

First Samuel

I. Introduction to I & II Samuel

A. Unity of I & II Samuel.

Originally, these two books were one composition under one title of “Samuel.” This explains why II Samuel, which apparently has nothing to do with the person Samuel, and which was composed long after his death, is identified with that judge.

Use of Poetry at Key Junctures

Hebrew poetry is used in key places in the combined book of Samuel.

- 1) Hannah’s song opens the first book as a dramatic call.
- 2) David’s lament for Saul and Jonathan “...serves as a means of opening the Second Book of Samuel on a poignantly lyrical note.”
- 3) David’s Psalm closes the Second Book.

“The Song of Hannah and Song of David—the first near the beginning of the work (I Sam 2:1-10,11) and the second near its end (2 Sam 22)—remind us that the two books were originally one by framing their main contents [called an “inclusio”], by opening and closing in similar ways, and by highlighting the messianic horizons of the Davidic dynasty through initial promise (1 Sam 2:10) and eternal fulfillment (2 Sam 22:51).” (Youngblood, *EBC* III:559)

Hamilton (p. 217-218) notes that 1) both songs speak of the acts of the Lord, and 2) her song leads from abasement to honor, while his song from honor to abasement.

Comparative Poetry at the Beginning and Conclusion of 1 & 2 Samuel

From Victor Hamilton’s *Handbook on the Historical Books*, pp. 217-218

1 Samuel 2:1-10	2 Samuel 22
in the Lord my horn is lifted high (v. 1)	The Lord is... the horn of my salvation (v. 3)
My mouth derides my enemies (v. 1)	I am saved from my enemies (v. 4)
There is no rock like our God (v. 2)	My god, my rock, in whom I take refuge (v. 3)
The Most High will thunder in heaven (v. 10)	The Lord thundered from heaven (v. 14)
He will give strength to his king (v. 10)	He is a tower of salvation for his king (v. 51)
He exalts the power of his anointed (v. 10)	He shows steadfast love to his anointed (v. 51)

The LXX, divided Samuel into two books and, for obvious reasons, renamed them the *Books of Kingdoms*. The Vulgate followed the LXX’s bifurcation, but Jerome employed the abbreviated name, *Books of Kings*. In the early church, the books which we now call I & II Samuel were then followed by III & IV Kings (our modern I & II Kings).

B. Authorship and Date

Samuel, of course, is not the author of the Books of Samuel. He dies in the reign of King Saul and was not around to record the reign and death of David.

Samuel may have recorded some of the events of his ministry, as did the prophets Gad and Nathan (I Chron. 29:29: "...written in the *words* ["records" NIV] of Samuel the seer..."). Probably these sources were used in the production of the Book of Samuel, contrary to the Talmud tradition that he wrote through I Samuel 24, and then Gad and Nathan finished the work.

Who wrote Samuel? We may suggest that it was a later generation disciple of Samuel's school of the prophets (I Sam. 19:20).

Whoever penned this record, it apparently was after the time of Solomon (I Sam. 27:6; note plural "kings of Judah;" also "last words" of David in II Samuel 23:1) yet before the fall of the Northern kingdom in 722 since that cataclysmic event is not mentioned, and also since the history of the subsequent kings is not developed. Kings and Chronicles will fill this void.

I Sam. 27:6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

II. Scope

A. Historical

1. I Samuel spans the time from the days of the judge Eli to the death of Israel's first king, Saul (cir. 1125-1010). Hence, Merrill labels this book, "Saul: Covenant Misunderstanding" (p. 189)

Samuel serves as a bridge

- From the judges to the monarchy
- From the charismatic judges to the prophetic era
- From the hierarchy of priests (Eli, Samuel) to the intervention of prophets

2. The two books together take us from the end of the distressing days of the judges to the beginning of the monarchy and the ultimate establishment of the Davidic dynasty. Note Howard's observation (p. 158) that I Samuel 1:1 "...echoes the ending of Judges in its references to the hill country of Ephraim" (Judges 17,18 refer to the hill country of Ephraim).

- a. In tandem with the development of the monarchy, the **prophets** now begin to come to the fore after the times of the judges. They act as God's spokesmen in guiding the monarchy. Samuel apparently is responsible for the establishment (19:20) of "the school of the prophets" as an institution that is also found in the days of Elisha.

The Books of Samuel and Kings will be told from a prophetic viewpoint, while the Book of Chronicles is more from a priestly perspective.

- b. Culminating in David’s purchase of the **temple** site in the last chapter of the combined book, I & II Samuel portray a period of sweeping change—from the anarchy and loose confederation during the judges to the centerpiece of the Davidic dynasty, the temple.
3. Providentially, God gave relief from outside super-power interference while the tribes were being welded together under the monarchy.

