

# 1 SAMUEL

## INTRODUCTION

1. AUTHOR – Unknown, but not Samuel as he died in 25:1. 1 Chronicles 29:29 tells of prophets who kept books. Later writers may have compiled these into books in their present form.
2. DATE WRITTEN – Again unknown but because 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book, it must have been after the time of David.
3. DATES COVERED – From the birth of Samuel to the death of King Saul. The book covers the transition from a Theocracy (God Rule) to a Monarchy (King Rule).
4. NAME – taken from the key figure in the book. The name Samuel means, "asked of God."
5. KEY VERSES - 3:1, 8:5, 13:14, 15:26, 16:13, 31:6

## OUTLINE

The First Book of Samuel centers around three characters.

1. SAMUEL – ISRAEL PREPARES FOR THE MONARCHY. CH 1-7
  - A. Samuel's family, birth, and call. (Ch1-3)
  - B. Samuel's silence – The Ark was lost and the priest Eli died. (Ch4-6)
  - C. Samuel judges – Israel defeated the Philistines. (Ch7)
2. SAUL – ISRAEL HAS HER FIRST KING. CH 8-15
  - A. Israel asked Samuel for a king. (Ch8)
  - B. Saul was made king, anointed and crowned. (Ch9-10)
  - C. Saul's early reign was successful. (Ch11-12)
  - D. Saul sinned and was rejected by God as king. (Ch13-15)
3. DAVID – IS ANOINTED AND PROSPERS AS SAUL DECLINES. CH 16-31
  - A. David was anointed by Samuel and met Saul. (Ch16)
  - B. David delivered Israel by defeating Goliath. (Ch17)
  - C. Saul was jealous of David and tried to kill him. (Ch18-20)
  - D. David wandered as an outlaw and twice spared Saul's life. (Ch21-30)
  - E. Saul and his sons died in battle preparing for David's rule. (Ch31)

## IMPORTANCE OF FIRST SAMUEL

1. Samuel is seen as the key figure in the transition from the Judges to the Kings of Israel. He is the last of the Judges and first of the Prophets.
2. Samuel prepared for the future ministry of the Prophets as spiritual advisors to the kings. See 3:20, 10:5, and Acts 3:24.
3. First Samuel presents Israel as still dominated by foreigners as in chapter 4. It also includes bright spots of deliverance. God will deliver Israel as they are faithful to him. (17).
4. We see God's power over foreign rulers in the remarkable story of the return of the Ark (Ch5-6). We also see God's holiness demonstrated in 6:19.
5. God granted Israel her desire for a king, though that was not God's will for them. See Ch 8.
6. We see godly leaders who did not have godly children. See Eli in 2:12-17 and Samuel in 8:1-5. The parents' walk does not always determine the way the children turn out.
7. Saul's downfall began with impatience for the Lord and failure to obey the Lord completely. We must learn that faith in God includes faith that His timing will always be right.
8. David and Jonathan's relationship is regarded as one of the most beautiful examples of friendship, loyalty, and love.

## FIRST SAMUEL

1 – Here the author tells the story of the birth of Samuel to prepare for his ministry which will eventually lead to the ministry and life of David, the ancestor of Messiah, Jesus. An unusual birth in the Bible usually points to anticipation of an unusual life. Samuel's father had two wives. One had a number of children. One had none. The one who had none was Hannah and she prayed before the Lord asking for a child and Samuel was born. Because she recognized that the Lord had answered her prayer, she gave the child after he was weaned over to serve the Lord and live with the high priest, Eli, to serve him. V27-28 "For this child I prayed and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord."

