OLD TESTAMENT · HISTORY · BOOK 9 OF 66

1 Samuel

The LORD seeth not as man seeth (16:7)

31	Samuel	c. 1105–1010 B.C.	3 Leaders
Chapters, 810 Verses	Nathan and Gad	Judges to Kings	Samuel, Saul, David

STRUCTURE

The Book in Four Parts

The book follows three leaders: **Samuel** (1–7), **Saul** (8–15), and **David**, first in Saul's court (16–20) and then as a fugitive while Saul falls (21–31).



Each bar shows that part's share of the 810 verses.

I 1–7 · 157 verses

Samuel, the Last Judge

Hannah's prayer, Samuel's call, the ark lost and returned.

II 8–15 · 226 verses

Israel's First King

The people ask for a king; Saul chosen, then rejected.

III 16–20 · 177 verses

David in Saul's Court

Anointed, Goliath, Jonathan, and Saul's jealousy.

IV 21–31 · 250 verses

David the Fugitive

On the run, sparing Saul, and Saul's death on Gilboa.

DATES B.C. (APPROXIMATE)

From Samuel to Saul's Death

Dates follow Saul's forty years (Acts 13:21) and David's age (2 Samuel 5:4).

1:20	4:11	7:2	10:1, 24
c. 1105	**c. 1085**	**c. 1065**	**c. 1050**
Samuel born to Hannah	The ark taken; Eli dies	Twenty years later: Mizpeh and Ebenezer	Saul anointed and made king

2 SAMUEL 5:4	16:13	25:1	31:6
c. 1040	**c. 1025**	**c. 1015**	**c. 1010**
David born in Bethlehem	David anointed by Samuel	Samuel dies at Ramah	Saul and Jonathan die on Gilboa

1 SAMUEL 1–3

Hannah's Prayer and Samuel's Call

A praying mother, a child given back to God, and a boy who learned to listen.

1 1:10–11

Hannah Prays

In bitterness of soul she vows her son to the LORD.

2 1:27–28

Lent to the LORD

"For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition"

3 2:1–10

Hannah's Song

"There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside Thee"

4 3:10

Samuel Hears

"Speak; for Thy servant heareth"

Mary's song in Luke 1:46–55 echoes Hannah's: the LORD "bringeth low, and lifteth up" (2:7).

Samuel, Saul and David

MAP

Samuel, Saul and David

The places of 1 Samuel, in the order they appear. Navy markers belong to Samuel and the ark, gold to Saul, and rust to David. The numbers match the cards below.

1 SAMUEL 1–31

Samuel, Saul and David

From Shiloh to Mount Gilboa

c. 1105–1010 B.C. · Positions approximate



Samuel and the ark
Chapters 1–7, 10

Saul
Chapters 9–15, 28, 31

David
Chapters 16–30

Israel under Saul
With the Philistines on the coast

"Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."

1 SAMUEL 7:12 (KJV)

Several sites (Ebenezer, Adullam, Ziklag and others) cannot be located with certainty; positions are approximate.

BibleStudyForAll.com · Map positions approximate · Scripture from the King James Version

1 1–3

Shiloh

Samuel and the ark. Hannah prays; the LORD calls the child Samuel at the tabernacle.

2 1:19; 7:15–17

Ramah

Samuel and the ark. Samuel's home, where he judged Israel and built an altar.

3 4

Ebenezer

Samuel and the ark. Israel defeated; the ark of God taken by the Philistines.

4 5:1–7

Ashdod

Samuel and the ark. Dagon falls before the ark of the LORD.

5 6:12–19

Beth-shemesh

Samuel and the ark. The kine bring the ark home on a new cart.

6 7:1–2

Kirjath-jearim

Samuel and the ark. The ark stays twenty years in the house of Abinadab.

7 7:5–12; 10:17–24

Mizpeh

Samuel and the ark. Israel repents; "Hitherto hath the LORD helped us"; Saul chosen by lot.

8 10:26; 15:34

Gibeah

Saul. Saul's home and royal city.

9 11; 31:11–13

Jabesh-gilead

Saul. Saul's first victory; later its men bury Saul.

10 11:14–15; 13:8–14; 15

Gilgal

Saul. The kingdom renewed; Saul's disobedience and rejection.

11 13–14

Michmash

Saul. Jonathan and his armourbearer rout the Philistines.

12 16:1–13

Bethlehem

David. Samuel anoints David, the youngest son of Jesse.

13 17

Valley of Elah

David. David slays Goliath "in the name of the LORD of hosts."

14 21:10–15; 27:1–4

Gath

David. David flees to Achish king of Gath.

15 22:1–2

Cave of Adullam

David. About four hundred men gather to David.

16 24

En-gedi

David. David spares Saul in the cave: "the LORD's anointed."

17 27:5–7; 30

Ziklag

David. Given to David by Achish; raided, and all recovered.

18 28

Endor

Saul. Saul seeks a woman with a familiar spirit.

19 31

Mount Gilboa

Saul. Saul and Jonathan fall in battle.

The Ark of God, Israel Asks for a King, Saul's Rise and Fall

1 SAMUEL 4–7

The Ark of God

Israel treated the ark like a charm and lost it; God showed His power among the Philistines and brought it home.