Egypt declines after the days of Rameses III (1170), except for one incursion by Shishak I in 927. Assyria is not a contender until the defeat of Ahab at Qarqar in 853. Jehu was forced to pay tribute to Assyria in 841 as recorded by the [Assyrian] black obelisk now residing in the British Museum.



Black Obelisk



King Jehu bowing before Shalmaneser III

B. Biblical Scope

1. “Catch lines” from the end of the book of Judges:
 - a. Eli’s wicked sons at the sanctuary (2:12-17,22) reflect the sins of the two Levites found in the two appendices of Judges: the idolatrous Levite serving the Danites, and the calloused Levite sacrificing his concubine.
 - b. The period of the Judges ends with the story of a barren woman (Manoah’s wife), and the message of Samuel begins with a barren wife, Hannah. “Both mothers are barren and depend on divine interventions to give birth to sons, both sons are conscripted from conception to be Nazirites, and both sons deliver Israel from the Philistines” (Waltke, *OT Theology*, 626). Spiritual progress beyond the time of the Judges is revealed in the pious Hannah (reflective of humbled Israel among the nations) who begs divine intervention and then offers her son and praises to God.
2. The times of the books of Samuel produced numerous Psalms that reflect the situation in David’s life. Examples from I Samuel include Ps. 52 (Doeg’s treachery), 54 (betrayal by Ziphites), 57 (hiding from Saul in the cave), 59 (Michal’s aid), 142 (in the cave).

C. Biographical Scope

The books of Samuel highlights the lives of three servants of God: Samuel, Saul, and David. Howard breaks the book down into four narratives: Samuel, Samuel & Saul, Saul & David, David. Tensions between these figures draws out God's message.

1. **Samuel** (ca. 1100-1030) serves as judge (7:15), as well as priest (9:12) and prophet (I Sam. 3:20).

As a bridge from the chaotic period of the judges to the elect Davidic dynasty, the PURPOSE of Samuel seems to be "to define monarchy as a gracious gift of God to His chosen people," (Youngblood, *EBC* III:558).

Samuel will anoint the other two key figures.

God makes plain that the people's request for a king was not a rejection of Samuel's leadership, but a rejection of God as King (8:7), even though God in His time would have granted a King (Dt. 17). Had not God commanded Adam, the sovereign of paradise, to "rule over" the creatures, and did He not promise Abraham that he would be the father of Kings (Gen. 17:6,16)?

God warned that both king and people would be punished if they conspired against Him (I Sam. 12:25; cf. Hosea 13:11).

I gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath. (Hos 13.11)

2. **Saul** (fl. 1050-1010) was an expedient political choice for king since

- a. He was from the centrally located and small tribe of Benjamin; this helped avoid tensions among the larger and historically jealous tribes;

- b. He was physically large and of an imposing stature (9:2; 10:23)

Saul lives out the tragic lesson that Samuel teaches, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice..." (15:22).

- c. There is a textual problem in 13:1 where Saul's age is missing from the MT (massoretic text). Verse one is not found in the LXX.

NKJ 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel,

NIV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was *thirty* years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel *forty-two* years.

NAS 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was *forty* years old when he began to reign, and he reigned *thirty-two* years over Israel.

NJB 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul was . . . years old when he became king, and reigned over Israel for . . . years.

ESV 1 Samuel 13:1 Saul lived for one year and then became king, and when he had reigned for two years over Israel

- Merrill gives some good suggestions for emending the text, p. 193. He suggests, "Saul was [forty] years old when he began to reign. When he had reigned for two years..."
- Waltke prefers the NAS reading of reigning 32 years.
- Acts 13:21 addresses the length of Saul's reign, saying it was "...40 years..."

Acts 13:21 Then they demanded a king, and God gave them Saul son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin. After forty years, 22 he deposed him and raised up David to be king,...

The Books of Samuel are among the most poorly preserved in the Bible. This original text tradition may have been based on an inter-testamental temple scroll that was worm-eaten causing lacunae like this one.

Compare 12:11 which records an unknown “Bedan” for the Judges period. The LXX and Syriac read “Barak.”

NKJ 12:11 "And the LORD sent Jerubbaal, Bedan, Jephthah, and Samuel, and delivered you

NJB 12:11 Yahweh then sent Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel.

3. **David**, (fl. 1010-971) the youngest of all his brothers, and from a small family in Judah, illustrates that “...the Lord sees not as man sees...” (16:7). This motif of God’s choosing and using unexpected vessels is introduced early in the book when Hannah exults in her own child of promise (1 Sam 2:6-8).

The most significant aspect of David’s calling was God’s unconditionally establishing the throne within his family and promising the Messianic King through him (II Sam. 7:12ff.; Ps. 89).

- Samuel helped **preserve** the nation during Philistine expansion
- Saul **confederated** the nation under the infant monarchy
- David **expanded** the nation through conquest
- Solomon would **centralize** the nation through his administration.