2 – What a wonderful model prayer Hannah prays to the Lord. All of it focuses on God, who he is and what he has done for her in answer to her request. Two parenting styles are presented here. Hannah exhibits great godliness in her prayer. Of her son it says, V11 "And the boy ministered to the Lord in the presence of Eli the priest." Meanwhile Eli is condemned for his parenting of his sons who were very ungodly men. V17 "Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt." A "man of God" who is unnamed comes to confront Eli about his sons and promises the judgment of God against him and his house. V30 "But now the Lord declares: 'Far be it from me, for those who honor me I will honor, and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed.'" It seems the greatest condemnation of Eli is in V29, "Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded, and honor your sons above me...?"

3 – This entire chapter is about the word of the Lord. V1b "And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no frequent vision." The Lord called to Samuel three times but Samuel was too young to recognize it. Eli recognized it but refused to do anything about it. It is not hard to compare Samuel here with Jesus at 12 years old when he appeared in the temple. There is a great parenting tip in that Eli's sons were "blaspheming God and he did not restrain them." That is minimum parenting, restraining resistance to God. V19 "And Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground."

4 – Israel went into battle and was defeated by the Philistines. They thought that the presence of the Lord in the ark would guarantee victory even though they were disobedient to the Lord. Eli's two sons were killed. But Eli's greatest concern was for the safety of the Ark of the Covenant. When he learned that it had been captured, he fell over and died even though his two sons had also been killed. Lord, make our hearts that close to you that you mean more to us than anything else. There is one fatal flaw common in this story. Israel assumed that the presence of the Ark among them would guarantee victory. They could disobey God and he would still bless them in the battle. Hophni and Phinehas thought they could win victory by trusting the presence of the Ark even though their lives were wicked and they died too. Note also that the reputation of God is great and it is rooted in the time when he delivered Israel from Egypt. V8 "Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness."

5 – What a story! The Philistines set the Ark of the Covenant of Israel in the temple of their god and their god kept falling down before the ark of the Lord. The key in this chapter is the phrase "the ark of the God of Israel." It seems that the Philistines recognize its significance and reality more than the Israelites. The Philistines grew to fear it knowing that there is a real God behind it. V11 "They sent therefore and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines and said, 'Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it return to its own place, that it may not kill us and our people.' For there was a deathly panic throughout the whole city."

6 – The Philistines return the ark to Israel with one final test. Will a cow with a nursing calf leave the calf to haul the cart back to Israel? What an evidence of the work of God! Note the advice by the pagan diviners in V5. "And give glory to the God of Israel. Perhaps he will lighten his hand from off you and

your gods and your land." In V20, the Israelites realize that God is holy. "Who is able to stand before the Lord, this holy God? And to whom shall he go up away from us?" God struck dead seventy men who disobeyed the word of the Lord and looked into the Ark.

7 – The Philistines decide to attack Israel convinced that since they just won a war, they will win again. This time Israel seeks God. V8 "And the people of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines.'" Samuel's formula for revival is given in V3. "If you are returning to the Lord with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroth from among you and direct your heart to the Lord and serve him only and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

8 – The people came to Samuel to request that he give them a king to lead them so they can be "like all the nations." V6-7 "And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.'" Samuel identified with God. The ultimate of this is Jesus who not only represented God but also was God. Let us not be rejected in our witness because of who we are but because we stand for him.

9 – Samuel identified and anointed Saul as king over Israel. Would it not be great if God did things that way for us? He told Samuel that the man he chose would come the next day. V16 "Tomorrow about this time I will send to you a man from the land of Benjamin, and you shall anoint him to be prince over my people Israel. He shall save my people from the hand of the Philistines. For I have seen my people, because their cry has come to me." Jesus will be the ultimate king over Israel and the entire world. He is the only one who is perfect. Saul failed in many ways.

10 – The process to anoint Saul was in three stages. Samuel anointed him privately in V1. Note how God confirmed these things to Saul by miraculous events. Later Saul was identified as king chosen by lot. Samuel warned the people that the key is not the king but their obedience to the Lord. V18-19 "I brought up Israel out of Egypt and I delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians...but today you have rejected your God." Some people rejected Saul but to his credit, V37 "he held his peace."

