

A Study of I Samuel
The Desiring for a King

Outline of I Samuel

The book of I Samuel is the story of two men, Samuel and Saul. There is a historical shift to David in the latter portion of I Samuel in preparation for the book of II Samuel.

SAMUEL: The Last of the Judges (chapters 1-7)

His Birth and His Youth (1 & 2)

His Call and His Office (3)

His Times and His Acts (4-7)

Summary: 7:15-17

SAUL: The First of the Kings (chapters 8-15)

His Appointment as King (8-10)

His Promising Beginning (11-12)

His Later Folly and Sin (12-15)

Rejection: 15:23, 28, 35

DAVID: The Anointed Successor (chapters 16-31)

His Anointing by Samuel (16:1-13)

His Service Before Saul (16:14- Chapter 20)

His Years as a Fugitive (21-30)

Death of Saul: 31

Israel's Last Judge

Samuel, Israel's last and greatest judge, was also a prophet (I Sam. 3:20) and a priest (9:12-13). In his old age Samuel served as God's adviser to Israel's first king, Saul. Samuel anointed Israel's greatest king, David.

The books of I & II Samuel form a bridge from the time of the Judges to the time of the Kings.

The Time of the Judges: Following the death of Joshua the tribes of Israel begin to occupy their inheritance in the land of Canaan. The marching orders for conquest into the Promised Land were for the people of Israel to utterly destroy all the inhabitants of the land. This commandment was given for the safety and preservation of God's holy nation (Deut. 7:1-11). However, following the death of Joshua and the continuing conquest of the tribal lands of Israel, the tribes did not obey this very basic command. Speaking of Judah and their conquests it is recorded, "... But (they) could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley..." (Judges 2:19). As for the tribe of Benjamin and their conquests it is recorded, "And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem unto this day" (Judges 1:21). The record shows throughout the rest of Judges chapter 1, that all the remaining tribes of Israel, from the Jordan river westward, failed to drive out the inhabitants of the land (Judges 1:27-33), and as a result the children of Israel sinned. And, as was prophesied, these heathen nations became a snare unto them. The tribes of Israel began to intermarry with the heathen nations and before long they began to worship their gods.

The time of the Judges is marked by cycles of sin, suffering, supplication, salvation. There are six distinct cycles of this recorded throughout the book of Judges, which all begin with the nation doing evil in the sight of the Lord. The book of Judges ends with: "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25). This is the time, and the political and moral climate, leading up to the time of I & II Samuel.

The Judges Cycle

	First 3:7-11	Second 3:12-30	Third 4:1-5:31	Four 6:1-8 – 8: 35	Fifth 10:6 - 12:7	Sith 13:1 – 16:31
Sin	And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD 3:7	And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD 3:12	And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, 4:1	And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD: 6:1	And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD. 10:6	And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD 13:1
Suffering	3:8	3:13-15	4:2	6:1	10:7-8	13:1
Supplication	3:9	3:15	4:3	6:6	10:10	NA
Salvation	3:9-11	3:15	4:4	6:11	11:29	13:5

The Time of I & II Samuel: Because of the political and moral decay of God’s people they cry out for a king to reign over them. They want a king like all the other nations, a physical ruler in place of their invisible God. Their desire for a king stems from the last verse in Judges in which all the people “did that which was right in their own eyes” (Judges 21:25). This anarchy, the utter lack of order and safety, lead God’s people to desire someone to rule over them. The nation will choose a king, a ruler who will “take” of all they have in exchange for their supposed peace and safety (I Samuel 8:10-22).

Samuel the Prophet: The ministry of Samuel marks the institution of the monarchy, the times of the kings. Samuel also marks the institution of the prophetic office. There were those in Israel, even before Samuel’s time, on whom the mantle of prophecy had fallen (Num. 11:25; Judges 6:8). Moses himself is called a prophet (Deut. 18:18), but there was no organized prophetic office. Samuel founded what would seem to be a school of the prophets, originating the prophetic order (I Samuel 19:18-24). This, coupled with the fact that before the time of Samuel a prophet was called a “seer” (I Sam.9:9), makes Samuel in a real sense the first of the prophets. This distinction is recognized in the New Testament:

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. (Acts 3:24)

And after that he gave unto them judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. (Acts 13:20)

And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: (Hebrews 11:32)

Samuel then is a significant figure. He ends the period of the judges; he heads the order of the prophets; he originates the first educational movement in the nation; he places Israel's first king on the throne, and later anoints David, the greatest of Israel's kings.

Saul, Israel's First King: The life of Saul is a life of tragedy. Saul's life, while starting out with promise, ends in sin and rebellion. The natural digression downward is clearly laid out in scripture.

His Early Life of Promise: At the beginning Saul seemed promising for a leader. First, he had striking physical superiority. It is said of the appearance of Saul, "And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (1 Samuel 9:2). While outward appearance does not guarantee an ability to rule (see Absalom), Saul had more than this, for it is said "he was goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he..."

Saul was also promising in his qualities. He showed modesty (9:21; 10:22), discreetness (10:27) and a generous spirit (11:13). In addition to these there was the special gift endowed by God, "And the Spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man. And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day" (1 Samuel 10:6, 9).

His Later Life of Decline: Saul's life of decline is **first** marked by the words of Samuel, "... Saul, **Thou hast done foolishly**: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee" (1 Samuel 13:13-14).

Saul was bidden to wait for Samuel at Gilgal. When Samuel did not come at the appointed time, Saul violated the office of the priesthood and made an offering before the Lord (I Sam. 13:8-12).

The **second** mark of Saul's decline is seen in chapter 14 when he would have killed his own son if it were not for the people restraining him (I Sam. 14:1-46).

The **third**, and steeper, decline of Saul transpired in chapter 15 when he was told to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all they had, none should be left alive (I Sam. 15:1-5)! However, Saul in his willful disobedience and arrogance kept alive the king of the Amalekites, King Agag along with the best of the livestock (I Sam. 15:6-9). Added to this act of disobedience is Saul's desire to cover-up his sin by lying to Samuel. Saul's acts were not hid from God however, for through the prophet Samuel God announces the removal of Saul as king. "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king... And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." (1 Samuel 15:22-23, 26)

The **final** decline of Saul is seen when the Spirit of the Lord departs from him (I Sam. 16:14). This act, along with the fact that David is anointed king prior to this event underscores that Saul is no longer king over Israel in the sight of God (I Sam. 16:1-13).

His Final Failure: The last and tragic act of Saul is depicted in chapters 28-31. His downgrade brings him to the witch of Endor. Saul at this point is a desperate, embittered man. Saul, who once enjoyed direct communion with God, has resorted to communing with the underworld. Saul's life will end the very next day by suicide on the battlefield with his beloved son Johnathan. Witchcraft and suicide are the final acts of the once promising king.