

**OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY**

**LESSON SERIES**

**Old Testament Survey - Unit III**  
**The Book of**  
**1 & 2 Samuel**

for

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## **THE BOOKS OF I AND II SAMUEL**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Biblical narratives of I and II Samuel, like those of I and II Kings, have long been favorites with readers in every land. Here we have a stirring account of a people in their struggle and rise to greatness, and told in the classic Hebrew manner according to the best of the Old Testament traditions.

In the original Hebrew text, the two books of I and II Samuel appeared as one book. The Greek translators of the Hebrew Old Testament, in their Septuagint Version about 270-150 B.C., were the first to divide the book into two, which they called "Books of the Kingdoms," because the books contained the history of the first two kings of Israel.

In 1516-1517 A.D., Daniel Bomberg printed a Hebrew Bible at Venice in which he retained the division into two books, but for the first time used the new title, first and second "Books of Samuel." Since this time most Hebrew Bibles have followed this arrangement, as have the English versions, although some English Bibles have a sub-title, the first and second "Books of the Kings."

There is much justification for the use of the title Samuel for these books. For one thing, Samuel was the leading person during the first half of the historical period covered. And he was one of the greatest of the prophets of Israel, of any period. Also, he was God's agent in the selection of both Saul and David for the throne. And long after his death, his influence over Saul and David lived on.

In the Hebrew canon, the book of Samuel, like the book of Joshua and the book of Judges, is placed in the general division of the Hebrew Scriptures called "Former Prophets."

Samuel is considered the author up to I Samuel 25 (his death), with Nathan and Gad being the ones who completed the writing (I Chron 29:29).

The exact date of the composition of the book is unknown. However, since, II Samuel 5:5 gives the total length of David's reign, the date needs to have been after the death of David. Also that I Samuel 27:6 mentions the kings of Judah reveals the period of the Divided Kingdom, and therefore a date not earlier than that of Rehoboam, Solomon's son.

The approximate overall dates of the period are from about 1100 B.C. to 974 B.C.

The contents of I and II Samuel deal mainly with the historical stories of the three chief men of the period; The prophet Samuel, King Saul, and King David.

### **A. SAMUEL THE PROPHET, I SAMUEL, CHAPTERS 1-24**

- **SAMUEL'S BIRTH**, Chapter 1
  - Shiloh was a town just north of Bethlehem. Here the tabernacle was permanently set up by Joshua (Joshua 18:1, 19:51).
  - Elkanah, Samuel's father was a Levite who remained true to the Lord in the midst of spiritual decline. He regularly attended annual

feasts at Shiloh together with his wife, Hannah, who was childless. Hannah was a remarkable woman and the circumstances surrounding Samuel's birth reveal so many types of Jesus.

1. **Barrenness** (vs.5). This is typical of the barrenness under the law, for the law of sin and death produce nothing (Heb. 7:19 and Heb 2:10).
  2. **Brokenness** (vs. 10 and 15). This is also typical of Jesus (Heb 5:7).
  3. **Misunderstood** (vs. 14). Here again Jesus was despised (Isaiah 53:3,4,10, John 7:5; Matthew 10:25).
  4. **Sanctified** (vs. 11, 24 and 28). Sanctification is 'set apart.' (John 17:18-20).G
  5. **Glorified** (Chapter 2:1, Isaiah 53:11). He shall see the travail of His soul and be satisfied.
- As soon as the child Samuel was weaned, Hannah, his mother took him to the tabernacle at Shiloh and placed him under the charge of the high priest Eli, to train for his sacred duties.
- **SAMUEL IN THE TEMPLE**, Chapters 2 and 3
- "The child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was precious in those days, there was no open vision." (chapter 3:1)
  - The corruption of Eli's sons (chapter 2:12-17 and 22-25) was unacceptable to God. Eli was high priest and judge. Even Shiloh was corrupted, the very place where God manifested His glory (Jer. 7:14).H
  - However, God is about to raise up a prophet. This child Samuel was the product of a Christlike spirit. While yet a child, Samuel was called and equipped by God for a very special divine service. Nevertheless, what boldness this young child needed as shown from verses 12-15 of chapter three.
  - Chapter 4 records the taking of the ark of the covenant, the death of Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Which deaths when heard by Eli caused him to fall off his seat backward thereby, breaking his neck and bringing on his death. Thus Samuel was to be God's man for the hour. The last of the judges, and in many ways, the best.
- **SAMUEL'S REMARKABLE MINISTRY**, Chapters 4-24

