



# **The Historical Books**

## **Session 4 – 1 & 2 Samuel**

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Autumn 2021

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## So What do you Think?

- Read the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel
  - There are 55 chapters (only few excuses!)
  - How would you describe Samuel's mother Hannah?
  - How did the Israelites lose the ark and why could the Philistines not keep it?
  - What is your first impression of Saul as king?
  - Does 1 Samuel 15 change your impression of Saul?
  - What does Samuel learn in 1 Samuel 16?
  - What is your first impression of David as a potential King?

## So What do you Think?

- Read the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel
  - How loyal to David is Saul's son Jonathan?
  - In 2 Samuel is David loyal to Saul's family?
  - How does Nathan get a candid response from David in 2 Samuel 12?
  - How does David show devotion to God in the last part of 2 Samuel?

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- These books give us some of the best narrative in the Bible
- The events are broad and clearly described
- The characters are realistic
- Read like a novel, the story is gripping and is like a page turner
- The plot of the story, while seemingly about relationships between people is actually about the relationship between people and God

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- The principle character in the story is Samuel
- He is so big a personality that condensing the story to one book would not seem right
- He is first of all a priest in the service of God's sanctuary
- He is also a judge, like the other judges who went before him
- He is however a much better judge due to his steadfast devotion to God

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Samuel is a prophet that confronts the people with the truth of God's word
- He doesn't waver in delivering God's message
- He is insistent when they fail to grasp or believe the message
- He is undaunted in his service to God
- He is also compassionate and desires the best for the people

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Another major character is Saul
- At God's command, Samuel anoints Saul the first true earthly king of Israel (10:1)
- Samuel gives Saul every advantage to learn and appreciate what being king of Israel means
- He also warns the people what it could mean
- Saul never learns to appreciate the spiritual values that are critical to being the king

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Saul is worldly in the most strict sense of the word
- He understands the role of the kings in other nations and basically acts the same
- Saul's worldview is physical and tangible
- If he cannot get his hands around something, it has little to no value for him
- Saul's idea that kingship in Israel would be like all other kings is mistaken – it cannot be that way or serve as the ideal for Israel

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- God sent Samuel to anoint a replacement for Saul – this is where David enters the picture
- David has the potential to be a great king
- He is devoted to God and understands that his ability, strength and thanks are God's
- We know of his victory over Goliath
- David is very different from Saul – he gives God all of the glory and thanks for the victory

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- As a result he finds favor with God and with the people of Israel
- David's popularity among the people grows and that leads to trouble
- Saul is unwilling to step down for David
- Saul is jealous and tries to kill him – it is notable how he does it, especially sending him against the Philistines
- David befriends Saul's son who offers protection

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Eventually it comes down to a great battle in which Saul dies
- This is where the first book of Samuel ends
- The second book of Samuel is about the kingship of David
- The theme remains the relationship between God and his people
- We follow David's career – there are lessons in his journey of faith

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- As long as David was faithful to God, he grows stronger and stronger
- Early in the second book David is declared king over all of the tribes of Israel
- With God's help, David finally brings peace and security to all of the land
- The people no longer live in fear – of death, war or losing the Promised Land
- All is well – or is it?

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Soon David is making plans to build a temple for God – but God has other plans
- God, rather than David will be the builder – he will build a dynasty for David
- The line of David will lead to the ultimate King of Kings – the Messiah
- All is really going great – peace, security, relationship and a dynasty – what could possibly go wrong?

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- The story takes the same old sad turn
- Confident of all of his success, even David turns from God
- He forgets that God is the source of all blessings, including his
- From that point on, David who mastered the outside world and reigned over his enemies fails to master even himself

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- He becomes a slave to his own desires and falls prey to sinful behavior
- He spies Bathsheba and has an adulterous relationship with her
- He arranges for Uriah - her husband and his faithful servant to die – in the same way Saul was trying to arrange his death
- These lead to a host of troubles in the kingdom

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- David's sons prove to be as unruly as he does
- David's beloved son Absalom leads a rebellion against his own father
- At the end of 2 Samuel, David's relationship with God is weaker than when the book started and the kingdom follows him
- The kingdom and the people are both suffering

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- 1 Samuel has 31 chapters
  - 1 – 7 Samuel restores Israel's strength
  - 8 – 15 The failures of Saul
  - 16 – 31 The success of David
- 2 Samuel has 24 chapters
  - 1 – 9 God's gifts to David
  - 10 – 12 David's ingratitude to God
  - 13 – 24 The decline of David's family

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- When does it take place
  - Samuel c. 1070 BC
  - King Saul c. 1040 BC
  - King David c. 1000 BC
- The two books cover these three major figures
- Account might come from a writer in David's royal court
- Some call it the "succession narrative" since "Who will succeed David" is a question
- Present form most likely after the Exile

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Interesting points
  - **Hannah** – She had no children. She asked God for a child and he heard her prayer. She is Samuel's mother. She was grateful to God for the rest of her life and God blessed her with more children.
  - **Shiloh** - The ark of the covenant was kept there during the days of Samuel. Samuel apprenticed there under Eli. When Samuel was an adult the Philistines captured Shiloh and the ark. It was a lesson for Israel – security depended on holy lives, not holy places

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Interesting points
  - **Loyal Servant** – Joab was David's most trusted commander. Joab did all he could to secure the kingdom by force. He even struck down Absalom because he posed a threat to the kingdom. David never forgave this and directed Solomon to exact vengeance on Joab.
  - **Endor** – Here Saul consulted with a woman who claimed to communicate with the dead (1 Sm 28). He only valued Samuel's words after Samuel's death. Had he listened during Samuel's lifetime his kingdom would have remained secure.

## 1 & 2 Samuel

- Interesting points
  - **Rabbah** – This was the site of a great victory for David. He knew how to win a battle in war. He was not successful in winning spiritual battles. While his army was winning the war with Rabbah, David lost his battle with his pride. He took Bathsheba for himself and arranged for Uriah to be killed.

## Lessons from 1 & 2 Samuel

- God is always ready to forgive our offenses
- Gratitude to God is a sound basis for security
- The highest dignity comes from serving God

## For Next Week

- Read the Books of 1 and 2 Kings
  - There are 47 chapters (at least it is fewer!)
  - Solomon begins with promise; why is the kingdom in trouble when he dies?
  - What is the theme of Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the temple in 1 Kings 8?
  - How does the Queen of Sheba see Solomon (1 Kings 9)?
  - What does 1 Kings 13-19 say about God's Word?
  - Why doesn't King Ahab rely on Elijah and other prophets?
  - Elisha wants a double portion of the spirit of Elijah, did he become twice as good? Why?

## For Next Week

- Read the Books of 1 and 2 Kings
  - Why was Naaman the leper told to wash seven times?
  - King Hezekiah also displays promise at the start of his reign, what about the rest of his life?
  - Why did the kingdom collapse in spite of the reforms of King Josiah?