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Introduction to First Samuel

The book of First Samuel is the first of the double books.

1. 1-2 Samuel.
2. 1-2 Kings.
3. 1-2 Chronicles.

These are double books recording for us the rise and fall of the Israelite monarchy.

I. The particulars of the book of First Samuel.

- A.** The place of First Samuel in the Hebrew cannon.
 1. First and Second Samuel in the Hebrew canon are one book.
 - a. The Masoretic Text of First Samuel is not in good shape.
 - b. It is said that many letters and words are omitted accidentally.
 2. The book division originated with the LXX, the Alexandrian text, translated from Hebrew to Greek in the third century B.C.
 3. First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings are labeled as belonging to the “Book of the Kingdoms”, in order.
 - a. First Kings, is First Samuel.

- b. Second Kings, is Second Samuel.
 - c. Third Kings, is First Kings.
 - d. Fourth Kings, is Second Kings.
 4. The title the “book of the kingdoms” was because of their duality of kingdoms
 - a. King Saul and King David.
 - b. The kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel.
 5. Jerome translated the entire Bible into Latin called “The Latin Vulgate”, in the fourth century and maintained the same divisions of two books but called them 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th books of the Kings, instead of “the Kingdoms” as in the LXX.
 - a. The Authorized Version of Kings James records this under each book.
 - b. The book of First Samuel as a subtitle says, “Otherwise called the First Book of the Kings”.
 - c. This follows to Second Kings.
 6. The book division was introduced into the Hebrew Bible with the first Rabbinical Bible of 1516-17, by the Venetian printer Daniel Bomberg.
- B.** The place of First Samuel in the English Bible falls under the second of five categories.
1. The first category in our English Bible is the books of the Law.

- a. Genesis.
 - b. Exodus.
 - c. Leviticus.
 - d. Numbers.
 - e. Deuteronomy.
2. The second category in our English Bible is the historical books.
- a. First and Second Samuel.
 - b. First and Second Kings.
 - c. First and Second Chronicles.
 - d. Ezra.
 - e. Nehemiah.
 - f. Esther.
3. The third category in our English Bible is the books of poetry.
- a. Job.
 - b. Psalms.
 - c. Proverbs.
 - d. Ecclesiastes.
 - e. Song of Solomon.
4. The fourth category in our English Bible is the books of Major Prophets.
- a. Isaiah.
 - b. Jeremiah.
 - c. Lamentations of Jeremiah.
 - d. Ezekiel.
 - e. Daniel.
5. The fifth category in our English Bible is the books of Minor prophets.
- a. Hosea.
 - b. Joel.

- c. Amos.
- d. Obediah.
- e. Jonah.
- f. Micah.
- g. Nahum.
- h. Habakkuk.
- i. Zephaniah.
- j. Haggai.
- k. Malachi.

C. The authorship of First Samuel.

1. The author of First and Second Samuel has always been excepted and taught to be Samuel.
2. The name Samuel means “asked of God”, from the root “to hear”, after the petition of his mother Hannah for God to give her a son.
3. The evidence of records being kept by men God called and ordained throughout Israel’s history is without question.
 - a. “Then Samuel explained to the people the behavior of royalty, and wrote it in a book and laid it up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.” 1Sam. 10:25
 - 1) The first 25 chapters of First Samuel were the work of Samuel, which marks his death.

- 2) The remainder by others, evident by the following scriptures.
- b. “David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar)” 2Sam. 1:17-18
 - c. “Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the men but did not finish. Wrath came on Israel on account of this numbering, and the number was not entered in the book of the annals of King David.” 1Chron. 27:24
 - d. “As for the events of King David’s reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer.” 1Chron. 29:29
4. The person eye-witness of Samuel is throughout this first book.
- a. The genealogy presents Samuel from the sons of Kohathites. 1Chron. 6:26, 33, 35
 - b. The man Samuel was a Levite.
5. The man Samuel is believed to of began the “school for prophets”, a key to bring the people back to God being focused on God’s will and revelation through His word.