- "And the word of Samuel came to all Israel." (4:1) - Cf.,also chapter 3:19-21
- Read I Samuel 2:34-36. Technically, Samuel could not be a priest for he was not of the sons of Aaron (Numbers 18:1-7). It was a time of emergency, and Samuel must have fulfilled something of the duties of the priest. From Samuel onwards, hundreds of years, the prophet was the power behind the throne of Israel.
- **Samuel was a man of prayer:**
  1. Mighty man of prayer - Psalm 99:6
  2. Man of public prayer - I Samuel 7:5
  3. Man of private prayer - I Samuel 8:6
  4. Man meticulous in prayer - I Samuel 12:23
  5. Man devoted to prayer - I Samuel 15:11
  6. Man who prevailed in prayer - Jeremiah 15:1

○ **SAMUEL'S SCHOOL OF THE PROPHETS**

- To make his judgeship more effective, Samuel established a judicial "circuit" on which he went year after year, with his headquarters at Ramah, his birthplace and home, six miles north of Jerusalem. From Ramah he went to Bethel, to Gilgal near Jericho, and from there to Mizpah and possible to other towns not mentioned. (I Sam 7:15-17).
- It seems that at least in some of these towns on Samuel's judicial "circuit" that he established schools of prophets, which for generations afterward exercised a great influence upon the moral and religious life of the nation. There were schools of prophets at namah (Naioth, a suburb of Ramah) Bethel, Gilgal, Jericho, and possible elsewhere (I Samuel 10:5-10; 19:18-20; II Kings 2:1-7; 4:3a).
- The most famous of the schools was the one at Naioth. It became a community of prophets who gathered about the prophet Samuel as their leader (I Samuel 19:18-20). The word Naioth is sometimes translated as a "house of learning." Saul was directed to go there as a part of his anointing, to receive "the Spirit of God." and later, David went there to hide from Saul.
- What a shame that Israel should be weary of the government of such a man as Samuel who was looking forward to Israel's future by preparing men who had a vital contact with God.

- This prophetic band under Samuel's leadership must have wielded considerable influence (I Samuel 19:18-24). It is quite likely that Nathan, Gad, and other prophets active in David's time received their impetus from Samuel. Now, a school of prophets here is not to say that a prophet could be trained to prophecy, **FOR INDEED THE PROPHETIC FUNCTION IS CHARISMATIC**. We assume that these schools of prophets were schools where men who had been called of God would go to learn about God and His ways.
- Maybe it is not coincidental that, with the establishment of a monarchy, an office which could very easily become secularized and dictatorial, God would raise up a standard of prophetic spokesmen. Their task was to speak to their own day and to keep the monarchy in line as much as possible.

## **B. KING SAUL, CHAPTERS 9-31**

### ○ **GOD AND THE KING**

- In chapter eight we see the elders of Israel coming to Samuel demanding a king to rule over them. In verse 22 the Lord told Samuel to go ahead and make them a king. Thus when Samuel reluctantly consented to this, he had no idea who God would choose.
- But one day he was met by a Benjaminite who came to consult him concerning his father's straying donkeys. Samuel entertained Saul, privately anointed him a captain over his inheritance, thereby indicating that kingship was a sacred trust.
- **NOTE**, a strange fact about Saul - Saul betrayed an astonishing lack of knowledge about the things going on in Israel beyond his own village (I Samuel 3:20). Saul's family only lived twenty miles from Samuel. Saul apparently knew little or nothing about Samuel. Saul and his servant seemed to regard him as a sort of fortune teller who for money might tell them where their lost donkeys were. Pitifully, Saul seems to revert back to this kind of superstitious attitude when, at the end, he disguised himself and secured the services of a witch.

### ○ **SAUL WHY OR WHY SAUL??**

- If the choice of Saul as a man fit to be a king" was debated, both the negative and affirmative could score points. For and against.
  1. He was originally humble (I Samuel 15:17).
  2. He was unassuming (I Samuel 10:16).