Be familiar with the dates of the forty year reigns of these three kings:

—Saul, 1050-1010

—David, 1010-971

—Solomon, 971-931

Excursus: Structure of I Samuel 9-31

Walter Kaiser cites W.L. Humphries structural outline of I Samuel 9-31:

Intro: 9:1,2
Part I: 9-14
Part II: 15-27
Finale 28-31

“These two parts [I & II] follow a common pattern: Saul and Samuel meet privately (9:3–10:15; 15:1-35). Samuel announces Saul’s destiny. This is followed by two scenes: in the first Saul is presented positively (10:17–11:15; 16:14–19:10), but the second is unfavorable, and Saul’s doom is realized (13:1–14:46; 19:11–28:2). The finale follows the same pattern: at a meeting of Saul and Samuel, Saul’s defeat and death are foretold (28:3-25), followed by a climax that had both constructive and destructive aspects as Saul committed suicide (31:1-13).” —Kaiser, *A History of Israel*, p. 214

D. Chronological Difficulties in the monarchial period

1. Degree of accuracy (see Howard, p. 148)

The era of 1000-900 has a margin of 10 years on some events
Events from 900-620 can be pinpointed within one year
After 620, our chronology is quite accurate.

2. Challenge of reckoning dates

When did various events occur?

What was the duration of the reigns?

Challenge of separating overlapping (father and son) reigns

Challenge of synchronizing contemporaneous (Southern and Northern realms) kings

The definitive work on monarchial chronology is Edwin Thiele’s, *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings*. Though not easy reading, it is a valuable resource for pinpointing historical events in the Narratives, and for defending the accuracy of the biblical record in the face of apparent minor inconsistencies.

Chronologists base their reckonings on solar eclipses recorded in middle eastern archives, and then compare the chronologies of Israel’s neighbors to events where Israel interacted with the surrounding nations.

III. Outline and highlights

A. Judgeship of Samuel — 1-8

1. Coming of Samuel, 1-3

- a. Birth in answer to a mother’s prayer. After her barrenness (sent by God, 1:6), she dedicates her first-born back to God Who blesses her, to Peninnah’s chagrin, with five more children, 2:21. For a chronology of Samuel who is born around 1124, see Merrill, pp. 176, 149-50.

1) Samuel's unexpected birth to an afflicted mother is a backdrop to a message of hope and exaltation of a spurned nation. A barren mother asks God for a son; a troubled nation asks God for a king.

2) Parallels between Hannah and Mary (Hamilton, pp. 218, 219)

a) Mary's Magnificat ("lowly handmaiden")

b) The growth and favor of the child of promise, I Sam. 2:21,26 cf. Luke 2:40,52

b. Beginning of the end of the priestly line of Ithamar (I Chron. 24:3; I Kings 2:27,35)

(1) Stage set for renewal of Eleazer's line by the "faithful priest" (2:35), probably Zadok

(2) Samuel, though from the territory of Ephraim, is a Levite (I Chron. 6:28,32,34) who serves in the place of Eli's sons in the tabernacle (9:12,13; etc.)

2. Wandering ark, sometimes called the "ark narrative" 4-6

a. There is a "...heavy use of Exodus imagery (cf. the explicit allusions to the Egyptians at I Sam. 4:8, the plagues which befell the Philistines, their reaction, which when they were confronted with the power of Yahweh, was similar to that of the Egyptians). Such a use of Exodus language and parallels implies that in a similarly desperate historical situation to that of the Exodus, Yahweh will begin again with Israel." —Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, p., 133

b. "Ichabod" (a compound word: the initial word being a contraction of the negative particle 'ayn, and the last word *chavod*, for "glory" אֵין כְּבוֹד) ben Phinehas, 4:21. This term is an apparent reference to the loss of the ark with its shekinah glory.

c. Shiloh destroyed; the rest of the Tabernacle moves to Nob on the Mt. Scopas/Olives (21:1-6) before removing to Gibeon in the days of David, I Chron. 16:39. From here Solomon brings the Tabernacle to Jerusalem, II Chron. 1:3-5; 5:5.

Jeremiah later reminded his generation that the ark is not a lucky rabbit's foot to protect Jerusalem (Jer. 3:16; 7:4).

d. God vs. Dagon, 5,6

(1) Tumors, blotches: some suggest the bubonic plague because of the use of golden mice guilt offerings, 6:5, for the mice that "spoiled the land" (5:6; 6:4,5).

