

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

DiscussionQs

1. Who are the main characters of 1 Samuel, who is *the* main character, and how does the story unfold?

The main characters are Samuel, Saul, and David.

Samuel comes to center stage early in the record of his birth and dedication to the Lord at the house of the Lord at Shiloh (1.24) and the current judge/priest (1.25; he judged Israel 40 years, 4.18). When Eli died, per the sins of his sons, his grandson was named, Ichabod, “the glory of the Lord is departed from Israel” (4.21), and Israel’s enemies took the ark of the covenant (Ex 25.10f, a wooden chest where Moses put the Law of God) and returned it because taken by Israel’s enemies and returned (4.1-7.2). During this time “Samuel grew in the presence of the Lord” (2.21) and Samuel became judge and brought peace (7.13-14). When he was old, Israel sought to have a king (8.5) rejecting God (8.7), and Samuel anointed Saul as king (10.1), gave his farwell address (12.1-25) and fades out the story line until his death (25.1).

Saul is center stage from chapters 9-15 until his rejection by God (15.22-23). He continues as king until God put him to death by suicide (1 Sam 31.4; 1 Chron. 10.13).

David come to center stage in chapter 16 when Samuel anoints him (16.7, 13). David’s notoriety in Israel begins when he kills Goliath (17). His ascent to the throne came in stages after he killed Goliath, became a warrior in Saul’s army, grew in popularity (Saul killed thousands and David ten thousands, 18.7), faced the jealousy of Saul as adversary until Saul died on the battlefield (31.4). After the death of Saul, David became king over Judah in the south (2 Sam. 2.1-4), but Abner, the captain of Saul’s army opposed David and made Ish-bosheth king of Israel. Conflict continued between the house of Saul (Israel in the north) and the house of David (Judah in the south) for seven years when David became king over Israel and Judah (over Israel, 5.1-5; here we have a summary of David’s reign of 40 years divided into 7 and 33).

Thus, 2 Samuel 5.6 begins the record of the rule of David over the whole nation for 33 years; hence that section is called the Davidic Monarchy.

2. What can we learn 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.

3. How could this youth utter the words of 17:46? How do we explain his boldness for the cause of God? It is because the Spirit of the Lord worked in him from the day of his anointing by Samuel forward (16:13).