

The Israelite Monarchy  
End of the judges and the establishment of the Monarchy:  
Samuel, Saul, David  
Reading: 1 Samuel 1.1 to 2 Samuel 5.5

Introduction

1) The relation of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles

The history progresses chronologically from Samuel through Kings. Chronicles is a later work that recaps the whole with some special emphases (roughly like Deuteronomy in relation to the events of Exodus and Numbers). Thus, Chronicles may best be left for discussion in the post-exilic period (after 539) with books like Ezra-Nehemiah; it will give us another look at the entire kingdom period and exile from a post-exile perspective.

2) Characters: Samuel, Saul, David.

The person, Samuel, is center stage early on (1-7; summary 7:13 & 15). Then Samuel fades into the background but overlaps with both Saul and David; his death is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1 while Saul and David are in conflict. Therefore, his judgeship continued well into the monarchy through the anointing of Saul, the Goliath episode, and the jealous pursuit of David by Saul.

The *main character* of 1 Sam 1.1-2 Sam 5.5 is David. The last judge (the person Samuel) and the first king (Saul) are covered as transitions to the Davidic monarchy.

1 Sam. 1-10 are transitional from judges to the monarchy.

1 Sam. 11-15 are transitional from Saul to David.

In 1 Samuel 16 *David emerges* in the story line and Saul begins to fade into the backdrop. Here Samuel anoints David from among the sons of Jesse (Key verses: 16:7; 16:13).

1A. The decline of Saul and the rise of David

1B. Early activities of Saul

Early on we are concerned about Saul (*hiding* in the bushes, 1 Sam. 10:22; is he humble or irresponsible at a fundamental level?).

He starts off with a big bang; has a significant military victory and is confirmed as king (1 Sam. 11) and called to wholehearted obedience (1 Sam. 12).

Next, he offers *sacrifice in disobedience* to the word of God (1 Sam. 13:7-14; he was to wait 7 days then enquire of the Lord through sacrifice by means of the appointed intercessor, Samuel, the prophet and judge). Note the effort to explain himself: I saw the men scattering; felt compelled!

He is rash and self-serving in victory (with the threat of death, none of his army are to eat till his vengeance is satisfied; puts his own son on chopping block, but he has to stand down before the leaders of his army (1 Sam. 14).

Chapter 14 reveals some chinks in Saul's armor. In the very victory by which he reaches his high point as king, his decline begins.

2B. Saul's rejection is sealed

Central is his disobedience to God's command. This is illustrated in a *second outstanding case of disobedience*. Again disobeying the word of the Lord, Saul fails to totally destroy the Amalekites (15:3; 9-10). When confronted, Saul says he has obeyed (15:13); and the sheep well that's because of the soldiers (15a) and can be used for pious purposes (15b)! I did obey (15:20)!

Rejection is recorded in 1 Samuel 15:22-23 (eventually God put him to death via suicide, 1 Sam. 31:4 w/ 1 Chronicles 10:13).

How is it that Israel is rebuked for rejecting God as king when God promised them a king? cf. Deut. 17:14-15; 1 Sam. 2:10; 8:7

3B. Lessons from the rejection of Saul?

1) God's plans do not change. He gives a king in spite of the rejection of him as king.

2) This is a mercy. He is upholding Israel; keeping covenant promise including a king, Christ.

3) There is a danger of going down the right road with a wrong heart (Israel seeks a king for the wrong reason, rejecting God).

Note: the Lord will often give us our desires to teach us some hard lessons; the desires he gives for the moment may not serve our fullest immediate good; they may trouble us; this is to teach us the difference between his will and our own. We need to season our desires however strong with a deep rooted submission to Him; to his commands; to his providential leading.

4B. The main character emerges

David is introduced as the main figure in the book in the very next chapter following Saul's rejection. Even though Saul remains king, David comes center stage though Saul remains king to the end of 1 Samuel. Key verses: 16:7; 16:13

5B. Notoriety

We know David now as the main character of the book but it is through the defeat of Goliath that David begins to gain notoriety historically with the people.

How could this youth utter the words of 17:46? Because of 16:13.

How do we explain David's attitude and resolve in 1 Sam. 17:32f? Why fight, v. 36, for the Lord in this way, 40-50? How could a young teen utter the words of 1 Sam 17:46?

## 2A. King of all Israel

As main character, David becomes king of all Israel in stages which include fleeing from Saul but sparing Saul's life (cf. 26:10), the death of Saul (1 Sam. 31), rule over Judah for seven years, then kingship over the whole nation (2 Sam. 5:3-5).

Thus 2 Samuel (5.6f) is the main text of the Davidic Monarchy.

As Dillard and Longman point out, the book of Samuel (1 & 2) has an *artistic excellence* that is mainly prose *framed by the poetry* of Hannah's prayer (1 Sam. 2:1-10) and David's songs (2 Sam. 22:1-23:7). Hannah's prayer is an artistic prefiguring of how God grants a king to Israel (IOT 141).