1 — 4:3–11
Taken at Ebenezer
Thirty thousand fall; Hophni and Phinehas are slain.

2 — 4:21–22
Ichabod
"The glory is departed from Israel."

3 — 5:1–5
Dagon Falls
The idol falls on its face before the ark, twice.

4 — 6:7–14
The New Cart
Two milch kine carry the ark straight to Beth-shemesh.

5 — 7:1–2
Kirjath-jearim
The ark stays in Abinadab's house twenty years.

6 — 7:3–12
Ebenezer
Israel repents at Mizpeh, and God thunders on the Philistines.

> *"Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Eben-ezer, saying, Hitherto hath the LORD helped us."*
>
> 1 Samuel 7:12 (KJV)

1 SAMUEL 8–12

Israel Asks for a King

Israel wanted a king "like all the nations." God gave them what they asked, and warned them what it would cost.

> *"They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."*
>
> 1 Samuel 8:7 (KJV)

8:11–18
The Warning
A king will take your sons, fields and flocks

10:1
Anointed
Samuel anoints Saul in private

10:24
Chosen
"God save the king" at Mizpeh

12:23
Samuel's Promise
"I will teach you the good and the right way"

1 SAMUEL 9–31

Saul's Rise and Fall

Saul began humble and promising, but he would not wholly obey.

SAUL AT THE START	SAUL AT THE END
"Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes?" 9:21	Builds a monument to himself at Carmel 15:12
Hid among the stuff when chosen 10:22	Seeks a woman with a familiar spirit 28:7
"The Spirit of God came upon Saul" 11:6	"The Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul" 16:14

1 SAMUEL 15:22

To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice

"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."

David and Goliath, David and Jonathan, David Spares Saul

1 SAMUEL 16–17

David and Goliath

God chose the youngest son, and the shepherd boy trusted God against a giant.

1 · 16:7
God Looks on the Heart
Not the tallest brother, but the one keeping the sheep.

2 · 17:4–10
The Giant
Goliath of Gath, six cubits and a span, defies Israel forty days.

3 · 17:34–37
The Lion and the Bear
“He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.”

4 · 17:40
Five Smooth Stones
A staff, a sling, and stones from the brook.

5 · 17:45–47
In the Name of the LORD
“The battle is the LORD’s.”

6 · 17:49–51
The Giant Falls
One stone, and the Philistines flee.

> *“Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.”*
>
> 1 Samuel 17:45 (KJV)

1 SAMUEL 18–20; 23:16–18

David and Jonathan

The king’s son loved the man who would take the throne, and stood by him against his own father.

18:1–4
Knit Together
Jonathan gives David his robe, sword, bow and girdle.

19:1–7
Speaking Up
Jonathan pleads with Saul for David’s life.

20:35–42
The Arrows
A signal in the field, and a tearful parting in peace.

23:16–17
Strength in God
Jonathan “strengthened his hand in God”: “thou shalt be king over Israel.”

> *“The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.”*
>
> 1 Samuel 20:42 (KJV)

1 SAMUEL 24 AND 26

David Spares Saul Twice

Twice David could have killed the king who hunted him, and twice he left judgment to God.

IN THE CAVE AT EN-GEDI (24)	IN SAUL’S CAMP AT NIGHT (26)
David cuts off the skirt of Saul’s robe 24:4	**David takes Saul’s spear and cruse of water** 26:12
“The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD’s anointed” 24:6	**“I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD’s anointed”** 26:23
Saul weeps: “Thou art more righteous than I” 24:17	**Saul: “I have sinned … I have played the fool”** 26:21

In between, Abigail’s wise words keep David from avenging himself on Nabal (25:32–33). Paul writes, “Avenge not yourselves … Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19).

Christ the Son of David, Key Themes and Key Verse

LOOKING FORWARD

Christ, the Son of David

First Samuel brings the first “anointed” kings, and points ahead to the Anointed One, the Messiah.

2:10

His Anointed

Hannah’s song first speaks of the LORD’s king and “His anointed” (Hebrew *Messiah*).

16:1, 13 · MATTHEW 2:6

Born in Bethlehem

David was anointed in Bethlehem, where Christ, his Son, was born.

17 · COLOSSIANS 2:15

The Champion

David defeated the giant for Israel; Christ triumphed over every enemy for us.

13:14 · ACTS 13:22–23

After God’s Own Heart

“Of this man’s seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus.”

BIG IDEAS

Key Themes

God Looks on the Heart

Not appearance, but a heart toward God.

16:7

Obedience

To obey is better than sacrifice.

15:22–23

Prayer

Hannah prays, Samuel intercedes for Israel.

1:10–11; 7:5; 12:23

God’s Sovereignty

The LORD brings low and lifts up kings.

2:6–8; 15:28

Honour God

Them that honour Me I will honour.

2:30

The Battle Is the LORD’s

Victory comes by faith, not size.

14:6; 17:47

Faithful Friendship

Jonathan’s covenant love for David.

18:1–4; 20:42

Waiting on God

David will not seize the throne by force.

24:6; 26:10–11

God’s Word

The LORD reveals Himself by His word.

3:1, 19–21

KEY VERSE

“For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

1 Samuel 16:7 (KJV)