

I SAMUEL

Boy Samuel Hears God at Night

Harp Soothes King Saul

David Kills Goliath: Young Shepherd says "I come in the name of the Lord"

This book needs little introduction. Some stories may be known from childhood. The action centers on three main characters: the prophet Samuel, King Saul, and David, God's choice for the next king. It covers approximately 1100 to 1000 B.C.

I Samuel opens with Samuel's mother praying desperately for a child. Samuel grows up to be the prophet who anoints the first King, Saul, and later, David. I Samuel tells the stories of David from his anointing until the death of Saul. The shepherd boy, who seems too young and small, kills the giant Goliath, soothes King Saul with harp and song, becomes best friends with Saul's son Jonathon, becomes a mighty and popular warrior and finally the object of King Saul's murderous jealousy.

Favorite Stories in I Samuel

Hannah prays for a child	1:1-28
Samuel hears God calling in the night	3:1-21
David, young son of Jesse, is anointed	16:1-13
David plays harp for Saul	16:14-23
David kills Goliath	17:1-50
The friendship of David and Jonathon	20:1-42
David refuses to kill Saul	24:1-24

II Samuel, which tells the story of David after he became king, is the second half of one book. It was divided for the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, which was in use around the Mediterranean Sea by the time of Jesus' birth.

I and II Samuel begin before the Israelites had any kings. Twelve tribes, based on the twelve sons of Jacob, formed a loose federation. During times of crisis, God raised up judges to provide unified leadership. Following escape from slavery in Egypt, they began to move into lands east and west of the Jordan River. The book of Joshua describes the areas that each tribe would get, but 200 years later they still had not moved into some areas, especially where the

Philistines with iron weapons lived. Under Saul and David, the remaining areas were conquered.

The Ark of the Covenant: Where does God live?

In I and II Samuel, the very powerful and Holy Ark of the Covenant had no home. The Ark was a wooden box, gorgeously and symbolically decorated with statues of angels, the cherubim who serve at the throne of God. (Exodus 25:10-22.) It contained some manna and two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written. It was the most holy and powerful religious object shared by the twelve tribes. During I Samuel, Philistines capture it but send it back because it is dangerous. Can the twelve tribes agree on one central worship place? Although David chooses Jerusalem, this becomes a test of loyalty to God.

Godly Leadership: The Good Shepherd

Samuel warns everyone that they would have problems with a king. Will they remember that God is really their king, their highest authority? Saul quickly showed that a king who does not trust God is a disaster. David is chosen because "he has a heart after God." Although the image of the shepherd king is not developed in I Samuel, it is significant that David is a shepherd who honors the Lord as his shepherd (Psalm 23).

The Deuteronomist: Blessings and curses

Deuteronomy 28 names destruction and exile as the consequences of disobeying God. Throughout Joshua, Judges, I and II Samuel, and I and II Kings, the people and the leaders are evaluated according to the standards of Deuteronomy, especially worship in one place of the one true God. Scholars believe that after the Exile, one or more individuals collected oral traditions and written accounts into these books as teaching for the future.