

Believe *His* Prophets

This Morning Watch Calendar
follows the
Believe His Prophets
2019
Daily Bible Reading Guide

JUNE

Each chapter has a study verse to be used as
the Youth Morning Watch verse of the day

A chapter Summary Statement
is provided each day



JUNE 1

Chapter: Judges 21

Theme: Regrets

Study Verse: Judges 21:25

STATEMENT: At the beginning, this chapter seems to show repentance. The people are mourning because the tribe of Benjamin has been decimated. Notice who they blame, in verses 3 and 15. Was it God's plan that they have a civil war over an act of cruelty and murder? At first, they make sacrifices and "peace offerings." But then they come up with their own solution to the need to repopulate the tribe of Benjamin with wives for the few male survivors. What do you think of their plan? What do you think God thought of their plan? The book of Judges ends here, and notice what the writer thought it was necessary to repeat at the very end.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: O Lord, I don't even know what to think. Thank You for the mercy that makes You willing to come down to our level and work with us as You find us, but please also help us to grow beyond our selfish beginnings and be more like You.

JUNE 2

Chapter: Ruth 1

Theme: A Devoted Daughter-in-Law

Study Verse: Ruth 1: 16, 17

STATEMENT: Ruth's story is a relief after the grimness of Judges. Perhaps God meant it to show us that even during the lawless time of the judges there were still faithful people who loved God and loved each other. The story begins with a little backstory. Elimelech and his wife and sons go to Moab during a famine, the boys grow up there and marry, then all three men die, leaving three widows. Orpah did no wrong; she was well within her rights to return to her family, and Naomi sent her with blessings. But Ruth apparently found a better mother in Naomi than at her own house. Her words of commitment have lived for thousands of years.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Dear Jesus, remind me to show love and honor to my mother, or to those who are motherly to me.

JUNE 3

Chapter: Ruth 2

Theme: A Godly Rich Man

Study Verse: Ruth 2:4

STATEMENT: Boaz was an example to his community and still is to us today. Throughout time, too many rich people have been likely to be greedy and uncaring, but they don't have to be. Boaz hires local reapers like all landowners, but he treats his with kindness, giving them food and breaks in the shade, and greeting them with blessings. He also allows the poor to glean for no cost, as God said we should. There is a hint in verse 8 that a lone woman gleaning might not meet with such care at other nearby farms. How do you think the local poorer people felt about him?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Lord, it is a relief to read an Old Testament story that shows people who live by Your loving ways. Help me to be as kind and generous as Boaz, and as compassionate as Ruth.

JUNE 4

Chapter: Ruth 3

Theme: Redemption

Study Verse: Ruth 3:11

STATEMENT: To understand this chapter, we must understand the custom in those days. To care for widows, brothers or close relatives were supposed to marry them, but their first child would be considered the heir of the former husband, so that any property would stay in the family. Boaz agrees to do this for Ruth, but he must first consult another relative, who is more nearly related. What clues can you find that Boaz hopes the other man will not take Ruth? What clues can you find as to how Ruth feels about Boaz?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Loving God, You have redeemed me from spiritual poverty, just as Boaz redeemed Ruth from physical poverty and loneliness. Help me to pass along Your blessings to others.

JUNE 5

Chapter: Ruth 4

Theme: A Happy Ending

Study Verse: Ruth 4:14

STATEMENT: Naomi had been so sorrowful that she even blamed God for her troubles, at first (see 1:20, 21). But as Ruth tenderly cared for her, and Boaz took on the burdens of the household by marrying Ruth, her faltering faith grew strong again. She loved her grandson so much that the neighbors teased her that he was her baby. Notice the genealogy at the very end. Just imagine what they would have thought if they'd known their baby would be the grandfather of David, one of Israel's greatest kings. Imagine what Ruth would say if you could go back in time and tell her she would be an ancestor of the Messiah!

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: God, we never know what eventual results You might bring from our smallest choices. Let me always remember to refer all decisions to You and make good ones.

