

The Book of 1 SAMUEL

Survey of 1 Samuel

Book Type: Book of History; the ninth book of the Old Testament; the ninth book of the Bible.

Author: The book itself does not name its author. Tradition records Samuel as the primary author, but not the only one. It was likely completed by both Samuel and other godly leaders of Israel who served through the end of book's events.

Audience: First and Second Samuel were originally completed as a single text, written to the Jewish people. The work serves both as a record of history and to emphasize the importance of faithfully following God. First Samuel records the transition of Israel's leadership from judges to kings, beginning with the transition of leadership from the prophet Samuel to King Saul and then King David. First Samuel illustrates the blessing of those who remain obedient to the Lord (like Samuel) and the judgment that comes upon those who live in disobedience to the Lord (like Saul).

Date: Unknown. It was clearly written after the division of Israel and Judah in 931 BC, since these lands are often noted as separate kingdoms. Because its contents do not reflect the later events of the exile to Babylon, it was likely completed prior to this time, sometime between 931 and 722 BC.

Overview: First Samuel consists of 31 chapters and includes three main sections. The first section develops the life of Samuel as both prophet

The Book of 1 SAMUEL

and judge in Israel (1 Samuel 1—7). He had a special birth (1 Samuel 1), initiated by a fervent prayer from his mother Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1—10). Samuel heard from the Lord at a young age, worshiping God under the leadership of Eli. Chapters 4—7 chronicle Samuel's tenure as a judge over the land, including an important victory over the Philistines in chapter 7.

The second section provides an account of Saul's rise as king over Israel (1 Samuel 8—15). After the people demand a king (1 Samuel 8), Samuel seeks the Lord who gives him directions for selecting Saul. Samuel then provides instruction to the people of Israel regarding submission to their king (1 Samuel 11:14—12:25). Though Saul begins well, his faithfulness does not last. Samuel rebukes him for sin (1 Samuel 13:8—15), the nation is dragged into multiple wars, and eventually Saul is rejected as king (1 Samuel 15).

The third section begins the transition from King Saul to the future King David (1 Samuel 16—31). David comes from a humble background, yet has a passion for the Lord. Samuel anoints him, and David soon plays the harp before Saul. In chapter 17, David miraculously defeats the giant Goliath, making him a national hero.

Saul is angry at David (1 Samuel 18), yet ends up giving his daughter Michal to David in marriage. Meanwhile, Saul's son Jonathan becomes David's best friend (1 Samuel 18:1—5; 19—20). Tensions then rise between Saul and David, leading to outright violence from Saul. David flees from Saul's pursuit, sparing Saul's life twice in the process (1 Samuel 21—26). During this time, Samuel dies (1 Samuel 25:1). David later comes to a low point and is forced to live among the Philistines (1

The Book of 1 SAMUEL

Samuel 27).

In the final chapters of the book, Saul finally sinks to his lowest spiritual point (1 Samuel 28). David and his army are sent home by the Philistines and must defeat the Amalekites to rescue their families (1 Samuel 29—30). Finally, Saul and his sons die in battle (1 Samuel 31).

The story is continued in 2 Samuel, and these were originally written as a single, continuous work.

Key Verses (ESV):

1 Samuel 8:6–7: "But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give us a king to judge us.' 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.'"

1 Samuel 13:13–14: "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.'"

1 Samuel 15:22–23: "And Samuel said, '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.'

The Book of 1 SAMUEL

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."

Ref: <https://www.bibleref.com/1-Samuel/survey-of-1-Samuel.html>