

NAME

The name Samuel means “asked of God.” The title does not mean that Samuel wrote the book but simply that his account occurs first and so is most prominent. Samuel was the last of the Judges and the first of the prophets (i.e. as a prophet He represented God to the people; c.f. Acts 3:24). He was not a descendant of Levi. He did function as a priest (i.e. represented the people before God).

1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book but divided into two books by the LXX. That division was followed copied by the Vulgate. The first book of Samuel leads what has been called the three “double books” of the Old Testament (i.e. 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, and 1 & 2 Chronicles). These three double books form a complete section which records the rise, establishment, expansion, and fall of the Hebrew monarchy.

The book of 1 Chronicles covers the period of history covered by 1 & 2 Samuel. 2 Chronicles covers the period of history covered by 1 & 2 Kings (note that both 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles begin with Solomon). The main differences are that 1 Chronicles begins with a lengthy genealogy (beginning with Adam) and omits the accounts of Samuel and Saul (except for Saul’s suicide). 2 Chronicles omits entirely the history of the northern kingdom (see Halley page 203). 1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings focus on the historical narrative while 1 & 2 Chronicles focus on the spiritual or Divine perspective of that history. 1 and 2 Chronicles come at the end of the Hebrew Bible in the historical section.

AUTHOR

The author is anonymous and cannot be known with certainty. 1 Chronicles 29:29 seems to suggest that the books of 1 and 2 Samuel are a compilation of earlier historical records. The verse identifies three men: Samuel the seer, Nathan the prophet, and Gad the seer. 1 Samuel 25:1 records the death of Samuel which he probably did not write. Whoever wrote these books used the Book of Jashar (probably a national anthology; a collection of ancient records of honored men or noble deeds) as a source (2 Samuel 1:18) and may have had access to other historical sources such as the Annals of King David (1 Chronicles 27:24). These books have perished. Jewish tradition (the Talmud) attributes the first 25 chapters to Samuel (1 Samuel 10:25) and the remainder to Nathan and Gad. Also suggested have been Hezekiah and Ezra.

DATE

The events of these books run from the time of Eli (c. 1050 B.C.) to the close of David’s reign (c. 970 B.C.). Roughly speaking this is a period of about 120 to 150 years. 1 Samuel covers about 110 years from the birth of Samuel to the death of Saul (1100-1010 B.C.). 2 Samuel covers about 40 years (1010-970 B.C.). It is possible that the book was written during the Babylonian captivity.

See Halley page 199: Biblical Sources For The Period Of The United And Divided Monarchies

<u>Period</u>	<u>Date (B.C.)</u>	<u>Major Biblical Passages</u>
Samuel	1105-995	1 Samuel 1:20-25:1
Saul	1050-1010	1 Samuel 9:31; 1 Chronicles 8 and 10
David	1010-970	1 Samuel 16-2 Samuel-1 Kings 2; 1 Chronicles 11-29
Solomon	970-931	1 Kings 1-11; 2 Chronicles 1-9
Divided Kingdom	931-722	1 Kings 12-2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 10-28; Israel taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722
Judah Alone	722-586	2 Kings 18-25; 2 Chronicles 29-36;
Babylonian Exile	586-538	Israel taken into captivity by the Babylonians in 586

THEME

Setting:

See Halley page 201: Fast Facts On The Divided Kingdom (chart)

(From WCBS notes)

Religious Setting: The low state of religion at the beginning of this period can be seen in the evil conduct of the sons of Eli who were religious functionaries. Yet a faithful remnant still kept the feasts, worshipping in sincerity, as seen in the parents of Samuel. As this period begins, the ark is at Shiloh (having been moved there from Gilgal by Joshua [Joshua 18:1]). After its capture by the Philistines, it was returned to Kirjath-Jearim (1 Samuel 7:1) and finally brought to Jerusalem by David (2 Samuel 6).

Political Setting: The books of Samuel begin with the final judgeship of Samuel, the priest-judge, and it ends with the establishment of the theocratic kingdom. Samuel's headquarters was in Ramah, though he went in a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel. He was the first nation-wide judge. Saul reigned from Gibeah and Gilgal. David reigned first in Hebron over Judah and later Jerusalem over all Israel. The primary external opposition during this period is that of the Philistines (fought by both Samuel and Saul and finally defeated by David) and the Ammonites. Under David the countries of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and Syria were put under subjection to Israel, most of Philistia was conquered, and a peace treaty was made with Phoenicia.