(2) The ark returned somewhat miraculously (6:7). It abides at the house of Abinadab in Kiriath-Jearim for about 70 years, 7:2; but cf. II Sam 6:3 in the days of David.

e. 6:19 — some conservatives suggest a reading of "...struck down of the people from 50 families, 70 men"

6:19 Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people,

- (1) Irregular syntax: normally the smaller number precedes the larger, and the expected conjunction is missing
- (2) Three reputable mss omit the number 50,000
- (3) The number is too large for this small community
- (4) Josephus says 70 died with no mention of 50,000

f. Renewal at Mizpah, 7:3-17. Ebenezer, 7:12

7:12 Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

3. Call for a king, 8

Davis & Whitcomb note that "...two principal crisis points in Jewish history revolve around the establishment and the rejection of a king."

a. Samuel's sons were corrupt, 8:7, 3; (and Samuel had seen Eli's sons!)

8:3 But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes, and perverted justice

b. Other nations had kings, 8:5,6,20

—"to judge them like the nations"

—"to fight for them"

c. Pressure from Philistines, 9:16

B. Initial reign of Saul, 9-15

1. Compromise appointment

- a. Central tribe
- b. Small tribe
- c. Confirmed by three signs spoken by Samuel, 10

A seeker of donkeys is chosen to shepherd the sheep of Israel before the messianic shepherd, David, is anointed by Samuel.

10:10 - Saul “prophesies” probably in the sense of I Chron. 25:1,3: “...prophesied in giving thanks and praising the Lord.” He is the first and only OT king called a prophet (10:11) or that prophesies.

E.J. Young (*My Servants the Prophets*, p. 87) explains the fact that God gave Saul “another heart” (10:9) as a change of degree rather than a change of kind/nature.

2. Nahash (“snake”) the Ammonite threatens Jabesh-Gilead, 11

a. This city already noted as probably in the ancestry of Saul

b. A DSS (4Q Sam^a) adds the commentary that “Reubenite and Gadite subjects of Nahash ... had been similarly mutilated for their acts of treason against the Ammonite king [and] had escaped Ammon and had found refuge in Jabesh-Gilead. As those who rebelled in the first place were deserving of such punishment, no less were those who harbored them.” —Merrill, p. 200.

The NRSV is the only modern English version that includes the additional text from the DSS; Waltke believes it is authentic, as does Frank M. Cross:

1. Josephus summarizes the backdrop to the Ammonite invasion of Jabesh as found in the DSS.
2. The DSS introduces Nahash in the customary biblical manner, “Nahash, king of the children of Ammon,” whereas the MT introduces him curtly as “Nahash the Ammonite.”
3. The addition is straightforward without theological/hortatory emphasis (Cross in *Understanding the DSS*, edited by H. Shanks, p. 160).

c. This is Saul’s opportunity to cement his leadership

3. Installation of the king at Gilgal, the place of covenant renewal and a military staging ground: 11:14,15; chpt.12

The word for “renew” the covenant in 11:14 is the same as in Psalm 51:10. Generally, חָדַשׁ *chadash* in the piel is used for restoring something damaged.

a. Note treaty language (12:14-18) that Samuel uses and also God’s command for respect as being still Preeminent (12:18)

Samuel clears himself of graft while predicting that the new king will take the children and property of the Israelites.

b. Sin of omission? → 12:23 “...far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you.”

4. Rejection of Saul — 13-15

Rejection is pronounced by God's prophet, Samuel, who, as God's mediator of heaven's court, supersedes the king in the king's calling, installing, and dis-enthronement

EXCURSUS on the "Pim" of 13:19-21

NKJV 13:20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a pim
KJV 13:20 But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. 21 Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads.

Archaeological finds have helped modern translations understand the Hebrew of this text. The AV (followed by the first edition NASB) translated, "...yet they had a file." We now know it should be translated "...and the price was a *pim*."

Pims have been found at Lachish and Jerusalem; they are a weight for the scales, being about 2/3 of shekel (so the NIV), or 1/4 of an ounce.

END EXCURSUS

- a. Presumptuously offering sacrifice as a priest, 13
- b. Partially obeyed command to exterminate Agag and the Amalakites, 15
- c. Significantly, both of these lapses by Saul which precipitate his rejection as covt leader are condemned at Gilgal (13:7,8,13,14; 15:23), the site of covt renewal.

15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."
- d. God as the ultimate king holds the prerogative of cashiering Saul—15:23; 16:1 cf. 8:7 where people had rejected God
- e. 14:49-51—Saul's paternity and posterity listing at this point instead of after his death like other kings implies that the end of his reign is sealed.

C. David the Crown Prince — 16-31

1. David "anointed", 16 (note translation for "Messiah")

Anointing was a mark of distinction that set one apart (consecration) with a special commission for a special office.

The oil (staple of life and of health as a medicine) with its perfumed fragrance was symbolic of the pervasive and effectual influence of the Spirit of God in doing the work through the anointed.

Power was thus often implied. Still, David did not exercise authority until Saul, legitimately the Lord's anointed, was removed from the scene. Then David was crowned after he actually took the throne.

