

1 Samuel—An Introduction [\[1\]](#)

Tonight we are going to prepare for a new series which we will launch next Wednesday evening, *Learning to Wait on God*. We'll be looking at the life of David *before* he became king of Israel . If you know anything about David you know that God made a promise to him as a young man, telling him he was chosen to be Israel 's next king. But David had to *wait* a long time and face many obstacles before seeing the fulfillment of that promise.

Next Week: A new series begins...

"Learning to Wait on God"

The Life of David *Before* He Became King

1 Samuel 16-31

We'll actually begin that series next week. This evening I want to sketch the backdrop for a study of the life of David by taking an introductory look at the book of 1 Samuel.

Discuss: Without looking, what can you tell me about 1 Samuel?

Historical Setting of 1 Samuel

1. The Patriarchs (2000 B.C.)

*Abraham, Isaac, Jacob

*The 12 sons of Jacob

2. Captivity in Egypt

*lasted 400 years

*delivered 1440 B.C.

3. Conquest of Canaan

4. Period of the Judges

*lasted 300 years

*political, moral, and spiritual anarchy

The final verse of Judges sums up the deteriorated condition of those days.

"...every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Judges 21:25

Q: How bad was it in Israel ?

To give you an idea, turn to I Samuel.

Q: Who was the ruling priest/leader in Israel ? 1:9 Eli

Q: Eli's sons assisted him. What kind of men were they?

2:12 "...worthless men; they knew not the Lord."

They didn't know the Lord! Think of that! These men were the spiritual leaders in the land!

Q: What else are we told about Eli's sons?

2:17 "sin...very great before the Lord...abhorred the offering"

2:22 "...they lay with women..."

2:25 "...hearkened not to the voice of their father..."

How bad was it in Israel in the 12th century B.C.? Very bad!

Key: Just when it seemed the nation would cave in due to its rottenness, guess what happened? That's what 1 Samuel tells us. In two words, here's what happened.

**God intervened!

Q: How did God intervene?

A: Through the seemingly forgotten prayers of an obscure peasant woman named Hannah! God heard Hannah. And God answered her cry.

In order to appreciate the life of David (who enters the story in 1 Samuel 16), we must appreciate the structure of the *entire* book of 1 Samuel. So

let's jump into a surveillance airplane and scan the book to see the big picture.

An Overview of 1 Samuel

In our English Bibles, we have two books called by Samuel's name, 1 & 2 Samuel. In the earliest Hebrew Bible, there was no division between the two. It was just called Samuel (deriving its name from the first main character). The book is located in the section known as the "Former Prophets" (which includes Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings).

The Main Characters of 1 & 2 Samuel:

*Samuel--born in 1120 B.C.

*Saul

*David--died in 971 B.C.

Thus, 1 & 2 Samuel span a period of 150 years.

An Outline of 1 Samuel:

- I. Israel under the Leadership of Eli (1-2)
- II. Israel under the Leadership of Samuel (3-8)
- III. Israel under the Leadership of Saul (9-15)
- IV. Israel under the Leadership of both Saul & David (16-31)
- V. Israel under the Leadership of David (II Samuel)

Discuss: Why did God give us the book of 1 Samuel?

Think about something. When God gave us the Bible, He used a variety of types of literature. He could have used one type. He could have just given us a theology textbook. But He didn't. He used poetry, songs, genealogical records, history, recorded sermons, parables, as well as plain and simple commandments.

Did you realize that over 1/3 of the Bible is narrative literature. What is narrative literature? Stories. 1 Samuel is narrative literature.

Q: Why did God give us stories in the Bible?

Application: When you read the Bible, keep this point in mind. God used various kinds of literature when He gave us the Scriptures. You can't interpret different kinds of literature in the same way.

eg--Do believe we should interpret Revelation literally? Yes, but what do you mean by "literally"? Should we interpret it the same way we do Ephesians? No. Ephesians is a letter. Revelation is apocalyptic literature. It's a vision full of images and symbols. Our question is always this--What did the writer mean by what he wrote?

So 1 Samuel is narrative literature. It's also a historical record.

Key: 1 Samuel gives us *theological history*.

It's history, yes. But it's a special kind of history. God didn't tell us everything that happened during the 150 period between 1120 and 971 B.C. 1 & 2 Samuel are very selective. 1 Samuel is history with a theological purpose.

Theme: 1 Samuel shows us how God by His sovereignty reclaimed the nation of Israel by sending them a deliverer, namely David. Through the seed of this king He would inevitably send the King of Kings.

Q: Who's the main character in 1 Samuel?

Samuel? No. Saul? No. David? No. God is.

Listen. Why did God give us 1 Samuel? God's intent in giving us 1 Samuel was not merely to give us "example stories." His aim for telling us about Saul and David was not merely to challenge us to be like David but

don't be like Saul. His aim is to teach us about Himself.

Challenge: Look for God throughout the book.

That's why a study like the one we're going to begin next week is so necessary for us, and why it can be so practical for us. Looking at David's life in the book of 1 Samuel will help us to get to know God better, and how to live for Him.

To Do:

1. READ I Samuel 16-31
2. Pray and ask God to use this study to enable us to get to know Him better.
3. Read some background information (Study Bible, Bible Dictionary).

[\[1\]](#) These are unedited teaching notes used initially for a Wednesday evening Bible study at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . They are provided for your edification as you personally study God's life-changing Word. Pastor Brad Brandt