- a. “After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, tambourines, flutes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying.” 1Sam. 10:5
- b. “While Jezebel was killing off the LORD’s **prophets**, Obadiah had taken a hundred **prophets** and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) 1Kings 18:4
- c. “The company of the **prophets** at Bethel came out to Elisha and asked, “Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?” “Yes, I know,” Elisha replied, “but do not speak of it.” 2Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15, 4:1, 38

These are the particulars of the book of First Samuel!

II. The historical background to the book of First Samuel.

- A. The period of history the books of First and Second Samuel covers is from 1100-970 B.C. (Stanley A. Ellisen)

1. The dates cover from the birth of Samuel to the death of King David.
 2. He assumes Samuel was thirty when he began his leadership in 1070 B.C.
 - * If you recall the age of entering the priesthood was thirty years of age.
 3. He places Samuel's leadership five years after the death of Eli, 1070 B.C. , placing the birth of Samuel at 1100 B.C.
- B.** The period of history is over-lapped by the period of the judges.
1. The book of Judges covers about 300 years.
 2. The nation of Israel had compromised conquering the land and came under bondage to the pagan nations.
 3. God raised up 12 judges to deliver Israel from her enemies and one woman, Deborah, 13 in total.
 4. The first twelve chapters of First Samuel fall into the period of the judges of civil, moral and religious anarchy.
 5. The two repeated phrases to describe the period of anarchy. Judges 17:6, 21:25
 - a. Everyone was doing what was right in their own eyes.
 - b. In those days, there was no king in Israel.
 6. Samuel then actually closes the period of the judges by being the last judge and

marking the transition to the period of the prophets, though there were prophets before this time.

- a. Samuel was the first prophet of the many to come in the New Testament.
 - b. Peter in the temple, after the healing of the lame man said, "Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days." Acts 3:24, 23:20, Heb. 11:32
7. These prophets would be advisers, counselors and mouth piece for God to the King.
 - a. Such as Nathan to king David or Elijah, Isaiah and Jeremiah to the kings of their days.
 - b. The prophets of God were called out, men of common lineage to call the leaders and people to repent.
 8. The period from the call of Samuel to the reign of king Saul is also a transitional period, from anarchy and monarchy.
 9. There were many over-lapping periods and the three prominent men, Samuel, Saul and David.
 - * Knowing God's Word, Stanley A. Ellisen,
 - a. The Philistine oppression for 40 years from 1095-1055. Judges 13:1

- b. The judgeship of Eli the priest for 40 years from 1115-1075. 1Sam. 4:18
- c. The ark at Kirjath Jearim for 20 years from 1075-1055. 1Sam. 7:2, 1Chron. 15:25
- d. The judgeship of Samuel for 40 years from 1055-1015. 1Sam. 7:14-16
- e. The reign of Saul for 40 years from 1050-1010. Acts 13:21
- f. The reign of David for 40 years from 1010-970. 2Sam. 5:4
- g. The reign of Solomon for 40 years from 970-930. 1Kings 11:42
 - * The perfect will of God was always a theocracy but the people rejected Yahweh and desired to have a king like all the other nations. 1Sam. 12

C. The spiritual state of the nation was idolatrous and immoral.

- 1. Though Eli the priest was faithful at Shiloh, as a priest, he failed to confront the sinfulness of his sons.
 - a. Hophni and Phinias were wicked men had not regard for the Lord and were serving as God's representatives. 1Sam. 2:12
 - b. They would benefit themselves of the offerings from the people who came to Shiloh. 1Sam. 2:13-16

- c. Their sin was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt. 1Sam. 2:17
- d. Eli, their father heard all his sons were doing, even laying with the woman who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting, but though he confronted them with their sin, he did nothing to stop them or remove them. 1Sam. 2:22-25
- 2. God pronounce judgment over Eli's two sons.
 - a. God sent to Eli a man of God to declare judgment over him and his two sons and the raising of a faithful priest. 1Sam. 2:27-36
 - b. God confirmed the judgment through Samuel. 1Sam. 3:11-18
- 3. The condition of immorality and idolatry was in all the land.
 - a. God therefore allowed the Philistines to invade and chasten the nation.
 - b. The people were in bondage.
- 4. The location of the ark of the covenant was in Shiloh.
 - a. Nine miles north of Bethel, from the time of Joshua to Eli.
 - b. The ark fell into the hands of the Philistines at the death of Eli and his sons.