JUNE 6

Chapter: 1 Samuel 1

Theme: Hannah's Prayers

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 1:11

STATEMENT: One of the problems that came from disobeying God's laws was the practice of having more than one wife—never a good idea! Elkanah loved Hannah best, but Peninnah had children, so of course Peninnah made Hannah's life miserable. Hannah knew no one could help her but God, so she took her problem straight to Him. And He answered her prayer. When Samuel was only a little boy, perhaps 5 to 7 years old, she gave him back to the Lord as she had promised.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Father, I, too, ask for Your help with any family issues. I am grateful for any adults in my life who have dedicated me to You, and now that I am older, I confirm that dedication and choose to follow You.

JUNE 7

Chapter: 1 Samuel 2

Theme: Samuel's Boyhood

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 2:26

STATEMENT: There are three sections in this chapter. First is Hannah's song of thanksgiving, which is a beautiful thing, and very interesting to compare with Mary's, in Luke 1. Then we are given a description of the unrepentant sinfulness of Eli's sons, who were supposed to be serving the Lord as priests and instead oppressed the people and were blasphemous concerning their offerings. There's a little interlude about Samuel and his mother, and then, very interestingly, a specific and strongly worded warning direct from God to Eli, through a man of God. Will Eli repent and put his house in order?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Lord God, as I've studied I've noticed that the times You are most upset is when people are harming other, vulnerable people, especially if they are using Your name to do it! Help me to be faithful and compassionate with all.

JUNE 8

Chapter: 1 Samuel 3

Theme: Samuel Listens and Obeys

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 3:10

STATEMENT: Here is the story we all know and love about Samuel. It's a beautiful example of someone listening and obeying. But it's in a sad context. Notice verse 1—words from God are rare. They do happen, though; Eli just had one in the previous chapter, perhaps a little time before this, because God was giving him time to do something if he would. He didn't. His sons continued their crimes. Now God calls a young boy to pass along the final sentence. Imagine how hard that was! We can tell from verse 17 that Samuel didn't want to give the message. But he did. Eli submitted to God, but he still didn't try to change his sons' behavior.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Speak, Lord, Thy servant heareth. Whatever You tell me, I will do, wherever You send me, I will go.

JUNE 9

Chapter: 1 Samuel 4

Theme: The Ark is Captured

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 4:22

STATEMENT: Samuel was now a young man, and his fame as a man of God spread far and wide. This story shows that the people had begun to think of the Ark of the Covenant as if it were an idol. Just as their pagan neighbors might carry an image of their god into battle, Israel thought it was a good idea to carry the ark, so they'd win. Did it work? When the Philistines heard the Israelites cheering, they were afraid, because, as idol worshipers, they did believe the ark itself was somehow powerful. So when they won anyway, they must have thought their god was even more powerful. Not a very good witness! Eli's sons, as he had been warned, died unrepentant, and on hearing of it, he died, too.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: O God, You show Your power in so many ways! Please help me not to start mistaking Your gifts, or Your house, or even Your Word, the Bible, as being somehow powerful in themselves. Only Your presence makes any of it holy.

JUNE 10

Chapter: 1 Samuel 5

Theme: The Ark not such a Good Capture

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 5:12

STATEMENT: Since the Philistines were pagans, God had to speak to them in a way they understood. If they thought the ark had power, then God would show His power, and they would learn it was not pleasing to Him to steal the symbol of His presence. It seemed to bring sickness and tumors. They kept sending the ark around to different places, but everyone who came near it kept getting sick. Finally, like the Israelites before them, when they got desperate enough, notice the last verse: their cry rose to heaven. Do you think God will listen?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Lord, I know we are all Your children on this earth. Your plan was for the Israelites to share Your love, but when they didn't, You found ways to do it Yourself.

JUNE 11

Chapter: 1 Samuel 6

Theme: The Philistines Learn Their Lesson

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 6:6

STATEMENT: For seven months, the Philistines had held out. Now they just wanted to get rid of the ark. They asked their magicians to tell them what to do to please this powerful God. In pagan times, people made gold images of whatever their problem was and offered it to their gods to ask for help. God didn't need such images, but He knew the people were doing all they knew to do. Notice that the diviners knew all about Pharaoh and his hard heart. They had some good advice—"Don't be like that!"

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: God of heaven, You deal with us like little children who don't know what we're doing. Compared to You, we are! Help us to learn wisdom.