Significantly, while the H.S. comes upon many persons, He only left one person in the Bible: Saul (I Sam. 16:14). This helps us understand David's statement, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me..." (Ps. 51), to mean that David was praying for pardon and renewal in continuing as God's anointed, covenant king.

In the same way, Christ (*Christos* is Greek for "anointed one") was anointed (consecrated) for His ministry (Ps. 2:2) and for His three offices of Prophet (I Kg. 19:16), Priest (Ex. 28:41), and King (I Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 16:12-13).

Like David He did not immediately take the throne (cf. Mt. 25:31; Acts 5:31; 10:37,38).

Acts 10:38 "...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Other OT anointing passages for the three offices are:

Is. 61:1 = Prophet, Ps. 133 = Priest, Zech. 4:14 = King.

Of immediate interest is the idea that the king was God's intermediary. He was viewed as God's adopted son to carry out the Father's royal will. Note the term of the Davidic covenant in II Sam. 7:14, where God promises to take David's son as God's son.

Psalm 2 is helpful in this regard when it speaks of the Anointed one of Whom God approves. This language is repeated at the baptism (anointing) of Jesus confirming Him as God's true and royal son.

Psalm 2:1 Why do the nations rage, And the people plot a vain thing? 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, 3 "Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us." 4 He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; The LORD shall hold them in derision. 5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, And distress them in His deep displeasure: 6 "Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion." 7 "I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.

Psalm 110 also bridges the relation between David and Christ within the Messianic dynasty. David, the adopted son of God, is the prototype of his later Son, Jesus the Messiah.

(See Hoffmeier's "Son of God" article in *BAR*, June 1997, pp. 45-49 for some cultural and religious parallels between Israel's and Egypt's crowning of kings as the son of a god. The author's conclusion is that Jesus the Messiah is anointed at His baptism as king and Son of God, not in a Hellenistic "son of god" sense, but in the Semitic sense of Psalm 2:7.)

2. David's appearance. Note frequent use of "looking," "seeing" in this chapter

a. 16:7 is literally, "man sees the eyes (the physical qualities), but Jehovah sees the heart"

b. "Ruddy" or "reddish, (אֲדָמִי *'admoni* in 16:12), probably referring to the color of hair "...which was regarded as a mark of beauty in southern lands, where the hair is generally black." –Keil & Delitzsch, p. 169

c. 16:14,15, an “evil spirit” on Saul from the Lord gives occasion for David in Saul’s court

3. David & Goliath — 17

a. The use of champions in a trial by ordeal to decide a contest

Even as Saul was immediately tested at Ramoth Gilead, David’s prowess is put to the test as soon as he is anointed. (See Dumbrell, *The Faith of Israel*, pp. 139-40)

b. Critics’ confusion over the language, “Whose son is this?” (17:55)

(1) David had returned home from Saul’s court and may have matured somewhat as an adolescent

(2) The real question may be about lineage, although Walter Kaiser thinks not (*OT Intro*) since Abner also had amnesia about David. Kaiser thinks this is a narrative out of sequence.

(a) “Which family will I be joined to by my daughter’s marriage?”

(b) “Which family should be tax exempt?”

(c) Rashi says he is asking, “Is David’s family a potential rival for the throne?”

c. Goliath’s four brothers? (hence five stones of 17:40?; II Sam. 21:22)

4. The fugitive heir-apparent — 19-27

a. This section provides the historical backdrop for many of David’s early Psalms. Cf. Joseph and Moses’ exile before rising to redemption and power, as well as Jesus’ expulsion from Nazareth.

b. David is spared from Saul in chapter 19: by Jonathan, by Michal, by the Lord’s presence

c. David maintains his innocence before the Lord by avoiding vengeance three times, chpts. 23-24

1) David spares Saul twice (Ex. 22:28), chpts. 24, 26

Ex. 22:28 " You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.

- David “cuts off” the corner of Saul’s royal robe in the cave (24:4)—cf. 15:27 where the kingdom was torn from Saul; David promises not to “cut off” Saul’s descendents (24:21)
- David locates Saul in the night camp (26:5) by the javelin at Saul’s head. This served as the king’s scepter in the field; cf. Saul’s use of the javelin against David in his court.

2) David is blocked from taking vengeance by Abigail

Abigail is God's gift as counselor following the loss of Samuel and as companion following Saul's taking away Michal.

25:25 Besides the acknowledged meaning of "fool," Nabal's name could also mean "fire, flame" or "send." Nabal's greatest sin is not his parsimony, but shameful lewdness: the meaning of this word "folly" implies a gross sexual sin or other violation (per Hamilton, p. 280).

5. Saul and the witch of Endor — 28

The Torah clearly forbids witchcraft and necromancy (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 20:6; Dt. 18:9-12). Saul himself had prosecuted witchcraft (I Sam. 28:3), a backdrop which helps reveal his desperation at the end of his life.

