covenant promises.

The original audience was to learn and grow in their relationship with God as they read these histories. Joshua through Kings should be read in light of the covenant relationship renewed in the book of Deuteronomy. The original audience of Samuel, if you look at references inside the book, was probably those who were Exiled in Babylon, or maybe those who were living in the latter days of the divided kingdom. They needed to hear of a faithful God in spite of the failures of the people of God through the times recorded in Samuel. When their world was torn upside down, what were they to think of God and his faithfulness to his purposes? How could they be faithful to God in their circumstances?

We today are to read these books to learn about God's faithfulness to his people and his Word, and to learn from their good examples and from their mistakes. We as Christians are also in a covenant relationship with God. I like how the Reformation Study Bible explains that the covenant in Deuteronomy is of the same substance as the New Covenant of Christ (underline mine):

"Through types and prophecy this book also points us to Christ. He is the Passover Lamb (16:1 note) and the coming Prophet (18:15–19 note). Moses, the founder of Israel's theocracy, mediated the old covenant, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, mediated the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34). The substance of the covenants is the same, but their manner of administration differs significantly. Whereas the old covenant was written on tablets of stone, Christ writes the new covenant through the Spirit of the living God on the tablets of human hearts (2 Cor. 3:3). The old covenant was ratified with Israel's promise, "we will hear and do" (5:27; cf. Ex. 19:8; 20:19). But the new covenant depends on God's better promise, "I will write it on their hearts" (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:7). The old covenant called for shedding the blood of animals; the everlasting new covenant was instituted once and for all by the blood of Christ (Jer. 32:40; Heb. 9:11–28). The old covenant calls for a heart religion, but it failed through human weakness and became obsolete after its fulfillment at Calvary (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:12; 8:13)."

When we come to 1 Samuel, we can interpret it by making adjustments for our period of redemptive history (post Christ, the Son of David), for our different culture, and for where people are personally.

As we read 1 Samuel, let us ask ourselves, “How do we see God’s faithfulness in Christ to his covenant people in our day like we see in Samuel’s day?” “How can we as Christians in covenant relation to God live out that relationship with God in Christ faithfully in times, like Samuel’s, where “everyone was doing what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25)? “How do we do this in our country, in our day, in our circumstances?”

I hope this is interesting and helpful as we study God’s magnificent Word together!

Grace & Peace,

Tim

New Appointments

The Session has approved the appointment of Rev. Dean Rydbeck to be Minister of Pastoral Care for First Presbyterian Church. Dean will be assisting the Session in providing pastoral care for the congregation.

The session has approved the appointment of Greg Mann to be our official Facilities Manager.

Both of these men are volunteering their service to the church; so pray for them and thank them!





John and Cathy Rug

Mission to the World - Chile

FROM FIRES TO FLOODS



Since the fires earlier this year destroyed the homes of thousands of people, the area has been hit with devastating floods. After more than 15 years of drought, we had many days of torrential rain in June. CEMIPRE is located about one block from a river which was close to leaving its banks, and our street was flooded. One of our churches bought sandbags and helped us protect the front of the property. We are so grateful for the body of Christ!



In Concon, the city where John and I live, the land washed away from under 2 large apartment buildings necessitating their evacuation, and many of the people who lost their homes in the fire and are now living in temporary housing issued by the government must now deal with mud, leaks and bone chilling cold.



For our small MTW sub-team of two families, the Grottons and us, the immensity of the need and our limited time and manpower can feel overwhelming! However, God has allowed us to network with an Anglican church to help meet some of the needs of the people in the affected areas. Many are just now beginning to understand what they really need and are working towards a more permanent solution. We are providing materials for one family with a newborn baby who is in the process of construction, (they have chosen to build the main structure from cement block and brick to avoid reliving this nightmare) but which had to be halted for weeks as they waited for the rains to stop and the mud to dry up enough to get trucks into the area. They buy what they need as they need it because they have nowhere to store it where it wouldn't be stolen.

We recently purchased beds for a single mother and her son as well as a gas heater for the apartment they are sharing with a friend. The nights have been brutally cold for an area with no central heating.

Someone shared with us the need of a family with 4 teenagers. They were carrying their laundry by public transportation to a community wash area set up in El Olivar, one of the areas hardest hit by the fires. Unfortunately it is inadequate for the large numbers of families using it and many times fights and ugliness broke out and the family felt unsafe going there. We were glad to be able to provide them with a washer. They have no room, nor can afford to run a clothes dryer, but they are so grateful to be able to hang everything on clothes drying racks on the balcony or in the living room.

