

good NEWS BIBLE

The books of

1 & 2 SAMUEL



Bible Society
Trinity Business Centre
Stonehill Green, Westlea
Swindon SN5 7DG
biblesociety.org.uk

First published 2023 by The British and Foreign Bible Society
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The books of 1 & 2 Samuel
ISBN: 978-0-56-403453-6

Typesetting and production management by Bible Society Resources Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The British and Foreign Bible Society

Cover design by Colin Hall

BSRL/2023/1M
Printed in Great Britain

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The first book of SAMUEL

The arrival of the kings

What's it about? Samuel was a great man of God, a prophet and judge who anointed God's chosen kings. In 1 Samuel, we encounter a failed king, Saul, and a glorious king, David.

Who wrote it? We don't know, but 1 Samuel, along with 2 Samuel, could have been written and collated over a period of time after the deaths of Samuel, Saul and David.

Why read it? This first book of Samuel talks about how God is king. He is greater than any human king; he guides his people and is in control. Through the soap-opera-worthy storylines, God's will and power stand out.

What's it to me? Even though God is king and is in control, things aren't always rosy. David was made king by God and Samuel, but he didn't take up that role straight away. 1 Samuel shows that life following God's way might not be straightforward.

Chapter 1

Elkanah and his Family at Shiloh

¹ There was a man named Elkanah, from the tribe of Ephraim, who lived in the town of Ramah in the hill country of Ephraim. He was the son of Jeroham and grandson of Elihu, and belonged to the family of Tohu, a part of the clan of Zuph.

² Elkanah had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

³ Every year Elkanah went from Ramah to worship and offer sacrifices to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD.

⁴ Each time Elkanah offered his sacrifice, he would give one share of the meat to Peninnah and one share to each of her children.

⁵ And even though he loved Hannah very much he would give her only one share, because^a the LORD had kept her from having children.

⁶ Peninnah, her rival, would torment and humiliate her, because the LORD had kept her childless.

⁷ This went on year after year; whenever they went to the house of the LORD, Peninnah would upset Hannah so much that she would cry and refuse to eat anything.

^a And... because; or *To Hannah, however, he would give a special share, because he loved her very much, even though.*

⁸Her husband Elkanah would ask her, “Hannah, why are you crying? Why won't you eat? Why are you always so sad? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?”

Hannah and Eli

⁹⁻¹⁰One day, after they had finished their meal in the house of the LORD at Shiloh, Hannah got up. She was deeply distressed, and she cried bitterly as she prayed to the LORD. Meanwhile, Eli the priest was sitting in his place by the door.

¹¹Hannah made a solemn promise: “Almighty LORD, look at me, your servant! See my trouble and remember me! Don't forget me! If you give me a son, I promise that I will dedicate him to you for his whole life and that he will never have his hair cut.”**b**

¹²Hannah continued to pray to the LORD for a long time, and Eli watched her lips.

¹³She was praying silently; her lips were moving, but she made no sound. So Eli thought that she was drunk, ¹⁴and said to her, “Stop making a drunken show of yourself! Stop your drinking and sober up!”

¹⁵“No, I'm not drunk, sir,” she answered. “I haven't been drinking! I am desperate, and I have been praying, pouring out my troubles to the LORD.

¹⁶Don't think I am a worthless woman. I have been praying like this because I'm so miserable.”

b *never have his hair cut*: A sign of dedication to the LORD.



“Stop making a drunken show of yourself!” (1.14)

17 “Go in peace,” Eli said, “and may the God of Israel give you what you have asked him for.”

18 “May you always think kindly of me,” she replied. Then she went away, ate some food, and was no longer sad.

Samuel's Birth and Dedication

19 The next morning Elkanah and his family got up early, and after worshipping the LORD, they went back home to Ramah. Elkanah had intercourse with his wife Hannah, and the LORD answered her prayer.

20 So it was that she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,^c and explained, “I asked the LORD for him.”

^c *Samuel*: This name, which in Hebrew means “name of God”, is here related to the Hebrew verb for “ask”.

²¹The time came again for Elkanah and his family to go to Shiloh and offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and the special sacrifice he had promised.

²²But this time Hannah did not go. She told her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will take him to the house of the LORD, where he will stay all his life."

²³Elkanah answered, "All right, do whatever you think best; stay at home until you have weaned him. And may the LORD make your^d promise come true." So Hannah stayed at home and nursed her child.

²⁴After she had weaned him, she took him to Shiloh, taking along a three-year-old bull,^e ten kilogrammes of flour, and a leather bag full of wine. She took Samuel, young as he was, to the house of the LORD at Shiloh.

²⁵After they had killed the bull, they took the child to Eli.

