

Tuesday Evening Bible Study
Series #15: Historical Books of the Old Testament
Week 4: 1 & 2 Samuel
Tuesday, February 19, 2019

The Books of 1 & 2 Samuel: Israel and its First Kings

Summary

First Samuel continues where Judges left off. The book of Ruth comes between them in English Bibles, but not in the Hebrew Bible. Chapters 1-3 present the birth, call, and early ministry of Samuel. Chapters 4-7 relate the "adventures" of the ark of the covenant as it falls into Philistine hands. Chapter 8 is a transitional chapter describing the people's demand for a king. Samuel and Saul interact in chapters 9-15. First Samuel comes to a close with a long section recounting the power struggles between Saul and David in chapters 16-31. Second Samuel continues the story of King David begun in 1 Samuel, including his military victories, centralization of the cult in the new capital of Jerusalem, and God's promise of an eternal dynasty. David's human failings—as a person, as a father, and as a king—as well as God's judgment and grace, complete this portrait of Israel's greatest king.

Who wrote 1 & 2 Samuel?

Ancient tradition identifies Samuel as the author of the first twenty-four chapters of 1 Samuel and asserts that the rest of 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were completed by Nathan and Gad. Today, many scholars believe that 1 and 2 Samuel are part of the Deuteronomistic History (DtrH) and that various older traditions have been gathered together and edited by a nameless exilic editor or editors.

Themes

The lives of Samuel, Saul, and David, presented so graphically with all the faults of the human condition, can serve as mirrors of our own humanity. Seeing how God works in and through these people can help us discern the activity of God in our own relationships with the Lord and with others.

When were 1 & 2 Samuel written?

The final event recorded in Kings occurred in 561 B.C.E. Since the return from Babylon (538 B.C.E.) is not recorded, one assumes that 1 Samuel reached its final form sometime between these two dates (561 and 538). It was written during the Babylonian exile as part of the Deuteronomistic History, though the older traditions that comprise much of the narrative are considerably earlier than this.

How should I read Samuel?

First Samuel looks like a history of the new institution of kingship in Israel. While important historical information is presented, some of it is at odds with the presentation found in 1 Chronicles. Both Chronicles and Samuel should be read as *theological*, rather than *historical*, presentations of the early years of the monarchy. Samuel is part of a larger narrative (the Deuteronomistic History) designed to demonstrate the reasons for the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722/721 B.C.E. and Judah's exile to Babylon in 587/586 B.C.E.

Outline of 1 & 2 Samuel

1 Samuel

- I. Samuel (1:1 – 7:17)
 - A. The Rise of Samuel the Prophet (1:1 – 4:1a)
 - 1) Samuel's birth and dedication (1:1-28)
 - 2) The Song of Hannah (2:1-10)
 - 3) The corruption of the Sons of Eli (2:11-17)
 - 4) The boy Samuel at Shiloh (2:18-21)
 - 5) The oracle against the House of Eli (2:22-36)
 - 6) The Call of Samuel (3:1 – 4:1a)
 - B. The Saga of the Ark of the Covenant (4:1b – 7:1)
 - 1) The capture of the ark (4:1b-11)
 - 2) The death of Eli (4:12-22)
 - 3) The Philistines and the Ark (5:1-12)
 - 4) The Ark is returned to Israel (6:1 – 7:1)
 - C. Transition (7:2)
 - D. Samuel as Judge (7:3-17)
- II. Samuel and Saul (8:1 – 12:25)
 - A. Israel demands a king (8:1-22)
 - B. Saul is identified as king (9:1-26)
 - C. Samuel anoints Saul (9:27 – 10:8)
 - D. Saul among the prophets (10:9-16)
 - E. Saul is proclaimed king by lot (10:17-27a)
 - F. Saul defeats the Ammonites (10:27b – 11:15)
 - G. Samuel's farewell address (12:1-25)
- III. Saul and David (13:1 – 31:13)
 - A. Saul disobeys God (13:1 – 15:33)
 - 1) Saul's unlawful sacrifice (13:1-15a)
 - 2) Saul makes preparation for battle (13:15b-22)
 - 3) Jonathan routs the Philistines (14:1-23)
 - 4) Saul's rash oath (14:24-35)
 - 5) Jonathan is in danger of death (14:36-46)
 - 6) Further notices about Saul's reign (14:47-52)
 - 7) Saul defeats the Amalekites (15:1-9)
 - 8) God's rejection of Saul (15:10-33)
 - B. Introduction to David (15:34 – 17:58)
 - 1) The anointing of David (15:34 – 16:13)
 - 2) David's arrival at the Saul's court (16:14-23)
 - 3) David and Goliath (17:1-58)
 - C. Jonathan makes a covenant with David (18:1-4)
 - D. Saul becomes jealous of David (18:5-16)
 - E. David marries Michal (18:17-30)
 - F. Saul pursues David (19:1 – 28:2)
 - 1) Jonathan intercedes for David (19:1-7)
 - 2) David's flight from Saul's court (19:8-17)
 - 3) Saul goes into a prophetic frenzy in pursuit of David (19:18-24)

