

I. 1 Samuel

- a. Purpose: We will look at the name of the book, authorship, purpose and other aspects of the book of 1 Samuel so we would be more familiar with this part of the Bible and yearn to study it for ourselves.
- b. The name of the book
 - i. According to Old Testament scholar Eugene Merrill: "The division of the book of Samuel into two parts is a product of the translation and canonical arrangement of the LXX in the second half of the third century BC. This Greek version divided the original Hebrew composition Samuel into sections called 1 and 2 Kingdoms (Basileiōn A and B) and also split Kings into 3 and 4 Kingdoms. However, the Jews have always called the book Samuel."¹
- c. Authorship
 - i. According to the Jewish Talmud: "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the Book of Judges and Ruth" (Baba Bathra 14b-15a)
 - ii. It is difficult to determine authorship
 1. The book of 1 Samuel does not explicitly say who the author is.
 2. Even though Jewish tradition says Samuel wrote the book yet Samuel died in **1 Samuel 25:1**: "*Then Samuel died; and all Israel gathered together and mourned for him, and buried him at his house in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran.*" → Yet **1 Samuel** continues with **chapters 25-31** and the book of **2 Samuel**.
 3. Any discussion of authorship must also account for the post-Samuel portion of the book of **1 Samuel** and **2 Samuel**.
 - iii. After stating Samuel's authorship the Talmud continue to explain the authorship of **1 Samuel** and **2 Samuel**: "It is also stated in the baraita that Samuel wrote his own book. The Gemara asks: But isn't it written: "And Samuel died" (I Samuel 28:3)? The Gemara answers: Gad the seer and Nathan the prophet finished it" (Baba Bathra 15a)²
 1. The source of the tradition that Samuel's authorship is identified as "the baraita" which means these are oral traditions outside the six orders of the Mishnah.
 2. The Gemara here refers to the commentary on the Mishnah; here the Gemara stated the issue of Samuel's death concerning the authorship by Samuel.
 3. The Gemara also answered the dilemma by quoting **1 Chronicles 29:29** and implying that the rest of the **1 Samuel** through **Chronicles** was authored by the prophets Gad and Nathan.
 - iv. While we are not dogmatic this explanation makes sense: The book of 1 Samuel was authored by the prophet Samuel and then picked up by the two prophets Gad and Nathan.
- d. Purpose

¹ Eugene Merrill, "The Book of Joshua" in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 11022-11025.

² Source: https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.15a.8?lang=bi.

- i. According to John Walton: “The purpose of the books of Samuel is to tell the story of the establishment of the kingship covenant with David. God’s plan was to have an earthly king who would give a good example of what God’s kingship was like. David is shown to be the legitimate choice of God, but also is shown to have been at times an obstacle rather than an instrument of God’s rule.”³
 - ii. According to Eugene Merrill: “Samuel's purpose is to provide a history of Israel just preceding and continuing through the reigns of Saul and David... Thus the way was prepared for the messianic ruler David, whose Greatest Son is to become the King of kings and Lord of lords.”⁴
 - iii. According to Keith Essex: “Yahweh established a human monarchy over His theocratic nation Israel and guaranteed its future in His Covenant with David.”⁵
 - iv. In my own words: The book of **1 Samuel** demonstrate the transition in Israel from the time and institution of judges to the kings and explain God’s own choice of David as king and promised lineage for the Messiah over and against the people’s choice and disqualifying characteristics of Saul.
- e. Structure
- i. There are different ways people have outlined the book.
 - ii. Eugene Merrill’s outline⁶
 - 1. The Preparations for the Monarchy (**1 Samuel 1-9**)
 - 2. The Period of Saul (**1 Samuel 10-31**)
 - iii. Walter Kaiser’s outline⁷
 - 1. Samuel: Rise and ministry (**1 Samuel 1-7**)
 - 2. Saul: The people’s choice for king (**1 Samuel 8-12**)
 - 3. Saul: God reject Saul as king (**1 Samuel 13-15**)
 - 4. David: God’s choice to replace Saul (**1 Samuel 16-31**)
- f. Key chapters in **1 Samuel**⁸
- i. **1-4** Eli to Samuel
 - ii. **8-10** Choose a King
 - iii. **13** Saul assumes priestly office
 - iv. **15** Saul spares Amalekites
 - v. **16** David anointed
 - vi. **17** Goliath slain
 - vii. **18** David: Jonathan's friend, Saul's enemy
 - viii. **24** David spares Saul's life

³ Andrew Hill and John Walton, *A Survey of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 257.

⁴ Eugene Merrill, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 11290-11299.

⁵ Keith Essex, *OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES I Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published Thesis for The Master’s Seminary), 31.

⁶ Eugene Merrill, “The Book of Joshua” in *The World and the Word: An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Nashville, B&H Publishing), Kindle Locations 11175-11188.

⁷ Slightly re-worded from Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 113.

⁸ Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master’s Seminary), 61.

- ix. 25 David and Abigail
- x. 28 Saul and the witch of Endor
- xi. 31 Saul and his sons killed
- g. Key characters in 1 Samuel⁹
 - i. Hannah - wife of Elkanah and mother of Samuel
 - ii. Eli - High Priest and Judge of Israel; wicked sons - Hophni and Phineas
 - iii. Samuel - Son of Elkanah and Hannah; a Nazarite; a Priest; a Judge; a King MAKER
 - iv. Saul - first King of Israel; son of Kish a Benjamite; first of many bad Kings Israel would suffer through.
 - v. Jonathan - eldest son of Saul and close friend of David; Father of Mephibosheth
 - vi. David - Son of Jesse; anointed by Samuel as King of Israel; first of few good Kings.
- h. Place of this book in the Canon
 - i. Both 1 and 2 Samuel show that God's earlier promises given to the patriarchs and to Israel are being fulfilled through David and His lineage.¹⁰
 - 1. Recall earlier in Scripture God has predicted that there will be a coming king.
 - a. This was what God said to Abraham as part of the Abrahamic covenant: Genesis 17:6, 7:16.
 - b. This was what God said to Jacob when God renamed him as Israel in Genesis 35:11.
 - c. This was what God made Balaam prophesied about in Numbers 24:7, 24:17-19.
 - d. God's requirement for kings in Deuteronomy 17:14-20 anticipate and presupposes future kings in Israel.
 - 2. Now we see who was that king that God picked: David!
 - ii. By introducing David 1 Samuel lays the foundation for the Messiah to come from the line of David which will be the topic of future books in the Bible!

⁹ What follows below is quoted verbatim from Richard Mayhue, *Ordination Practicum Syllabus* (Sun Valley, California: Self-Published for The Master's Seminary), 61.

¹⁰ Walter Kaiser, *The Promise-Plan of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 113.