

1 Samuel

Original Historical Setting

Author: Unknown

Written: Perhaps around 950-900 B.C.

Audience: Perhaps Israelites living in their land during the monarchy.

Occasion: To provide an account of the beginnings of the Israelite monarchy

Timeline:

- ~1100 B.C. – Samuel born
- ~1050 B.C. – Saul anointed king
- ~1018 B.C. – David anointed to be king
- ~1010 B.C. – Saul dies and David begins to reign

World Events that occur simultaneously

- ~1100 B.C. – Philistines protect their secret of making iron
- ~1100 B.C. – China develops mouth organ
- ~1000 B.C. – Founding of Mayan dynasties in Central America

Genre/Literary style

A historical account written in Hebrew

Features and Structure

- Everything in this book happened in Israel or Philistia
- The book is organized around three main men:
 - CH 1-7 -- Samuel (the last judge) and his ministry
 - CH 8-15 – Saul (the first king) and his selection and rejection
 - CH 16-31 – David (the greatest king) and his selection and adventures while Saul falls

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 15:22

Key text(s)

15:22 – To obey is better than sacrifice

16:7 – Man looks on the outside; God on the inside

17:45-51 – David slays Goliath

What to look for

- Note King Saul's disobedience:
 - CH 13 – he presumptuously offers a sacrifice
 - CH 14 – he makes a foolish vow at the expense of his son Jonathon
 - CH 15 – he disobeys the LORD's direct command
- As a result God chooses (in the next chapter) a young man with a heart for God named David
- Note at the end of 1 Samuel, even though Saul had honor, authority, riches, good looks and more, he died in despair, because he made the mistake of thinking he could please God with a sensible motive rather than obedience.

Interesting facts

- 1 & 2 Samuel were originally one book (the Book of Samuel in the Hebrew Scriptures). The Greek translators (2nd century B.C.) who divided the book used the titles 1 & 2 Kingdoms. 1 & 2 Kings were called 3 & 4 Kingdoms.
- Ichabod Crane, the man terrorized by the headless horseman in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" gets his name from one of Eli's grandsons. Eli's daughter-in-law gave birth shortly after the Philistines defeated the Israelites, stole the Ark of the Covenant and killed her husband. She named her son Ichabod which means, "the glory is gone."
- In the previous book, Ruth, we realize that Ruth, who is from Moab originally, is the great-grandmother of David. In 1 Samuel 22 we find David returning to the land of his family to hide his mother and father until he figured out

what God was doing as he hid from King Saul.