Samuel had condemned Saul's rebellion as on a par with witchcraft and pronounced that God was shutting up His Word to Saul who had rebelled against God's commands (15.23). Moreover, Saul has slain the priests, and the priestly ephod had been given to David (23.6); now the heavens are silent, so he turns to a witch for guidance.

This passage raises several theological questions.

- 1) Did the witch actually have power to communicate with the dead, especially the righteous dead?
- 2) Where did Samuel come from when he was disturbed?

Suggested interpretations:

- a. The witch faked the apparition through ventriloquism (implied by LXX) and sleight of hand. But this doesn't explain her apparent shock or the real prophecy that was to come true.
- b. The witch through demonic intervention is able to conjure up an evil spirit who portrayed Samuel.

This interpretation has theological support:

- (1) Powers of the devil to counterfeit, II Cor. 11:14
- (2) Would God cooperate with a sin that He calls an abominable capital offense? The witch is aware (28:10) of the capital penalty.
- (3) The righteous dead are at rest and not able to be disturbed and do not travel, Lk. 16:31
- (4) The witch's shock was at recognizing Saul, not necessarily at actually raising Samuel

(5) Saul apparently does not see (13) the spirit but only hears (v. 15)

OR c. Through God's sovereign intervention, Samuel was sent to bear bad news to the rebellious Saul. This position has exegetical (i.e., textual) support.

(1) The narrative says "Samuel spoke..." (28:15,16,20)

(2) I Chron. 10:13 in LXX: "Saul asked counsel of her that had a familiar spirit to inquire of her, and Samuel made answer to him." Significantly, however, the final clause, "...and Samuel..." is not found in the MT.

(3) God can speak in unusual ways (e.g., Balaam's donkey)

(4) "Samuel's" prophecy is fulfilled, a biblical test for prophets (Dt. 18:21,22), while it remains unproven that demons can accurately predict the future.

(5) Saul apparently does not see the spirit, v.13, but rather "hears" him, v. 15.

6. Saul's last battle

a. Philistines call David a possible "Satan" שָׂטָן (29:4; cf. Psa 109:6), one who would appear friendly but is a traitorous "*adversary*"; not surprisingly, the arch-Satan appears at the end of 2 Samuel to provoke David.

David as Goel rescues his family kidnapped from Ziklag, much as Abraham rescues Lot.

b. Saul's remembrance of Philistine abuse of Samson, 31:4

Is suicide a pardonable sin?

Is suicide an option for believers?

IV. II SAMUEL

A. Outline of Highlights (alliteration by Geisler, *APSOT*)

1. Recognition of David on the throne — 1-10 (1010-970 BC)

Until the summer of 1993 it was believed that there was never any archaeological or non-biblical evidence that David had ever really lived. Then a portion of a broken monument was found in a wall being excavated at Tel Dan; apparently, the stone had been reused in the wall after the monument was broken. The original inscription is from the larger victory stele of King Ben Hadad of Damascus in his campaigns against N. Israel (I Kings 15:16-22) in the early 9th Century, 100 years after David.

Reference is made to the “king of Israel,” apparently Baasha, and the “king of the house of David,” apparently Asa who had bribed ben Hadad to invade the north.

Until this discovery, the earliest Israelite kings cited in non-biblical records had been Omri, Ahab, and Jehu.

For a fuller treatment, see *BAR* 20:2, March/April 1994.

Walter Kaiser notes (*History of Israel*, pp. 225-26) that actually there was an earlier discovery than 1993. The famous Moabite Mesha Stele, retrieved in the late 1800s, had a reference to “the house of David” that had been effaced by Bedouin traders. Before it was vandalized however, a plaster squeeze was taken at the location of discovery. Re-examination of the plaster squeeze in 1994 confirms that David’s house was cited by this IX century record.

a. Hebron for 7^{1/2} years — 1-4

- (1) “After the death of Saul” 1:1, is similar to beginnings of Joshua and Judges in marking the beginnings of those epochs. The new beginning always means there is a future.
- (2) David, not yet acknowledged by the Northern tribes, chooses the ancient Judean center of Hebron for his capital
- (3) David solidifies his claim to the throne by demanding the return of Michal his wife and by putting distance between himself and the assassins of Ishbosheth.
R.K. Harrison further suggests that his wife, Ahinoam (I Sam. 25:43), was the daughter of Saul by his wife, Ahimaaz (*Old Testament Times*, pp. 187-189).

b. Jerusalem for 33 years — 5-10 (I Chron. 11-20)

- (1) Site choice
 - (a) Hebron liabilities: it was a Levitical city of refuge located far away from the other tribes and long associated with Judean history.

(b) Jerusalem advantages: it was fortified with its own water supply and centrally located between Judah and the northern tribes. It belonged to no single tribe at its capture (cf. D.C.)