All in all, we have been able to assist over 20 families with everything from food, clothing, beds, bed clothes, and appliances to construction materials and machines and tools for home businesses. The teams which came soon after the fires, did an amazing job in the construction of several homes.

We delight in being able to serve as a testimony to God's love and mercy in these ways, and we thank you all for your prayers and sacrificial giving to make this possible.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.

– John and Cathy Rug



Book Report

Finishing Our Course with Joy by J. I. Packer

This book is an excellent book by Dr. Packer (by the way – all his works are extremely beneficial) addressing the continuing role of the elderly in the body of Christ – the church. The book provides guidance and encouragement from God's word for "engaging our aging". I found the work to be challenging as well as encouraging because I am one of those "old retired guys", but according to Dr. Packer, our journey and usefulness in the church doesn't end until the Lord calls us "home".

Dr. Ligon Duncan, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, says "Dr. Packer's book speaks to senior adults, those who love and care for them, those who will become them, and those who pastor them." The book begins with the statement that "there is no retirement in the body of Christ." We all, no matter how young or old, are valuable in the service of Jesus until the day that the Lord calls us home. Billy Graham observed from time to time that the word "retired" is not in his Bible.

According to Dr. Packer, the elderly are valuable to the body of Christ because of our "ripening". He uses the term to describe the wisdom, life experience, and enlarged capacity for discussing and encouraging that only living life for many years brings.

I would also refer to the usefulness of the elderly in Psalms 92:12-15 and Proverbs 1-7 which pictures an elderly father teaching morals and spiritual wisdom.

Coram Deo,

Jim Misner

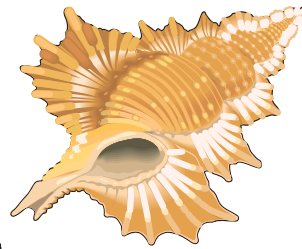
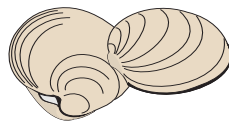
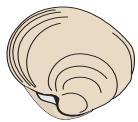


BIRTHDAYS FOR AUGUST



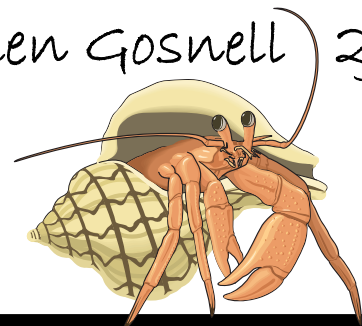
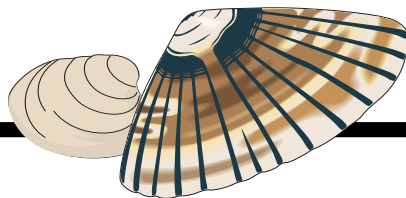
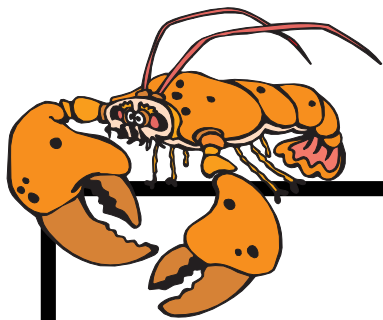
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John Chaney 6th

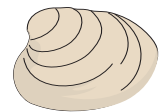


Charlotte Rhett 11th

Ken Gosnell 29th

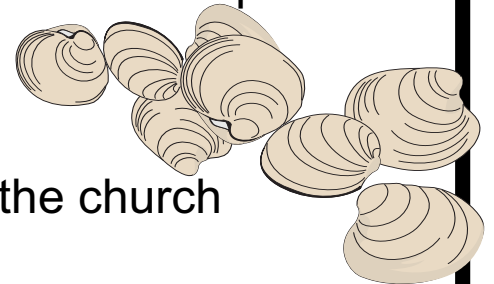


Dates to Remember for August



August 3 Men's Breakfast at 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall

August 4 Communion



August 5 Men's Bible Study at 6:30pm at the church

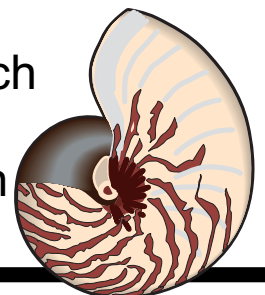
August 7 Ladies Circle at 9:30am in the church Parlor

August 11 Monthly Luncheon after the worship service, please bring a dish to share.



August 19 Men's Bible Study at 6:30pm at the church

August 27 Session Meeting at 6:00pm at the church





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First Presbyterian Church of Biloxi is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in America. To learn more about the PCA, log on to pcanet.org

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Church Secretary

Kim Clark	228-374-6880	info@firstpresbiloxi.org
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