

1 & 2 SAMUEL

STUDY GUIDE

AUTHOR & DATE

Once again, we do not know the exact author – or authors – of 1 & 2 Samuel. Though the books are titled with Samuel’s name, and it is very likely he authored some of the text (1 Chron. 29:29), much of 1 Samuel and all of 2 Samuel occurs after his death. Because it was commonplace for prophets to act also as historians, it is likely Nathan and Gad also participated in the writing of the books (1 Chron. 29:29), but the books 1-2 Samuel were probably compiled by an unnamed prophet who drew from multiple sources, including the *Book of Jashar* (2 Sam. 1:17), a collection of poetical writings compiled during David or Solomon’s lifetime featuring poetic writings about significant events in Israel’s history.

When the book was written is also a bit nebulous. Within the text itself are hints that the compiling and editing of the book happened well after events described (1 Sam. 5:5, 6:18, 30:25; 2 Sam. 4:3, 6:8, 18:18) and includes explanations of historical customs which seem to no longer be practiced at the time of writing (1 Sam. 9:9; 2 Sam. 13:18). Numerous references to Israel and Judah as separate entities (1 Sam. 11:8, 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:5, 19:42-43, etc.) points to a writing after the division in 931 B.C. The writing style of 1-2 Samuel is different enough from 1-2 Kings that scholars believe Samuel was written sometime during the period of the divided kingdom and before the Exile: approx. 931-722 B.C

BASIC INFORMATION

What we have as two separate books in our Bibles was once only one book titled, “Samuel.” Around 1516-1517, the Bomberg edition of the Hebrew scriptures divided Samuel into 2 books. Long ago, the Greek version of the Old Testament (*Septuagint*) grouped Samuel and Kings into 1-4 Kings. This is understandable given that 1-2 Samuel covers the establishment of the kingdom of Israel and 1-2 Kings carries on through the division and disintegration the kingdom.

1 Samuel covers a period of about 140 years, from the final years of the Judges to the establishment of David as king of Israel. 2 Samuel covers approximately the next 50 years, or David’s rule over Judah and all of Israel. Though the books do cover history, there is so much more to be gained! In many ways, 1-2 Samuel reinforces the teachings of the Law as presented in the Pentateuch through the examples of key characters demonstrating how to live (and not live!) as people of God’s kingdom here on earth. Also apparent in both books are themes of covenant, divine presence, and wholehearted obedience. Be on the lookout for these things!

1 Samuel

Samuel: The Last Judge (1 Sam. 1:1- 7:17)

Saul: A King Like All Other Nations (8:1- 14:51)

David: A King After God’s Own Heart (15:1 – 31:13)

2 Samuel

David's Victories (2 Sam. 1:1- 10:19)

David's Moral Failures (11:1-27)

David's Troubles (12:1 – 20:26)

Appendix: Certain Events in David's Kingship (21:1 – 24:25)

THE PHILISTINES

BY DEAN NIFORATOS

During most of this period, the warlike Philistines along the Mediterranean seacoast dominated the scene. These people, from whose name comes the term "Palestine," were invaders who originated from Greece and the island of Crete to the west. The Philistines of Canaan tended to adopt the culture and religion of the native Canaanites whom they ruled. Thus, the Philistine deities described in the Old Testament (e.g., 1 Sam. 5:2-5) were actually Canaanite gods.

It was the Philistines' pioneering use of iron in the Middle East that is cited as an explanation for their early dominance of the area (1 Sam. 13:19-22), and the threat posed by the Philistines was a major factor in Israel's desire for a king to lead them. Because of Saul's disobedience, he had only limited military success against the Philistines, and he died in battle at Mt. Gilboa. Later, when David was finally able to subdue them, the way was open for him to begin to establish his empire.

OBSERVATION WORDS

- God, Jesus, Holy Spirit
- Samuel
- Saul
- David
- Philistines
- Abner
- Joab
- Take note of explanations for things

SUMMARY QUESTIONS

- What did the Lord teach YOU through what you read?

- Where/how is **Jesus** & the **Holy Spirit** represented in the books?

- What do you learn about the **character of God** through these books?

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- What practical and spiritual lessons do you learn from (find several):
 - Hannah & Elkanah

 - Eli

 - Samuel

 - Saul

 - David

- In 1 Samuel ch. 26, David gets angry with Abner. Why do you think he was so upset? What does this teach us about our role as disciples?

- In 2 Samuel ch. 7, the Lord makes several promises to David. What are they and what do they remind you of? (Hint: think both backward & forward)

- In what ways does David fulfill his covenant with Jonathan? What does this teach us for today?

- What do you notice about the progression of sin? What do you learn about sin and its consequences?

- God refers to David as a “man after God’s own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). What does this mean? Assuming you want to be a person after God’s own heart, what is required on your part and in what area(s) do you want to see improvement in your own life?

KEY STORY – Pick an event/story from each book and explain why you chose that story and what you learn.

- 1 Samuel

- 2 Samuel

KEY WORD – How would you summarize what you’ve read into one word or very short phrase? Why did you choose that?

- 1 Samuel

- 2 Samuel

KEY VERSE(S) & CHAPTER – Like key words, key verse & chapter reflect something that stood out to you from the book. It may be a means of summarizing the book, or it may be something that the Lord taught you through that verse & chapter. So, what are they for you and why?

- 1 Samuel

- 2 Samuel