

The Prophets and Kings of Israel

A Study in 1 Samuel – 2 Kings

Old Testament Background

By one measure, over 50% of the Old Testament is made up of **historical books**: Genesis through Esther & the 1st half of Daniel. In contrast, the New Testament only has the Book of Acts (13%).

Major events (tentpoles) of the Old Testament:

- Creation *unknown*
- Abrahamic Covenant ~2,100 B.C.
- Mosaic Covenant ~1,400 B.C.
- Davidic Covenant ~1,000 B.C.
- Exile ~ 600 B.C.

Majority of O.T. written because of two events (Exodus & Exile)

Introduction to 1 Samuel

Major figures in Samuel & Kings:

Saul	Samuel (<i>1st great prophet and last judge—watershed figure</i>)
David	Elijah
Solomon	Elisha

1 Samuel contains the Story of *Samuel* the Prophet, *Saul* the first king of Israel and the rise of *David*.

1 & 2 Samuel were *originally one book* (Hebrew text) and were probably written shortly after the death of King Solomon and the division of the kingdom. In the Septuagint, 1 Samuel – 2 Kings are labeled 1-4 “Kingdoms” or “Reigns”

The Israelite Kingship was not to be like the surrounding nations, but was established within the *Covenant*.

Simplified **outline**:

- The Story of Samuel: ch's 1-7
- Transition to the Monarchy ch. 8
- The Story of Saul: ch's 9-15
- The Story of David's rise: ch's 16ff

Approximate **chronology:**

1105 B.C.	Birth of Samuel (1 Sam 1.20)
1080	Birth of Saul
1050	Saul anointed to be king (1 Sam 10.1)
1040	Birth of David
1025	David anointed as Saul's successor (1 Sam 16.1-13)
1010	Death of Saul and beginning of David's reign over Judah in Hebron (1 Sam 31 - 2 Sam 1.1; 2.1,4,11)
1003	Beginning of David's reign over Israel and capture of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5)
997-992	David's wars (2 Sam 8.1-14)
991	Birth of Solomon (2 Sam 12.24; 1 Kings 3.7; 11.42)
980	David's census (2 Sam 24.1)
970	End of David's reign (2 Sam 5.4f; 1 Kings 2.10f)

Chapter 1

v.1 Elkanah was a direct descendant of Levi (1 Chr 6.33-38)

v.3 Three times a year every Israelite male was required to appear before the Lord at the central sanctuary (See Exodus 23.14-17, Leviticus 23):

- **Passover/Unleavened Bread**
- **Weeks/ Pentecost/ First Fruits**
- **Booths/ Ingathering)**

v.11 Hannah pledges the Nazarite vow for her son like Samson in Judges 13.2-5 (See Numbers 6.1-21). Though instead of for a limited time, Samuel is pledged for life. “Hannah did not ‘bargain’ with the Lord; rather, she proved her spirituality by willingly offering God her best—her firstborn son.” (Missler)

v.20 “Samuel” sounds like the Hebrew for “heard of God” (ESV)

v.22 Children might be 3 or more years old before they were weaned in the ancient near east (see 2 Maccabees 7.27).

Chapter 2

v.1 Hannah's prayer bears a strong resemblance to the Magnificat of Mary in the New Testament (Luke 1.46-55). See also the Song of Zechariah (Benedictus) in Luke 1.67-79.

v.10 The first reference in the Bible to the Lord's anointed. "'Anointed' and 'Messiah' are the translation and transliteration respectively of the same Hebrew word, The Greek translation of the Hebrew term is 'Christos'" (NIV). The first prophecy of a King from the tribe of Judah is given by the patriarch Jacob (Genesis 49.10).

vv.13-16 Eli's sons had gone from privileged to entitled; From servant to served. Discussion topic: God's patience with evil. Also: Do Godly parents always produce godly children?

v.21 Hannah had five children (apparently in addition to Samuel)

v.22 Eli's sons' actions call to mind the religious prostitution practiced by idol worshippers. They were in fact acting like pagan priests.

v.23 Eli rebukes his sons but does not remove them from office. Discussion topic: failure to disciple/proper use of authority.

v.26 "grow ...in stature and in favor with the LORD and also with man." (*cf.* Luke 2.52)

v.29 The blood and fat were reserved for God (Lev 3.3-5; 17.6, 11)

v.30 The promise of Yahweh's blessings always presupposes the maintenance of the covenant relationship.

v.33 Saul would later kill many of Eli's descendants (1 Sam 22.17-20)

v.35 "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest." God brings down unfaithful stewards and raises up new leaders from among the faithful. "In the course of history the high priestly role was shifted from Eli's family line to another branch of Aaron's family (*cf.* 1 Kings 2.27, 35)." (Missler). The ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy is in Jesus.

"The Books of Samuel and Kings display a relentless march of history toward not only David, the chosen king, but also Jerusalem, the chosen city, and along with the latter, Zadok of Jerusalem, the chosen priest." (McCarter)