3. He did not justify himself (I Samuel 10:27.)
  4. He was presentable (I Samuel 9:2).
  5. He was considerate (I Samuel 9:5).
  6. He was retiring (I Samuel 10:21).
  7. He was anointed and changed (I Samuel 10:9-10).
    - Note the particular significance of this anointing and ordination. This new king is a prophet-king. What credentials for leading a holy nation were available, if only he could have maintained his communion with God.
- How pitiful to behold:
    1. His disobedience (I Samuel 15:10-11, chapters 21-23).
    2. His dismay (I Samuel 17:11).
    3. His displeasure (I Samuel 18:8).
    4. His despair (I Samuel 28:4-6)
- **REJECTION POINT**
    - It could be said that God was using Saul to teach Israel a lesson. Saul was chosen and changed. Saul himself, however, chose to disobey, and at that point sensed the rejection of God! It appears that Saul's besetting sin was his pride in his own ability as soldier. Saul had no scruples about putting people to the sword, but he spared Agag, king of the Amalekites. Probably he wanted to enjoy displaying him as a captive of war.
    - Oh the sin that did so easily beset him. Note that Saul's rebellion equates him with the sins of witchcraft (I Samuel 15:23). Saul's rebellion leads him into witchcraft. He now consults precisely what he had cast out previously (28:9-10).
  - **SAUL AND THE EVIL SPIRIT**
    - I Samuel 16:14 says, "The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." Now instead of Saul being a prophet-king, he is a possessed king. The tactics of Satan: a house divided against itself. Saul is now so unpredictable. He who once was mighty and brave in battle is paralyzed with fear when the Philistines gather against Israel. He has allowed a divided

kingdom (satanic) to divide his kingship. Saul even prophecies, but I don't think it was by the Spirit of God (I Samuel 19:24). Prophecy not of God cannot always be immediately detected by what is prophesied. The nature of an evil spirit is more readily discerned by the fruits of the person it possesses and the fruits it produces.

- On the eve of his tragic death, Saul is so desirous of a word from the Lord (I Samuel 28:15). However, the only word was concerning his demise! (I Samuel 26:21). Saul said of himself to David, "I have played the fool."

### **C. DAVID - GOD'S MAN, I SAMUEL, CHAPTERS 16-31, AND II SAMUEL**

#### ○ **DAVID ANOINTED AS KING OF ISRAEL**

- "And the Lord said unto Samuel, How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons." (I Samuel 16:1).
- Chapter 16 of I Samuel tells the unusual story of how David was chosen and anointed secretly to be Saul's successor and king of Israel.
- I Samuel 16:13-14, tells of the transfer of kingship from Saul to David. "Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and **"the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward . . . But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit front the Lord troubled him."**
- David was the eighth and youngest of the sons of Jesse, a native of Bethlehem in Judah. We recall from the book of Ruth, how Ruth married Boaz of Bethlehem and became the great grandmother of David. A thousand years hence, Jesus, a descendant of David, would also be born at Bethlehem.
- **Question:** Did Samuel publicly explain to David the meaning of his anointing? It is unlikely that he did, but David soon learned the secret of his destiny. From the shepherd's task, he was quickly promoted to the battlefield, because the anointing was upon him. He heard the defiant challenge of the Philistines' champion and the anointing began to stir him. It was through this battlefield that David was elevated to the palace.

- Now in the Royal palace we see something of the wonderful attitude of David (I Samuel 18:5, 14, 15, and 30).
- **DAVID BECOMES A FUGITIVE**
  - And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David... and Saul became David's enemy continually. (I Samuel 18:28,29).
- **DAVID'S DIRECTION FROM GOD** (Chapter 23)
  - David needed very definite direction in those days:
    1. Regarding the Philistines (vs. 2).
    2. Regarding the fears of his own men (vs. 3 & 4)
    3. Regarding the trap of Saul (vs. 7 & 8)
    4. Regarding the betrayal of those he had freed (men of Keilah) (vs. 10-12) "bring hither the ephod."
    5. Regarding prophecy from Jonathan (vs. 16,17).
- **DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE** (chapter 24)
  - Notice David's heart:
    - David's heart smote him (vs. 5)
    - He, Saul, is the anointed of the Lord (vs. 6) - Cf Chron 16:22)
    - David bowed himself with his face to the earth when addressing Saul (vs.8)
    - The Lord judge between me and thee, but my hand shall not be upon thee (vs. 12)
  - The results of David's pure heart affected Saul, and the truth began to be spoken. (vs 18, 19, 20, 21).
- **DAVID AS KING**
  - The last chapter of I Samuel closes with the story of the downfall and death of Saul, the defeat and slaughter of the army of Israel, and the death of Jonathan and two other sons of Saul.