(2) David is anointed a third time (5:3, ctr. 2:4) after the Saulide dynasty in the North is terminated. I Chron. 12 lists the leaders of the nation who now take David as king.

(3) David's household grew with offspring and concubines, 5:13-16

6:16 Michal is spurned after her restoration from another man. Note the window that separates her and David here and in I Sam. 19:12. Hamilton (p. 314) suggests the possible motive for her critical eye of David at the coming of the ark.

(4) The Ark is moved to Jerusalem (6:16-17) making it the religious center of Israel as well as political. By this act, David made it evident that God's throne was at Jerusalem and that he would rule in God's name. He sang Psalm 105 (I Chron. 16:7ff.) at the Ark's coming.

See Merrill, p. 263, especially footnote #30: "David himself articulates his awareness of Yahweh's choice of Zion as the site of both palace and temple (Ps. 78:68; 87:2; 132)."

Dumbrell also makes an issue of the coming of God's presence to the capital to indicate that He will rule through His mediator, David (*Covenant and Creation*, pp. 142ff.) The palace of the heavenly King and His mediator are both in the place of God's choosing.

c. **Davidic Covenant** — chpt. 7 (cf. 23:5; I Chron. 17; Ps. 89; Mt. 1:1; Lk. 1:32)

The term "covenant" is not used in II Sam. 7, but it is apparent from subsequent references, as in 2Sam. 23:5 and Ps. 89:3,28,34.

Ps. 89:3 "I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn to My servant David: 4 'Your seed I will establish forever, And build up your throne to all generations.' "

1) Background

Rather than David building God's house as he had wished, God promises to build David's household and to establish it forever on the throne of Israel. These are the two key words of the chapter: "house" (15X) and "forever" (8X).

Although Jehoiachin, the last monarch in David's line to sit on the throne, was removed and cursed with his lineage (Jer. 22:24-30), God would raise up in Messiah a Judean King Who would possess the throne forever (7:13,16; Lk. 1:32). God would be a Father to David's son, and the Davidic King would be the Son of God (7:14; Rom. 1:3,4; II Cor. 6:18f.).

1Chron. 17:11 "And it shall be, when your days are fulfilled, when you must go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 "He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 "I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took *it* from him who was before you. 14 "And I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." ' ' 15 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. 32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. 33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever,

2Cor 6:17 Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." 18 "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

2) Continuity with the covenants

The Davidic Covenant is a further out-working of the promise of deliverance given in the garden, the terms of which were further defined to Abraham (note the promise of “kings” from Abraham, Gen. 17:6,16).

- The Abrahamic covenant established the inheritance and the great posterity;
- The Sinaitic called for a “kingdom of priests” (Ex. 19:3b-6);
- The Davidic established God’s mediate theocratic rule (Ps. 110:1,4; I Chron. 29:23) in the midst of His people.

1Chron. 29:23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father...

Although Saul had the throne wrested from him, this covenant to David was unconditional in its ultimate fulfillment, although conditional in which son of David might work out the promise (cf. I Kings 11:11,13; 15:4). **Immanuel** was promised as the ideal coming King (Is. 7:14; 9:6).

3) Essence of the Davidic Covenant (acc. to Dumbrell, *Faith of Israel*, p. 81)

a) Make David’s name great, vs. 9b. Cf. Gen. 12:2 of the Abrahamic promise

2Sam. 7:8 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 "And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth.

b) “Appoint a place” for Israel, 7:10. Note language of Deuteronomy (11:24) and Gen. 15:8 for promised land

2Sam. 7:10 "Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more;

Gen. 15:7 Then He said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it."

c) Give David “rest” from his enemies, vs. 11. The Davidic Messiah will subdue His enemies with a “rod of iron” (Ps. 2:9, Rev. 2:27)

4) David as the King-Priest, typical of his Son, Messiah — Psalms 110, 2 (Zech. 6)

(a) Bringing up the ark to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6)

- i) care in bringing it the Levitical way (I Chron. 15:11-15)
- ii) In a sacral role, David wears the ephod and sacrifices to the Lord, blessing the people in the name of the Lord (2Sam. 6:18)
- iii) Dumbrell notes that the coming of the ark in chpt. 6 and the Davidic Covt in chpt. 7 are closely interrelated. II Sam. 7:1 is a pivotal passage, with the key words “house” and “dwell” tying together the two developments. Also, the idea of “rest” (vs. 1) is in line with the expectations that went with the promised land (Dt. 12:10), although “there remaineth yet a rest...” (vs. 11).

(b) Appointing the religious personnel to attend the tabernacle (I Chron. 15:16,19; 16:4-6), possibly including his own sons, 2Sam 8:18b.