JUNE 12

Chapter: 1 Samuel 7

Theme: 20 Years to Make a New Decision

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 7:3

STATEMENT: When the ark returned, even the Israelites were afraid of it now. The family of Abinadab took charge of it—for 20 years! It's hard to understand why the people left it there so long. According to the Bible Commentary, Vol 2, 480-81, they had been under the sway of the Philistines for 40 years, and then apparently took 20 more to decide for sure to follow God, despite Samuel's efforts. The tabernacle sat empty—no ark, no festivals. But that wasn't what made God sad; to Him it was the empty hearts that mattered. Still, Samuel worked, and at last the people got rid of their idols and served God again.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: O patient Lord, how many generations and centuries have You waited for us to set our hearts on You and mean it? Please let the end of this sinfulness come in my time. Come, Lord Jesus!

JUNE 13

Chapter: 1 Samuel 8

Theme: Israel Wants a King

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 8:7

STATEMENT: Samuel was now an old man. He appointed his sons to be judges after him, but like Eli's sons, they did not care about God or the people. So the Israelites decided they wanted to be even more like the nations around them (an attitude that had been getting them in trouble time and again, for hundreds of years!) They wanted a king. Samuel and God both warned them what it would be like. Centuries later, Lord Acton, a British historian, said, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." When one person gets a lot of power over other people, it usually doesn't end well. But the people wouldn't listen. So God said, "Fine, give them a king."

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Mighty King, You are the only king I want. I will obey earthly authorities, and try to be a witness to You in so doing, but I wish You alone to direct my ways.

JUNE 14

Chapter: 1 Samuel 9

Theme: A Good Man

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 9:16

STATEMENT: Saul is about to become an excellent example of the corrupting influence of power. As a young man, he is industrious, faithful, responsible, kind, and humble. God chooses him for an important position—to be the first king of Israel. He knows nothing of that in this story. He is simply out looking for some donkeys who have wandered away. He and his servant go to find Samuel because they hope he might know where their donkeys are. And so he does; he tells them the donkeys have been found. But he also invites Saul to eat with him. Saul doesn't know why he, of all people, is being given such an honor.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Dear God, whatever task You choose me for, I hope I will be humble and responsible, too. But I want to stay that way all my life!

JUNE 15

Chapter: 1 Samuel 10

Theme: A Changed Man

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 10:9

STATEMENT: Those who think one is saved forever and can never go back on that decision should take note of this story. Here, to reassure young Saul that this astonishing thing is really from God, Samuel prophesies a series of strange events. More importantly, he says God will “change Saul into a different man.” And God does. The Holy Spirit enters Saul and he even prophesies. Then, when the time comes to acclaim him as king, he is too timid and hides. This is clearly a man who will be a good king—or he should be. The Israelites are happy. They have a king like everybody else. Will they ever regret this day?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: King of the universe, You can even work within the mistakes we are making. You warned the people they should stick with You as king, but when they didn’t, You worked to get them the best human king You could. Thank You for Your patience!

JUNE 16

Chapter: 1 Samuel 11

Theme: A Kingly Act

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 11:13

STATEMENT: In verse 26 of the last chapter, we are told that Saul, though officially chosen as king, just went back home and back to work. In this chapter, we see that he was at work in his fields as usual when the news came to him that Ammonites had gruesomely threatened some of his people. Suddenly, it seems that Saul realizes his responsibilities as king—and so does everyone else. When he sends for soldiers, they come from everywhere, and they defeat the Ammonites soundly. Then, in verses 14 and 15, they go to God at Gilgal and make Saul king indeed.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Mighty One, when You give me some new work to do, I sometimes don’t know what to do, at first. I go on with my daily life, and You make it clear.

JUNE 17

Chapter: 1 Samuel 12

Theme: A New Covenant

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 12:22

STATEMENT: While they are all together, Samuel has more words of wisdom for them. He tells them an abbreviated version of their story, to remind them who they are and where they came from. He reminds them that they were wrong to turn from God to a human king, but he also reassures them that God is still willing to lead both them and their king if they are faithful. He promises to continue to pray for them as he always has. (He is old, and believes his work will soon be ended, but he is wrong about that.) Is there a person of God who prays faithfully for you?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Holy One, I thank You for those who pray for me and lead me and seek to help me be the best that I can be.

