

Guidelines for our Survey of the Old Testament:

1. As a general rule, we will devote one week to one book.
2. Read (or scan) the book prior to our study, looking for the big picture.
2. Our aim is to discover and remember the following details about each book:

Who wrote the book?

When was the book written?

Why was the book written?

What is the outline of the book?

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

This evening we come to the historical, narrative books of 1 & 2 Samuel.

Discuss: What comes to your mind when you think of 1 & 2 Samuel?

The Name: "Samuel" -- In its earlier form, the Hebrew Bible seems to have regarded 1 and 2 Samuel as one book, and did so until the Christian era. In fact, the LXX treats Samuel and Kings as a unified work called the book of the Kingdoms (1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings are called 1-2-3-4 Kingdoms; LHB, 227).

The Background: The book begins within the chaotic setting of the end of the period of the Judges, and presents the establishment of Israel's monarchy.

Who wrote the book?

Not stated.

Possibilities: Samuel, Nathan, and Gad (Unger, 186)

See 1 Chron 29:29--This text reveals that biblical writers had several sources at their disposal as they wrote.

When was the book written?

Difficult to determine.

According to Archer: Between Solomon's day and the fall of Samaria (930-722 B.C.)

According to Schofield: 10th century B.C.

Why was the book written?

Many approach the book with the idea that in it God gives us "example stories" (Saul is bad, David is good. God gave us the book to warn us to not be like Saul but to be like David). Is this the intent God had when He gave this inspired book? No, not primarily. Certainly we can derive moral lessons from looking at the lives of Saul, David, etc., but the book was not written to teach us about Saul and David. There's a more significant subject here. This portion of God's Word, as is the case with all portions, is primarily given to teach us *about God*.

The book teaches us Who God is, what He is like, what pleases Him, and how He works.

Key: The books of 1 & 2 Samuel are often referred to as "historical books," but they were written to do far more than just provide us with a chronological history of Israel's past. Instead of labeling these books as "historical" books, it would be better to place them in the category known as "Former Prophets."

The Hebrew Bible has three parts: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The second section is comprised of the Former Prophets (Samuel, Elijah, etc.), and the latter prophets (Isaiah, etc). Prophets were not merely "foretellers," but also "forth-tellers," moral reformers who said, "Thus saith the Lord," and called the people of God to obedience. We must read the book of Samuel in that light. It's not a historical record per se, but a prophetic oracle (see Former Prophets notes, p. 8).

Discuss--What do we learn about God from 1 & 2 Samuel? He is sovereign over history. He is holy. He is faithful to His covenant and His word.

What is the outline of the book?

(see transparency outline of 1 & 2 Samuel)

- I. Israel under the leadership of Eli (1 Samuel 1-2)
- II. Israel under the leadership of Samuel (3-8)
- III. Israel under the leadership of Saul (9-31)
 - A. Saul's Rise (9-15)
 - B. Saul's Decline and David's Rise (16-31)
- IV. Israel under the leadership of David (2 Samuel)
 - A. David's reign over Judah at Hebron (1-4)
 - B. David's reign over all Israel (5-10)
 - C. David's sin and ambitious sons (11-24)

1. Bathsheba (11)
2. Amnon and Tamar (13)
3. Absalom (14-18)
4. The final years (19-24)

What is the message of the book in one sentence?

1 & 2 Samuel explain how God brought the Davidic monarchy into existence.

What contribution does the book make to biblical theology (that is, how does this book relate to the rest of the Bible)?

1. 1 & 2 Samuel explain the need for the Prophets. Sinful people need to hear the voice of God.

Discuss: Why is it important for us to expose ourselves to the public proclamation of God's Word? Why is personal Bible study not enough? We tend to be selective readers, to skip over areas that may need confrontation. Exposure to public proclamation forces us to deal with areas needing change.

Discuss: What happens when we do not receive the ministry of the Word *from others*?

2. It's not whether a person sins, but how he deals with sin that is the issue.

Contrast: Eli vs. Samuel; Saul vs. David

Discuss: What is the God-honoring way to deal with sin? We can learn from watching David's life. His sin with Bath sheba is detailed in 2 Samuel 11. How he dealt with his sin is recorded in Psalms 51 & 32.

3. If we repent and learn from our past, God will renew us.

Key Verse: 1 John 1:9

Others: Peter, John Mark

4. In 1 & 2 Samuel, we learn about leadership.

Inept leadership is just as bad as corrupt leadership (e.g. Eli).

Partial obedience is just as bad as total disobedience (e.g. Saul).

Even the best of leaders can fall (e.g. David).

Through David's lineage, God would send THE Leader to deliver His people.

Key: David's name is mentioned 94 times from Isaiah to Revelation.

Mt 9:27 Jesus is referred to as "the son of David"

2 Tim 2:8 "Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead..."

Discuss: Leadership is needed in a variety of spheres. We need leaders in our homes, in the church, in places of employment, in our country, in our schools, on ball teams, in the military, and so on. What insights do we gain from God's kind of leader from 1 & 2 Samuel?

Follow-up Q: How can we use these books in our ministries with our children and youth in order to prepare tomorrow's leaders?