

## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF

# 1, 2 Samuel

The Bible's ninth and tenth books connect two major eras in the history of God's people. The time of the judges in ancient Israel was nearly over, and the time of the kings was set to begin. The year was about 1000 before Christ.

**Who was Samuel?** Aide to the priest, faithful judge, courageous prophet, and anointer of kings, he was the human link between the books of Judges and Kings. Like Christ (who is prophet, priest, and king), Samuel was miraculously conceived, dedicated from his mother's womb, and grew in stature and favor with God and man (1, ch. 1; 2:26). He is among the most noble of God's servants in Scripture (Jer. 15:1; Heb. 11:32).

**Powerful:** Though mostly historical, these books contain lofty moral and spiritual teachings. In them are the successes and sins of David, that towering Bible character.

## Samuel's resumé (from 1 Sam.)

- As a lad, he serves the priest Eli in God's house and hears God's call (chs. 2, 3).
- He speaks the Word of the Lord to all Israel (4:1; 7:3ff; 12:1-35).
- He judges Israel as a circuit rider from his Ramah home (7:6, 15-17).
- He prays without ceasing for Israel (7:5-9; 12:17-23).
- He warns the people after they clamor for a king (8:1-22).
- He anoints Saul as the first king of Israel (chs. 9, 10).
- He serves with King Saul, confronting him with his failures (chs. 11-15).
- He anoints the boy David as successor to King Saul and continues to mentor them both (16; 19:18-24).
- He dies and is later "recalled" in a demonic seance between Saul and the witch of Endor (25:1; 28:3ff).
- He utters memorable words: "Speak, for Your servant hears" and "To obey is better than sacrifice" (3:10; 15:22).

## Saul's resumé (from 1 Sam.)

- Tall and handsome, seeking his father's lost livestock, he is anointed by Samuel, receives the Spirit, is acclaimed king, and leads Israel's armies to victory over the Ammonites (chs. 9-11).
- His unlawful sacrifice, foolish oath, and refusal to obey the Lord grieve Samuel and bring about his downfall (chs. 13-15).
- Plagued by evil, he requests a musician to refresh his spirit; Jesse's son David comes to play his harp and be his aide (ch. 16).
- As David's popularity increases, so does Saul's jealousy; for several years, he tries to take David's life (chs. 17-27).
- With God departed, he seeks counsel from a spiritist and is slain with his four sons in battle with the Philistines (chs. 28, 31).

## David's resumé (1 and 2 Sam.)

- Seventh born son of Jesse, he tends his father's sheep and hones his skills as a fighter and musician.
- Anointed by Samuel, he slays Goliath, serves in Saul's court, is honored by the people, bonds closely with Saul's son Jonathan, and marries his daughter Michal (chs. 16-18).
- Victim of Saul's jealousy, David flees for his life through the Judean wilderness, twice passing opportunities to kill his rival (chs. 18-30).
- He marries a second wife, Abigail, after the death of her foolish husband, and then marries another, Ahinoam; Michal has departed (ch. 25).
- At Saul's death, David becomes king of Judah, then reigns over all Israel at the death of Ishbosheth (chs. 1-5:5).
- He takes the Jebusite stronghold (Jerusalem) and consolidates his kingdom by defeating Philistines, Syrians, Moabites, etc. (chs. 5-10).
- Hoping to build God a house, David is surprised and honored by the Lord's promise to establish the throne of his kingdom forever (ch. 7).
- His adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah begin a time of great family turmoil and national tragedy. Son Absalom dies trying to wrest the kingdom from him (chs. 11-20).
- The aging David performs more exploits with his mighty men, pens a praise song to Yahweh, sins by numbering Israel, and humbles himself with a personal sacrifice at the height of the ensuing plague (chs. 21-24).

**1 and 2 Samuel in a sentence:** The era of judges in Israel ends with righteous Samuel, and the era of kings begins with Saul, a great disappointment, and David, who loved God deeply but sinned greatly.