JUNE 18

Chapter: 1 Samuel 13

Theme: The Rebuke

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 13:14

STATEMENT: The Hebrew of verse 1 is entirely obscure (see BC, Vol 2, pp 506-7) so we don't know how long Saul had reigned when this took place. But it is clear that power had begun to corrupt him. Facing an important battle with the Philistines, Saul was supposed to wait on Samuel to bless them. Impatient of waiting, he offered sacrifices himself, which he was not allowed to do, since he was neither priest nor prophet. It was a serious mistake, and showed his heart beginning to turn away from God already. Samuel rebuked him and warned him of the faltering of his kingdom, but it will become apparent that as king, Saul will consider himself above even God's law.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Dear Lord, help me never to make the mistake of doing whatever I think is the best thing to do, without even asking You.

JUNE 19

Chapter: 1 Samuel 14

Theme: Saul and Jonathan

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 14:45

STATEMENT: This is a long and complicated chapter, telling a story with some interesting twists and turns. It is most valuable as a demonstration of the difference between Saul and his son, Jonathan. Saul did whatever he thought was right and seems to only ask God for form's sake, since he doesn't even care if God doesn't answer (v. 37) and makes foolish vows for the whole army, all of whom can't possibly all hear everything he says. Jonathan, on the other hand, acts wisely and thoughtfully, asking God to show him clearly by signs (v. 10, 12) and also recognizing commonsense (v. 29, 30). When things don't go his own way, Saul has fallen so far that he is willing to kill his own son for nothing.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Lord, preserve Your people from leaders who think they know it all! I'd rather be more like Jonathan.

JUNE 20

Chapter: 1 Samuel 15

Theme: Saul's Fall

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22

STATEMENT: Here we see the results of Saul's pride and arrogance. Not only does he disobey, doing what seems right to him rather than what God says, but he makes excuses when he's caught. From this point, he is rejected by God as king over Israel, but it will take years before he is overcome, and he never will submit in his own mind. The saddest part of the story is Samuel's grief. He has loved Saul as if he were a son. Resolve that you will never cause grief to your parents or other leaders by rebelling against God.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Dear God, You have cared for me, and You have sent parents or others who have cared for me. I will be faithful to You and never give them cause to mourn my rebellion.

JUNE 21

Chapter: 1 Samuel 16

Theme: God Chooses a New King

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7

STATEMENT: God tells Samuel to accept reality and put aside his mourning for Saul; Saul has made his decision and will not change. God sends Samuel to Bethlehem to Jesse, who has fine sons, all of whom Samuel thinks would make good kings. Little does he know that God's eye is on the youngest and least likely son—David the shepherd boy. We will be studying the story of David for many weeks. As you study his life, you will see that he makes mistakes as bad as or worse than Saul's, but there is one crucial difference between the two men: David always repents.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Shepherd of the world, let me be a child of Your own heart, like David. I will try not to make bad mistakes, but whatever mistakes I make, I want to always repent and turn back to You.

JUNE 22

Chapter: 1 Samuel 17

Theme: Goliath

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 17:45

STATEMENT: Note that the story of David playing the harp for Saul in chapter 16 is out of order. He may have been playing now and then for the king, but he can't be his armor bearer yet before the end of this chapter. Sometimes stories got mixed up in the old days. You are probably familiar with the story of David and Goliath, but try to read it as if you have never heard it before, and in your imagination, put yourself there in the story. What new insights jump out at you when you do this?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Lord, there are giants in my life, too. There are temptations and false beliefs that try to make me believe they are bigger than You are. They may be bigger than me, but they are not bigger than You! Don't let me forget that.