Purpose and Theme of the Books of Samuel (WBCS Notes)

The Unified Theme of the two books is the establishment of the Kingdom of Israel, progressing from a loosely connected, disorganized group of Hebrew tribes, existing in practical anarchy, to a solidified kingdom under David, its greatest king. It shows the transfer of the crown from the tribe of Benjamin to Judah.

A Further Theme underlying both books is the overlordship or Kingship of Jehovah over the theocratic state of Israel. He sets up, deposes, and commands the rulers of Israel. When obedient to Him, they win their battles and achieve prosperity; when disobedient, they are defeated by their enemies and confounded in their domestic affairs.

1 SAMUEL:

Type of Literature: History & Government

Halley (page 43): Organization Of The Kingdom

Mitchell: Transition from Theocracy to Monarchy

In 1 Samuel we see Israel change from a theocracy (rule of God) to a Monarchy (rule of one man). The Warrior-Judges have passed (Book of Judges), and a Priest-Judge has come (Eli), to be followed by a Prophet-Judge (Samuel). With Samuel the period of the Judges ends and the order of the prophets begins (c.f. Acts 3:24; 13:20). Until this period of time the priest had been prominent in Israel, but from now on the prophet is distinguished.

The material in 1 Samuel is largely biographical, and many feel that for sheer interest, this book is unsurpassed. 1 Samuel records the biographies of three very colorful personalities: Samuel, Saul, and David. It provides the historical reason for the beginnings of the Hebrew kingdom.

Kartozian: The condition of the chosen people under the judges was one of terrible degeneracy. They had practically rejected God from being King. The clamor for an earthly king which followed was the natural outcome of this practical rejection.

Key Word (Nelson's): Transition - First Samuel records the critical transition in Israel from the rule of God through the judges to His rule through the kings.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you" (1 Samuel 13:14).

"And Samuel said, 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams'" (1 Samuel 15:22).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 15 - 1 Samuel 15 records the tragic transition of kingship from Saul to David.

Outline:

I. The Rule of Samuel 1-7

- Includes the priestly degeneration (1 Samuel 2:12-36) of Eli and his sons. Their corrupt worthlessness and sin is contrasted with Samuel who ministers to the Lord (vs. Eli who was not a proper father who honored his sons above God).
- Judgment is placed on Eli and the promise is given of the "Anointed One" (מָשִׁיחַ "mashiyah" "Messiah" - anointed, anointed one, "My Anointed" / Greek [LXX] = ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ "kristou" - Christou) coming from the Davidic line (1 Samuel 2:35,36) . This is the first use of the word "messiah" in Scripture.
- Primary distinction comes in chapter 3 with the call of Samuel to the prophetic office. Samuel hears God's voice and is commissioned as a prophet to speak God's words.

II. The Reign of Saul 8-31

The highlights (or lowlights)

1. The Clamor of the people 8

2. The Anointing by Samuel 10

"Let them have him..." - Saul is from Benjamin (as was Paul) not Judah. Saul had qualities of leadership but not the spiritual character necessary to be a Godly leader (as also was the Apostle Paul until he met Jesus on the road to Damascus)

3. His Rejection 13-15 - why God rejected Saul

These show the condition of Saul's heart before God. Saul is all about Saul verses David who is all about God. The cat and mouse hide and seek episodes prove that David desired God's will to be done. David is trusting God for God's will and timing regardless of the personal cost, his reputation, etc.

a. Unauthorized Sacrifice 13

David admits his sin while Saul makes excuses. Jonathan has a great military victory and Saul (Dad) gets jealous. Saul doesn't wait for Samuel and so acts foolishly.

- b. Ill Advised Oath 14
Saul is impetuous and is even willing to sacrifice his own son
- c. Partial Obedience 15
He was told to totally destroy everything. But, instead he uses the spoils (the Amalekite King Agag and the best of the sheep, oxen, etc.) of war in a victory parade for himself (1 Samuel 15:1). In the end he lies and makes excuses. 1 Samuel 15:11 is a brutal rebuke (along with 1 Samuel 15:22): *"I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following me and has not performed my commandments."*

2 SAMUEL:

Type of Literature: History & Government

Halley (page 43): Reign Of David

Mitchell: Success Is Turned Into Failure By Sin

This book is all about David. In First Samuel we saw David rising while Saul was reigning; but in Second Samuel, David is reigning. In 2 Samuel David is anointed king and the book closes just before David's death when he is old and stricken in years. The book therefore covers a period of some 40 years (2 Samuel 5:4,5). In that time David encounters a lot of triumphs and a lot of troubles. The parallel history of this period is found in 1 Chronicles 11-29. In the early chapters of 2 Samuel we view the marvelous success of King David. However, in the latter portion we see the tragic failure with its incumbent trials and bitter experiences. David's great sin (chapter 11) marks the turning point of David's career.