2. Retrogression of David on the throne — 11-18

a. His sin — 11

“The center point of the whole narrative is, of course, the birth of Solomon and the intrigue which made it possible for him, though not the heir apparent, to succeed his father on Israel’s throne. * * * Thus the detailed account of the Ammonite campaign in 2 Samuel 10 is related to the main plot of the succession narrative and, of course, to Israel’s history.”—Merrill, p. 252

b. His sorrow — 12

*Two penitential Psalms are written out of this experience, 32 and 51.

Three punishments:

- 1) internal conflict, v.10
- 2) his own wives taken, v.11
- 3) death of the new child, v.14.

Actually, David will suffer a four-fold loss (2 Sam 12.6; cf. Exo 22.1) in the death of his four sons: Bathsheba’s child, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah (1 Chron 3.1-4).

c. His suffering — 12-18

These latter three sons are wicked and ambitious, a fact that is manifested as soon as Nathan pronounces God's curse. David's second son, Chileab (by Abigail), may have been deceased since nothing further is said of him. With #1 son Amnon out of the way, Absalom would have had claim to the throne and Davidic promises; he realizes that after David had compromised his own integrity, it would be hard for his father to punish Absalom for exacting [gross] justice against Amnon. Adonijah, #4 son, later tries to lay claim to the throne against David's wishes.

3. Restoration of David to the throne — 19-24

a. Ascension again to the throne — 19-21

- (1) Subjugation of revolt under Sheba the Benjamite
- (2) Subjugation of the Philistines with the death of Goliath's four booming brothers in four separate engagements at the hands of four of David's mighty men, 21:18-22.

b. Aspirations on the throne — 22-24

- (1) David's Psalm of victory, 22 = Ps. 18

- (2) Self-claim of writers of Scripture of their inspiration of God, 23:2

2Sam. 23:2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue. 3 The God of Israel said, The Rock of Israel spoke to me..."

- (3) Numbering the people, 24

- (a) A sin of pride; David was interested in levying taxes and in conscription for public works, both a burden upon the people. Further, he displayed his lack of trust in God's providence in this attempt to shore up his national control after the civil war and subsequent revolts.

Some have suggested on the basis of Ex. 30:12-16 that David brought a plague upon the nation for not paying a special "head tax" offering to the Lord

Exodus 30:12 "When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give a ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no plague among them when you number them. 13 "This is what everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary (a shekel is twenty gerahs). The half-shekel shall be an offering to the LORD. 14 "Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering to the LORD. 15 "The rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *you* give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. 16 "And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shall appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."

- (b) God works all things together:

- 1) punishment of the people's sin (24:1)
- 2) David's pride (24:10)
- 3) the devil's designs (I Chron. 21:1). Contrast II Sam. 24:1 — "it (God's anger) incited David..."

2 Samuel 24:1 Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them...

1 Chronicles 21:1 Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.

- (c) The destroying angel stays his hand at the site of Ornan's threshing floor. Here David had offered sacrifice at his personal expense and here the temple of sacrifice would be built. David is portrayed in priestly intervention for the nation.

2 Samuel 24:24-25 Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. ²⁵ And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

1Chron 21:24 says David paid 600 shekels of gold, apparently for the real estate. The silver was either a down payment or for the cattle and threshing sled.

c. Chiastic Epilogue, chapters 21-24: a picture of David's Final Establishment and Success

	A	Famine out of Saul's sin vs. Gibeonites	21:1-14
	B	Human agents of David's success	21:15-27
Climax	C	Song of Praise for Deliverance and establishing him on the throne	chpt. 22
	C ¹	David's last words of praise for God's covenant	23:1-7
	B ¹	Human agents of David's success	23:8-39
	A ¹	Plague out of David's sin vs. his people	chpt.24

B. Two of the saddest sayings in David's ears

1. "Thou art the man!" -Nathan, 12:7
2. "...Every man to his tents, O Israel!" –Sheba, 20:1

C. David's final arrangements — I Chronicles 22-29

1. Gathering of Temple materials. The fact that David was not allowed to build the temple because he was a man of war (22:7-10) says something about God's ideals. Despite the fact that David was doing God's will in subjugating the uncircumcised, the temple would be left for the king of peace (*Shalom-an*).

2. National convocation — 23–29:22

- a. Public charge to Solomon to keep the Abrahamic, Mosaic, and Davidic covenants, 1Chron 28:8,9; 29:18,19

1 Chron. 29:18 "O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 "And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all *these things*, and to build the temple for which I have made provision."

- b. The greatest public works project without taxation — free-will offering for the Lord's work, 29:1-9

- c. "The Last Thanksgiving," 1 Chron. 29:10-15

Note that David's prayer (1Chron 29:12) contains themes from Deut. (e.g., 8:18) and that Jesus uses similar language in His pattern for prayer (Mt. 6:9-13, depending on the ms).