JUNE 23

Chapter: 1 Samuel 18

Theme: David and Jonathan

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 18:3

STATEMENT: David is now more than an occasional harper for the king; he becomes part of his household. And a miracle happens: David and Jonathan, the son of Saul who should be the next king in the human order of things, become beloved friends. This chapter begins the long and sorry story of the years between God choosing David to be the next king, and his actually becoming king. Saul had turned completely from the Lord (the evil spirit is not “from the Lord,” but the Lord has stopped protecting Saul against the evil he invites into his life), so he became increasingly mentally unstable and increasingly threatened by David’s success, even though he himself was the one who sent David to battle for him.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: My God and King, thank You for the beloved friends I have, who help me to stay close to You. Protect me from so-called friends who do the opposite.

JUNE 24

Chapter: 1 Samuel 19

Theme: Saul’s Increasing Instability

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 19:1

STATEMENT: For a time, Jonathan was able to calm his father’s fits of murderous rage and David could be with him and be his army commander. But Saul was still in rebellion from God, and the evil spirits could do as they pleased with him. More and more, he went after David, whose military successes threatened Saul. This chapter ends with an odd story in which several groups of messengers fall into prophetic trances, and finally, Saul does, too. Remember when he prophesied from an honest heart when he first was anointed (Ch. 10)? The Bible Commentary suggests that possibly here the Holy Spirit pleaded with Saul for the last time (V. 2, 548).

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: O Lord, I promise I’ll always listen to You! Don’t ever let me get so far gone in my own inner confusion that I turn from You completely!

JUNE 25

Chapter: 1 Samuel 20

Theme: Separation

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 20:41, 42

STATEMENT: David was in despair. It was clear that Saul would not rest until he was dead, and he felt he should flee. Jonathan begged him to say, promising that he would find out for sure what mind his father was in. But it became clear that Saul was now fully against David. Jonathan communicated the truth by their prearranged signals, and the two friends were separated. They didn't know if they would see each other again. The friendship of these two is one of the best examples of godly brotherly love in the Bible. Do you have a best friend like this?

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Best Friend of my soul, thank You for the good friends You have sent me. Help me to "have their back" as they have mine.

JUNE 26

Chapter: 1 Samuel 21

Theme: David on the Run

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 21:6

STATEMENT: David's life grew progressively more difficult as he tried to stay one step ahead of Saul. In this incident, he and his men were hungry and asked a priest for food. The priest didn't have anything but the special showbread, but it was apparently about to be replaced with new bread, so the priest let David and his men have it. Jesus will use this as an example of people's needs having higher priority than mere rules, in Matt. 12:3, 4. David fled from there to Gath, but had to pretend he was crazy so the king of Gath wouldn't be threatened by him.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Father, I am grateful I don't have to live my life on the run like David. But help me to have faith as he did, for whatever troubles may come my way.

JUNE 29

Chapter: 1 Samuel 24

Theme: Saul's Instability and David's Mercy

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 24:6

STATEMENT: Finally, David had a chance to end his constant danger. He could kill Saul and his men, and take the throne, which God has already said is his by right. His men think he should do it. David, however, has such a tender conscience he even feels badly for cutting off a bit of robe, just to prove how close he'd been. He points out to Saul that he could have killed him and begs for reconciliation. Saul weeps in regret, and speaks words of kindness and favor to David. But David knows better than to trust that this change of heart will last.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Maker and Master of earthly kings, You knew Saul's heart—David's, too. Saul is a sad example of what happens if someone turns away and keeps on turning away. David would have willingly forgiven and made friends, but Saul did not really repent. I want to be like David, not Saul.

JUNE 30

Chapter: 1 Samuel 25

Theme: Abigail's Wisdom

Study Verse: 1 Samuel 25:32, 33

STATEMENT: David always protected the innocent, and he and his men had watched over rich, Nabal's shepherds and servants. Yet now, when David politely seeks some supplies, Nabol (whose name means Fool) responds with rude arrogance. David's failing is a quick temper, and he is about to take vengeance, but Nabol's wife, Abigail, moves quickly and wisely. She points out that if he responds by shedding blood he'll only regret it. David here shows the biggest difference between him and Saul, and the reason he is called "a man after God's own heart." He may make mistakes, but he quickly repents when he is shown his wrong.

RESPONSE: _____

PRAYER: Merciful God, David is one of those who shows the world what it means to repent and humbly seek Your forgiveness. Help me to remember his example when I lose my own temper, or sin in any other way.