- The first chapter of II Samuel opens with David as king in his own right.
- **DAVID'S DAYS OF MOURNING**
  - When the news of Israel's disaster, and the death of Saul and Jonathan came to David at ziklag, he mourned their death as a personal loss and as a national calamity. He expressed his grief in the writing of a beautiful and touching eulogy (II Samuel 1:19-27).
  - David challenged the young Amalakite who boasted he had slain Saul. Orders him slain (vs. 16). Notice the absolute priority David placed on this precept (I Chron. 16:22).
- **DAVID PROCLAIMED KING OF JUDAH AT HEBRON**
  - After seeking God's guidance, David left Ziklag and came to Hebron, where his own tribe anointed him king over the house of Judah.
  - The defeat and death of Saul had entirely changed David's relation to the people of Israel and their future. But Saul's followers were yet alive and had to be reckoned with, before David would be king of all Israel. For more than 7 1/2 years there was fighting between David's army and the army of the followers of Saul. But the day came when Captain Abner fell out with Saul's son and came and offered David the whole of Israel.
  - However, David announced that he would only accept Abner's proposal if Michal, Saul's daughter and his former wife, were returned to him. In so doing, he made himself again legal son-in-law of King Saul, legitimate ruler of Israel, and not a usurper (II Samuel 3:13).
- **DAVID MADE KING OVER ALL ISRAEL, Chapter 5**
  - David never lost heart. He was convinced that he genuinely was anointed as a youth by Samuel in Jesse's house to be king of Israel (cf. 1 John 2:27).
  - Now king of Israel, Jerusalem must be his capital, and he made it so.
  - The capture of Jerusalem marked a most important event in the history of Israel. Before, the nation had no real center or capital. At best the residence of a Judge or a Prophet or a King was only a temporary meeting place, such as the Palm Tree of Deborah, the

house of Samuel at Ramah, or the house of Saul at Gibeah, or the military headquarters of David at Hebron. From this time on, however, the national center was fixed at Jerusalem.

- **DAVID AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT**, Chapter 6
  - The ark had been taken by the Philistines at the time of the downfall of the house of Eli. Now after 70 years, David decided to bring the ark from the house of Abinadab where it had been, to Jerusalem.
  - However, something went wrong, and God smote Uzzah. They had made certain mistakes with the presence of God.
    1. verse 3, They set it on a new cart.
    2. verse 5, All manner of instruments instead of worship.
    3. verse 6, Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of it.
  - When they get it right, God blesses the return of the ark. King David gave himself to absolute ecstasy in public. But Michal, David's wife, despised and charged her husband with shameless indignity. David's only defense was, "It was before the Lord." (vs. 21).
  - **NOTE: Because of that fact, God judges Michal and she remained childless until the day of her death. We need to be particularly careful as to how we react toward others when what they do, they do before the Lord (Romans 14:12,13,20-22).**
  
- **DAVID BLESSED BY GOD - EXTENDS HIS KINGDOM**, Chapters 7-10
  - David's heritage was to be unique in that God promised that his family should become an Eternal Throne. (chap 7:12-16)
  - David's marvelous military victories against enemy nations are briefly summarized in chapters 8 to 10, and David is shown as their overlord to whom they paid tribute.
  
- **DAVID'S PRIVATE LIFE AND TROUBLES**, chapters 11-20
  - Here is presented episodes dealing mainly with the private and domestic life of King David.
  - The first of these is the ugly and criminal story of David and Bathsheba.

- David repented; and God forgave him. But the grievous consequences followed him all his life, as he lived under God's pronouncement, chapter 12 verse 10. This was only too true, as David lived to see. For in the chapters that follow, we read:
    1. How David's daughter was outraged by her brother, Ammon.
    2. The murder of Ammon by his brother Absalom.
    3. The rebellion and conspiracy of Absalom against David
    4. David's exile from the palace
    5. David's wives violated in public
    6. Old feud with followers of Saul stirred up
    7. Sheba's conspiracy against David
  - Although his great transgression, and its consequences, took some of the luster from David's glorious reign, he sincerely repented and his later life was such that he was called "the man after God's own heart."
- **D. AN APPENDIX**, chapters 21 - 24
    - These chapters record stories of a famine; some exploits against the Philistines; the "Song of Deliverance," which was revised and printed as Psalm 18; the "Last Words" of David; a list of thirty of David's chief heroes; and a census of the people of Israel and Judah.

**END of Lesson**

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