

1 Samuel

"The Rise of the Kingdom"

Background Information

First and Second Samuel were originally one book, but were divided when the Old Testament was translated into Greek. In this original dividing, they were called "The First and Second Books of Kingdoms." The Latin Vulgate listed these books as "First and Second Kings," with our books of those titles being "Third and Fourth Kings."

Author is unknown, although both _____ and _____ are possible answers, based on 1 Chronicles 29:29. Some suggest that Samuel wrote the portions about his life, and others filled in the rest by inspiration. Other suggestions are Hezekiah and Ezra.

The book was likely not completed until after the time of Solomon (see 1 Samuel 27:6), but before the exile.

Time Covered and Outline

Being narrative books, it is easy to list the time covered. 1 Samuel begins with the birth of Samuel and ends with the death of King Saul. In this time, about 115 years elapses.

The outline of 1 Samuel easily flows among three major characters:

I. Samuel

- A. Samuel the prophet (1:1-4:1)
- B. Samuel the judge (4:1-7:17)

II. Saul

- A. The rise of Saul to the kingship (8-12)
- B. The decline of Saul's morals and the kingdom (13-15)

III. David

- A. David the moral young man (16-17)
- B. David driven from the royal court, but friends with Jonathan (18-20)
- C. David on the run from Saul (21:1-28:2)
- D. Death of Saul (28:3-31:13)

**Five Well-Known
Accounts from 1 Samuel**
Hannah's prayer (1-2)
"We want a king" (8)
Saul not destroying Amalekites (15)
David and Goliath (17)
David and Jonathan (18-23)

Major Themes

- Covenant extended to the kingdom (2:10)
- Sin, both personal and national
- Friendship
- Faith

God's Character in 1 Samuel

Holiness (2:2)

Wisdom (2:3)

Wrath (5:6; 6:19; 7:10; 31:6)

Providence (2:7-8; 6:7-10; 30:6)

Sovereign (9:17; 16:12-13)

Powerful (14:6)

Jesus in 1 Samuel

Hannah's prayer in 2:10 anticipates a future king of God's people. It is also remarkably similar to the words of praise uttered by Mary upon the promise that she will bear the Messiah (Luke 2:46-55).

Key Words in 1 Samuel

Hears (Hebrew *shama*); "to listen" or "to obey." 1:13; 2:23; 4:14; 7:9; 8:18; 17:11; 23:11

King (Hebrew *melek*); 2:10; 8:6; 10:24; 15:11; 18:22; 21:11; 21:16; 24:20

Utterly destroyed (Hebrew *charam*); 6 times in chapter 15 (verses 3,8,9,15, 18, 20)

Elsewhere in the World...

In 1190 BC (likely just before Samuel's birth), the Trojan War occurs.

About 1100 BC, the Phoenician's develop a script alphabet.

Elsewhere in Scripture...

1. First Chronicles 1:1-9:44 provide an overview and chronology of names leading up to and including the events of 1 Samuel.
2. Several of David's psalms were written as a result of events found in the text of 1 Samuel:

Psalms 59	1 Samuel 20
Psalms 34, 52, and 56	1 Samuel 21
Psalms 57 and 142	1 Samuel 22
Psalms 54	1 Samuel 23

William S. Deal shares these words about the purpose of the book of 1 Samuel:

"Throughout the book the thought of God's supreme leadership in national affairs is uppermost. The writer apparently had in mind to give his readers the *reason* for the *failure* of the leadership of King Saul. To all leaders who afterward would disobey God, it is a warning that their kingdoms could end in miserable failure."

(*Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*,
page 87)