11 – Saul began in humility and allowed the Lord to establish him as king. God provided Saul an opportunity to establish his kingship through a challenge and battle. Soon though, Saul would seek to establish himself as king and his life and reign go downhill from that very quickly. V15 "So all the people went to Gilgal and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they sacrificed peace offerings before the Lord and there Saul and all the men of Israel greatly rejoiced." Jesus is the rightful ruler but he trusts his Father to set the time of his reign. May we also trust the Father in the timing of all areas of our lives!

12 – Samuel gave his farewell address. It is really a sermon that recalled the greatness of the Lord's deliverance in the past. He called on them to obey and it would go well or if they disobeyed it would not go well for them or for their king. Even though the desire for a king was contrary to God's will and a rejection of him as their ruler, Samuel encouraged them that obedience is the key. V20 "Do not be afraid; you have done all this evil. Yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart." How great it is to have Jesus as king knowing that he will always do what is right.

13 – Saul's downfall begins. He did not obey Samuel's instructions. He was told to wait for Samuel but he panicked and offered a sacrifice because, V12 "I have not sought the favor of the Lord." In doing so he lost the favor of the Lord. V13-14 "And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the command of the Lord your God with which he commanded you. For then the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 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." All of these who fail remind us that only Jesus did everything perfect. Only Jesus is our Savior.

14 – This is the story of the way the Lord delivered Israel. It is mostly through Saul's son Jonathan who stepped out in faith depending on the Lord's leading and provision while King Saul held back and caused trouble. V6 "Jonathan said to the young man who carried his armor, 'Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised. It may be that the Lord will work for us, for nothing can hinder the Lord from saving by many or by few.'" Jonathan defied his father's orders and his life was threatened. The Lord and the people intervene to preserve Jonathan's life when Saul makes a rash vow.

15 – Saul was commanded to fight the Amalekites and devote everything to destruction. He disobeyed but blamed the people in V20-21. How easy it is to rationalize disobedience just as easily as Saul did. Lord, forgive us and let us walk more and more in your ways. We have already disobeyed far more than Saul yet we continue on and seem to be blessed by you. V28 Samuel announced again that the kingdom would be taken away from Saul. "And Samuel said to him, 'The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.'" There is an important principle in this chapter. V22-23 "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. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king."

16 – David is introduced and anointed to succeed Saul. V13 "Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah." Even though he is very attractive outwardly, he is not chosen for what he looks like "for the Lord looks on the heart." There is an important principle in this chapter. V7 "Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." Jesus is the only one perfect.

17 – This is the story of David and Goliath. Goliath defied Israel, and the armies of the living God. David approached him in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. His purpose was V45-47 "I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of all the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you in to my hand...that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand." This seems to be especially for the army that has stood in fear for forty days. Not only is this battle between a great giant of a man and a youth, but also David's advantage was that with the sling and stone, he could fight the battle by "remote control." He did not have to get close enough to Goliath to be in danger. In Jesus is victory. It has already been won. May we act on that victory in all we do no matter what the odds look like, especially in witness!

18 – David grew and increased as Saul decreased. V12 "Saul was afraid of David because the Lord was with him but had departed from Saul." The people did not know of God's decision to reject Saul as king and to replace him with David. Yet more and more they recognized that the Lord is with David and Saul is jealous and is afraid of David.

19 – David had been chosen by God to be king to replace Saul and Samuel had anointed him. We know it is God's will that David will become king. Yet all this time God allows Saul to pursue David, for years, to try to kill him. Why is that? It is not that David is outside of God's will. God had his purposes then just as he did when Jesus his Son died on the cross. They may not be visible to outsiders or even to those going through them, but God is in charge for his glory and our good. The low point for Saul is in V9-10. "Then a harmful spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre. And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped the night."

20 – This chapter furthers the conflict, as Saul remains even more determined to kill David. Yet Jonathan remains faithful to his friendship with David. Their friendship is characterized by the phrase in V23, “the Lord is between you and me forever.”

