

# 1 Samuel

**MEANING:** Samuel means “The name of God,” “His name is God,” “Heard of God,” or “Asked of God.”

**AUTHOR:** Jewish Talmudic tradition says it was written by Samuel. He may have written a portion of the book, but his death is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1 making it clear that he did not write all of 1 & 2 Samuel. 1 Chronicles 29:29 refers to “The Book of Samuel the Seer,” “the Book of Nathan the prophet,” and “the “Book of gad the Seer.” All three may have contributed to 1 & 2 Samuel.

**TIME WRITTEN:** Soon before his death in 1015 B.C.

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 9th Book in the Bible
- 9th book in the Old Testament
- 4th of 12 books of History
- 8 has preceded it. 57 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 31

**VERSES:** 810

**WORDS:** 25,061

**KEY WORD:** Transition

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **1 Samuel 13:14** – But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you."
2. **1 Samuel 15:22** - So 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 heed than the fat of rams.

**KEY CHAPTER:** 1 Samuel 15

1. 1 Samuel 15 records the tragic transition of kingship from Saul to David.
2. As in all three changes recorded in 1 Samuel, god removes His blessing from one and gives it to another because of sin.
3. **1 Samuel 15:23** — “Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT 1 SAMUEL:**

1. Samuel was born around 1105 B.C. and died in 1015 B.C. He ministered as a judge and prophet in Israel between about 1067 B.C. and 10:15 B.C.
2. The books of Samuel end in the last days of David; so they must have been compiled after 971 B.C.
3. Samuel:

- a. Was a man of prayer.
  - b. Finished the work of the judges.
  - c. Began the school of the prophets.
  - d. Anointed Israel's first two kings (Saul & David)
4. The books of 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book in the Hebrew Bible.
  5. 1 Samuel covers the 94 year period from Samuel's birth to Saul's death.
  6. 1 Samuel is a book of great beginnings . . . and tragic endings.
  7. 1 & 2 Samuel, along 1 & 2 Kings, form a continuous narrative in the Bible and are devoted to recording the early years of the Hebrew monarchy.
  8. 1 Samuel describes the transition of leadership in Israel from the Judges to the kings. The transition goes through three stages in 1 Samuel.
    - a. From Eli to Samuel. (From theocracy under the Judges to a monarchy under the kings)
    - b. From Samuel to Saul.
    - c. From Saul to David.
  9. Three characters are prominent in 1 Samuel.
    - a. Samuel, the last Judge.
    - b. Saul, the first king of Israel.
    - c. David, the king-elect, anointed but not yet recognized as Saul's successor.

## SUMMARY OF 1 SAMUEL

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. 1 Samuel records the crucial transition from the theocracy under the judges to the monarchy under the kings.
- B. The Book of 1 Samuel is centered around three key men:
  1. Samuel. (1-7)
  2. Saul. (8-31)
  3. David. (16-31)

### 1 SAMUEL: (1-7)

- A. Samuel's story begins late in the turbulent time of the judges when Eli is the judge-priest of Israel.
  1. The birth of Samuel and his early call by Yahweh are found in chapters 1-3.
  2. Because of his responsiveness to God (3:19), he is confirmed as a prophet (3:20-21) at a time when the "Word of the Lord was rare . . . There was no widespread revelation" (3:1)
- B. Corruption at Shiloh by Eli's notoriously wicked sons leads to Israel's defeat in the crucial battle with the Philistines (4:1-11).

1. The Ark of the covenant, God's "throne" among the people, is lost to the Philistines.
  2. The priesthood is disrupted by the deaths of Eli and his sons.
  3. The glory of God departs from the tabernacle (Ichabod, "No Glory," 4:21).
- C. Samuel begins to function as the last of the judges and the first in the order of the prophets  
(Acts 3:24). His prophetic ministry (7:3-17)
1. Leads to a revival in Israel.
  2. The return of the ark of the covenant.
  3. The defeat of the Philistines.
- D. When Samuel is old and his sons prove to be unjust judges, the people wrongly cry out for a king. They want a visible military and judicial ruler so they can be "like the nations" (8:5-20).

### **SAUL. (8-15)**

- A. In their impatient demand for a king, Israel chooses less than God's best.
- B. Two major things are wrong.
1. Their motive is wrong. (8:5)
  2. Their criteria is wrong. (9:2)
- C. Saul begins well (9-11), but his good characteristics soon degenerate.
- D. In spite of Samuel's solemn prophetic warning (12), Saul and the people begin to act wickedly.
1. Saul presumptuously assumes the role of a priest (2 Chronicles 26:18) and offers up sacrifices (13).
  2. He makes a foolish vow (14).
  3. He disobeys God's command to destroy the Amalekites (15).
- E. Samuel's powerful words in 1 Samuel 15:22-23 evoke a pathetic response in 15:24-31.

### **SAUL AND DAVID. (16-31)**

- A. When God rejects Saul, He commissions Samuel to anoint David as Israel's next king.
- B. God's king-elect:
1. Serves in Saul's court. (16:14 - 23:29)
  2. Defeats the Philistine giant (Goliath). (17)
- C. Jonathan's devotion to David leads him to sacrifice the throne (20:30-31) in acknowledgment of David's divine right to it (18).
- D. David becomes a growing threat to the insanely jealous Saul. However, he is protected from Saul's wrath by:
1. Jonathan.
  2. Michal.
  3. Samuel. (19)

- E. Saul's open rebellion against God is manifested in his refusal to give up what God has said cannot be his.
  - 1. David is protected again by Jonathan from Saul's murderous intent (2), but Saul becomes more active in his pursuit of David.
  - 2. David flees to a Philistine city where he feigns insanity (21).
  - 3. He flees again to Adullam where a band of men forms around him. (22).
- F. David continues to escape from the hand of Saul, and on two occasions spares Saul's life when he has the opportunity to take it. (24-26)
- G. David again seeks refuge among the Philistines, but is not allowed to fight on their side against Israel.
  - 1. Saul, afraid of impending battle against the Philistines, foolishly consults a medium at En Dor to hear the deceased Samuel's advice. (28)
  - 2. The lord rebukes Saul and pronounces his doom: he and his sons are killed by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. (31)