- 4) The friendship of David and Jonathan (20:1-42)
- 5) David and the priest of Nob (21:1-9)
- 6) David flees to Gath (21:10-15)
- 7) David the fugitive (22:1-5)
- 8) Saul slaughters the priests at Nob (22:6-23)
- 9) David saves the city of Keilah (23:1-14)
- 10) David eludes Saul in the wilderness (23:15-29)
- 11) David spares Saul's life (24:1-22)
- 12) The death of Samuel (25:1)
- 13) David, Nabal, and Abigail (25:2-44)
- 14) David spares Saul's life again (26:1-25)
- 15) David enters the service of the King of Gath (27:1 – 28:2)
- G. Saul's last days (28:3 – 31:13)
 - 1) The witch at Endor (28:3-25)
 - 2) The Philistines dismiss David (29:1-11)
 - 3) David avenges the destruction of Ziklag (30:1-31)
 - 4) The death of Saul and his sons (31:1-13)

2 Samuel

- I. David becomes King of Judah (1:1 – 3:5)
 - A. David learns of the death of Saul and Jonathan (1:1-16)
 - B. David's lament over Saul and Jonathan (1:17-27)
 - C. David is anointed King of Judah (2:1-7)
 - D. Ishbaal becomes the king of the other tribes of Israel (2:8-11)
 - E. The battle of Gibeon (2:12-32)
 - F. The sons of David (3:1-5)
- II. David becomes King of Israel (3:6 – 5:16)
 - A. The death of Abner (3:6-39)
 - B. Ishbaal is assassinated (4:1-12)
 - C. David is anointed King of Israel (5:1-5)
 - D. Jerusalem becomes David's capital (5:6-16)
- III. David unifies the kingdom (5:17 – 8:18)
 - A. David's victories over the Philistines (5:17-25)
 - B. David brings the Ark to Jerusalem (6:1-23)
 - C. Nathan's oracle (7:1-17)
 - D. David's prayer (7:18-29)
 - E. David's military success (8:1-18)
- IV. Life with King David (9:1 – 20:26)
 - A. David's kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth (9:1-13)
 - B. The war with the Aramean coalition (10:1-19)
 - C. David commits a grave sin and punishment (11:1 – 23)
 - 1) David commits adultery with Bathsheba (11:1-13)
 - 2) David has Uriah the Hittite killed (11:14-27a)
 - 3) Nathan's parable (11:27b – 12:15a)
 - 4) The first child of David and Bathsheba dies (12:15b-23)
 - D. Like father, like son (12:24 – 14:33)

- 1) The birth of Solomon (12:24-31)
- 2) Amnon rapes Tamar (13:1-22)
- 3) Absalom murders Amnon (13:23-39)
- 4) Absalom returns to Jerusalem (14:1-24)
- 5) David forgives Absalom (14:25-33)
- E. Absalom rebels against David (15:1 – 19:43)
 - 1) Absalom usurps the throne (15:1-12)
 - 2) David flees Jerusalem (15:13-31)
 - 3) Hushai the Archite (15:32-37)
 - 4) Ziba's Report (16:1-4)
 - 5) Shimei curses David (16:5-14)
 - 6) Ahithophel counsels Absalom (16:15 – 17:4)
 - 7) Hushai counsels Absalom (17:5-14)
 - 8) Hushai warns David to escape (17:15-29)
 - 9) The defeat of Absalom's army (18:1-18)
 - 10) David hears of Absalom's death (18:19-32)
 - 11) David mourns for Absalom (18:33 – 19:8a)
 - 12) David returns to Jerusalem (19:8b-15)
 - 13) David pardons Shimei (19:16-23)
 - 14) David meets with Mephibosheth (19:24-30)
 - 15) David's kindness to Barzillai (19:31-43)
- F. Sheba rebels against David (20:1-22)
- G. David's Cabinet (20:23-26)
- V. Epilogue (21:1 – 24:25)
 - A. David avenges the Gibeonites (21:1-14)
 - B. Exploits of David's warriors (21:15-22)
 - C. David's Song of Thanksgiving (22:1-51)
 - D. David's last words (23:1-7)
 - E. Roster of David's warriors (23:8-39)
 - F. David's census of Israel and Judah (24:1-9)
 - G. The census plague (24:10-17)
 - H. The threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite (24:18-25)

Watch the videos, "Read Scripture: 1 Samuel," & "Read Scripture: 2 Samuel."

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QJOju5Dw0V0> (1 Samuel)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvoWDXNDJgs> (2 Samuel)

Resources

HarperCollins Study Bible (NRSV), 1989

"1 Samuel" & "2 Samuel," <https://www.enterthebible.org/>