- c. The ark remained separated until David sought the ark year later.
- 5. The history of the tabernacle. Stanley A. Ellisen. Knowing God's Word.
 - a. The tabernacle was at Gilgal from 1405-1398.
 - b. At Shiloh from 1398-1075.
 - c. At Nob from 1075-1015.
 - d. At Gibeon from 1015-1000.
 - e. At Jerusalem from 1000-960.
- 6. The history of the ark.
 - a. At Gilgal, with the tabernacle, from 1405-1398.
 - b. At Shiloh, with the tabernacle, from 1398-1075.
 - c. At Phistia 1075.
 - d. At Kirjath Jearim, from 1075-1055.
 - e. At Jerusalem in the tabernacle, from 1000-960.
 - f. At Jerusalem in the temple, from 960-586.
- D. The political state of the nation.
 - 1. Divisions from within the nation, being judged by various judges, there being no central leadership since the time of Joshua.
 - a. The repeated cycle was the pattern.
 - b. Bondage, to liberty and back to bondage.

- 2. Opposition from without the nation, being under God's judgment.
 - a. The Philistines from the south-west, were their greatest enemies and had taken almost all of the west of the Jordan.
 - b. The neighbors on the east and Syria in the north at time attacked them also.
- 3. The internal divisions and external oppositions became progressively removed in the reign of David.
 - a. The nation became united under David.
 - b. The nation was able to drive out the Philistines and put to tribute Edom, Moab, Ammon and Syria.
- 4. The purpose of the book becomes obvious, any attempt to united the nation and establish God's Kingdom apart from God but depending on man was futile.
 - a. It was the man God chose, not man.
 - b. It was God who received the glory not man.
 - c. It was the power of God alone who could defeat the enemies of God's people, not man's might.
- 5. The will of God is always the best.
 - a. Samuel is the last judge and first prophet by the choice of God.
 - b. Saul is the first king by the choice of man.

- c. David is the great king by the choice of God.
- d. Gods choice and man's choice a diametrically opposed.
 - 1) Flesh will not seek or yield to God but rather act as God.
 - 2) Spirit will reveal and bring about the will and purposes of God for His glory.
 - 3) Anything apart from God's choice is less than God's best!
- 6. The Kingdom of God is a future kingdom to be establish on earth as promised to Israel.
 - a. The New Testament opens up with the proclamation that the Kingdom of God was at hand.
 - b. The church will reign on the earth with Jesus, as Israel lives in physical Kingdom for 1,000 years.
 - c. The church is looking for a spiritual Kingdom, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. 11:10
- E. Key people and events in First Samuel.
 - 1. The key people.
 - a. Hannah.
 - b. Eli.
 - c. Samuel.
 - d. Saul.
 - e. David.

- 2. The key events.
 - a. The birth of Samuel through prayer. 1Sam. 1
 - b. The judgment of God over the house of Eli for ungodliness. 1Sam. 2
 - c. The ark of the covenant lost to the Philistines, symbolic of the glory of the Lord departing. 1Sam. 4
 - d. The people's choice of the first King. 1Sam. 12
 - e. The slaying of Goliath by David. 1Sam. 16-17

This is the historical background to the book of First Samuel!

III. The division of the book of First Samuel.

- A. The simple outline of First Samuel.
 - I. The birth of Samuel, God's man, judge, priest and prophet. 1Sam. 1-7
* The replacement of the corrupt priesthood!
 - II. The reign of Saul, the first king, the people's man, self-willed and evil. 1Sam. 8-15
* The deception of the people and rejection of the first king!

- III.** The reign of David, the anointed king, God's man, servant, leader and a man after God's own heart. 1Sam. 16-31
- * The preparation of David to unite the kingdom.

* The detailed outline of First Samuel.