²⁶Hannah said to him, "Excuse me, sir. Do you remember me? I am the woman you saw standing here, praying to the LORD.

²⁷I asked him for this child, and he gave me what I asked for.

²⁸So I am dedicating him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he will belong to the LORD."

Then they^f worshipped the LORD there.

^d Some ancient translations *your*; Hebrew *his*.

^e Some ancient translations *a three-year-old bull*; Hebrew *three bulls*.

^f Some ancient translations *they*; Hebrew *he*.

The second book of SAMUEL

The promise of a future king

What's it about? 2 Samuel continues the story of 1 Samuel, with David finally taking control of Israel. God made a promise to David about his family tree, assuring him that one of his descendants would always be king.

Who wrote it? We don't know, but 2 Samuel, along with 1 Samuel, could have been written and collated after the death of David.

Why read it? David was a great king, but he made some mistakes. 2 Samuel is an honest portrayal of a flawed man who loved God. The promise that God made to David foretells the coming of Jesus, who was part of David's family.

What's it to me? David's flaws as a king show us that everyone can make a difference for God. Despite his mistakes, David was still a mighty king.

Chapter 1

David Learns of Saul's Death

¹After Saul's death David came back from his victory over the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag for two days.

²The next day a young man arrived from Saul's camp. To show his grief, he had torn his clothes and put earth on his head. He went to David and bowed to the ground in respect.

³David asked him, "Where have you come from?"

"I have escaped from the Israelite camp," he answered.

⁴"Tell me what happened," David said.

"Our army ran away from the battle," he replied, "and many of our men were killed. Saul and his son Jonathan were also killed."

⁵"How do you know that Saul and Jonathan are dead?" David asked him.

⁶He answered, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and I saw that Saul was leaning on his spear and that the chariots and horsemen of the enemy were closing in on him.

⁷Then he turned round, saw me, and called to me. I answered, 'Yes, sir!'

⁸He asked who I was, and I told him that I was an Amalekite.

⁹Then he said, 'Come here and kill me! I have been badly wounded, and I'm about to die.'



“David tore his clothes in sorrow” (1.11)

¹⁰So I went up to him and killed him, because I knew that he would die anyway as soon as he fell. Then I took the crown from his head and the bracelet from his arm, and I have brought them to you, sir.”

¹¹David tore his clothes in sorrow, and all his men did the same.

¹²They grieved and mourned and fasted until

evening for Saul and Jonathan and for Israel, the people of the LORD, because so many had been killed in battle.

¹³David asked the young man who had brought him the news, “Where are you from?”

He answered, “I’m an Amalekite, but I live in your country.”

¹⁴David asked him, “How is it that you dared to kill the LORD’s chosen king?”

¹⁵Then David called one of his men and said, “Kill him!” The man struck the Amalekite and mortally wounded him, ¹⁶and David said to the Amalekite, “You brought this on yourself. You condemned yourself when you admitted that you killed the one whom the LORD chose to be king.”

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

¹⁷David sang this lament for Saul and his son Jonathan,
¹⁸and ordered it^x to be taught to the people of Judah. (It is recorded in *The Book of Jashar*.)

¹⁹ “On the hills of Israel our leaders are dead!
The bravest of our soldiers have fallen!

²⁰ Do not announce it in Gath
or in the streets of Ashkelon.
Do not make the women of Philistia glad;
do not let the daughters of pagans rejoice.

²¹ “May no rain or dew fall on Gilboa's hills;
may its fields be always barren!
For the shields of the brave lie there in disgrace;
the shield of Saul is no longer polished with oil.

²² Jonathan's bow was deadly,
the sword of Saul was merciless,
striking down the mighty, killing the enemy.

²³ “Saul and Jonathan, so wonderful and dear;
together in life, together in death;
swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.

²⁴ “Women of Israel, mourn for Saul!
He clothed you in rich scarlet dresses
and adorned you with jewels and gold.

^x One ancient translation *it*; Hebrew *the bow*.

- 25 “The brave soldiers have fallen,
they were killed in battle.
Jonathan lies dead in the hills.
- 26 “I grieve for you, my brother Jonathan;
how dear you were to me!
How wonderful was your love for me,
better even than the love of women.
- 27 “The brave soldiers have fallen,
their weapons abandoned and useless.”

Chapter 2

David is Made King of Judah

¹ After this, David asked the LORD, “Shall I go and take control of one of the towns of Judah?”

“Yes,” the LORD answered.

“Which one?” David asked.

“Hebron,” the LORD said.

² So David went to Hebron, taking with him his two wives: Ahinoam, who was from Jezreel, and Abigail, Nabal's widow, who was from Carmel.

³ He also took his men and their families, and they settled in the towns round Hebron.

⁴ Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and anointed David as king of Judah.