Kartozian: The book of 2 Samuel deals almost exclusively with the history of David. His history begins in 1 Samuel and runs into 1 Kings, and is dealt with from another standpoint in 1 Chronicles. 2 Samuel, however, is the principal history of his kingship, and presents to us the picture of the theocratic monarchy. The people had clamored for a king. God first gave them one after their own heart. He then gave them one after His own heart. By him also the failure of mediation in government was manifested. Yet he, by relation to God maintained even through times of sinning, contributed to the movement of history toward the one true King.

Key Word (Nelson's): David - The central character of 2 Samuel is David, around whom the entire book is written.

Key Verses (Nelson's):

"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever" (2 Samuel 7:12,13).

"The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me" (2 Samuel 22:21).

Key Chapter (Nelson's): 11 - The eleventh chapter of 2 Samuel is pivotal for the entire book. This chapter records the tragic sins of David regarding Bathsheba and her husband Uriah. All of the widespread blessings on David's family and his kingdom are quickly removed as God chastises His anointed one.

Outline:

- I. David's Reign Over Judah (7½ years) 1-4
 - David laments over Saul and Jonathan
 - If David was a homosexual he would have been stoned.
 - David waits for God's timing to take over the north (chapter 4 - ten tribes come to him).
- II. David's Reign Over All Israel (33 Years) 5-24
 1. The Triumphs of the King 5-10
Troubles are turned into triumphs through faith.
 2. Throne Established 5-7
Central capital = Jerusalem
 3. Kingdom Extended (by subjugation) 8-10
The Davidic Covenant (2 Samuel 7:4-17) See Handout: Major Covenants of the Old Testament (from SNS Class 03 - Exodus)
 4. The Troubles of the King 11-18
Triumph is turned into troubles through sin. Crucial to remember in prosperity what we learned in poverty.
 - a. David's Sin 11 *"The famous case of the missing shower curtain."*
 - Against Bathsheba
 - Against Uriah - sin has a way of getting complicated
 - b. David's Sorrow 12:1-13
 - Confession removes spiritual consequences but not temporal consequences
 - See also Psalm 51
 - c. David's Suffering 12:14-18:33
 - Death of child
 - The lust of Amnon - incest with ½ sister
 - The crime of Absalom - especially the public violation of David's harem - note how the sexual sins of the son follow the sexual failure of the father. Question: What did Jesse struggle with?
 5. The Restoration of the King 19-21
 6. The Closing Years of the King 22-24
 - David numbers the people (24) - military census (500,000/south & 800,000/north)
 - Sin not in census but in motive

RECIPIENTS

God's people - specifically the Hebrews...and us.

CONTRIBUTION TO CANON

- Establish the unified Kingdom - The Monarchy
It is evident that God intended the Israelites to become a great nation living immediately under His government and knit together by faith in Him. But they proved themselves unworthy. They disregarded God's commands, fell into evil ways, and were fast losing their national and religious life. It was clearly seen that for salvation from their troubles a strong union must be made. Samuel was ordered by God to accede to the people's wishes, reluctant at first, he finally yielded and anointed Saul as king.
- Rise of the Prophetic Order
One of the most striking features of these books is the order of the Prophets which suddenly presents itself. No explanation is given for its origin. Up to this time the priest had been the chosen medium through which God communicated His will to His people. Now the prophet to a great extent takes his place. This order represented the independence of the moral portion of the nation and the Divine will as distinct from government or priestly enactment.
- God's people established in the land.
- Establish the Davidic Kingdom/line
- Davidic Covenant

Also:

- God can use anyone anywhere - Saul died because of trespass. God killed him and turned the kingdom over to David.
- Doom comes to the supremacy of self

RESOURCES

Gromacki, Robert C. *New Testament Survey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House, 1978

Halley, Henry H. *Halley's Bible Handbook*, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Zondervan Publishing House

Horton, David, General Editor. *The Portable Seminary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Bethany House Publishers, 2006

Nelson's Quick Reference - Bible Maps And Charts, Nashville, Tennessee; Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1994

As general resources I've relied on my class notes from various professors at Biola University (especially those of Dr. Curtis Mitchell), Western Conservative Baptist Seminary (WCBS), and Talbot Seminary as well as notes shared with me by Annie Kartoian.

Additional reference material has come from the study Bibles of the English Standard Version, New American Standard Version, and The New Living Translation.

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