21-22 – David fled from Saul. Saul killed all the priests of Nob in his hatred of David. David even had to try to hide among the Philistines. David was righteous and Saul was wicked yet David was the one on the run. The issue is not right or wrong, as God will do right. The issue is timing. When will David become king? Why did God wait so long to carry out right? 21:10 “And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath.” 22:21 “And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord.”

23 – Saul’s pursuit of David became even more intense. He sent his army against David and then he himself joined them to seek to capture and kill David. V14 “And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.” David’s life and times were in God’s hand and he so trusted God that he would not do anything to act against Saul.

24 – David would not lift his hand against Saul, because he is “the Lord’s anointed.” V6 “He said to his men, ‘The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord’s anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord’s anointed.’” This demonstrates David’s great trust in God that even though God had promised that David would be king, he also put the timing in God’s hands. This is a lesson Christians need to learn that just because God has promised us something, we still need to trust him for the timing. A New Testament example would be that Jesus remained in the tomb for three days.

25 – David sought a favor from Nabal in return for the favor of protection he gave. Nabal refused. Abigail intervened and when Nabal died, David took Abigail as his wife. V39 “When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, ‘Blessed be the Lord who has avenged the insult that I received at the hand of Nabal, and has kept back his servant from wrongdoing. The Lord has returned the evil of Nabal on his own head.’ And David sent and spoke to Abigail, to take her as his wife.” It is hard for us to understand that what David did in this chapter was right.

26 – For a second time it appears that the Lord delivered David’s enemy, Saul, into his hand. Yet again David refused to lift his hand “against the Lord’s anointed.” David made an appeal to Saul. V24 “Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.” It seems to be the same lesson as in chapter 24.

27 – It is not hard to understand the thinking for why David flees to hide among the Philistines. They were the enemy of Saul and Saul would never chase him there. V3 “And David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal’s widow. And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him.” But does this not seem to be a lack of trust in God when God had protected him in such obvious ways in the past? David is described as a “man after God’s own heart.” Obviously this does not mean that David was perfect or sinless. It does mean that he always confessed his sin and restored his relation with God.

28 – Saul had been cut off from the Lord and could not receive any message from him. He went to seek advice from a medium in En-dor even though he had outlawed them. She brought back Samuel and Saul heard that what has happened to him is only the fulfillment of what God had said would happen to him when he tore the kingdom away from Saul because of his disobedience in the matter of the Amalekites. V17 “The Lord has done this to you as he spoke by me, for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor David.” Then he received the message that he and all his sons would die in battle the next day and that Israel would be defeated by the Philistines.

29 – This is a difficult chapter to understand. It appears that David was ready to fight with the Philistines against Israel. The only reason he did not appear to be that the Philistines feared that he would turn against them in battle to win back his favor with Israel. V4 “He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here?”

30 – Amalekites captured the city where David and his family lived and David’s wives were carried away. The Lord helped him to recapture and rescue them. Since it was the Lord’s victory, the spoils were shared with those who did not fight due to exhaustion. V30 “You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us.” They established the principle because it was a way of crediting the Lord with the victory. As we think of our victories through Jesus, the same principle should apply that we share with everyone. It would be good for us to figure out each time how we can make sure the Lord gets the credit in our stories.

31 – Saul died in battle as the Lord had said. V6 “Thus Saul died and his three sons, and his armor bearer, and all his men, on the same day together.” In 2 Samuel 1 we read that it was an Amalekite that claimed to have actually killed him. There may be another explanation that he only found him. It is interesting that one of Saul’s disobediences was to not “totally” destroy the Amalekites when God told him to and it was an Amalekite who killed him. Saul’s life shows that even a little disobedience can have disastrous results. Yet in our lives we often do not only little disobediences but also large ones. How gracious it is of God to forgive us. How much that should impact us for greater obedience.