

1 Samuel

Who wrote it?

No one knows! From 1 Chron 29:29-30 we believe that Samuel (or his followers) write things down but since he dies way less than half way through the story Samuel could not have written most of these books!

Who was it for?

For the people of Israel – to).

When does the action take place?

The book is set before and during David's reign – roughly 1050-1000BC.

How do the books fit together?

The major sections of the books are punctuated by the changing leaders of Israel:

1 Sam 1-8	Samuel
1 Sam 9-15	Saul
1 Sam 16-31	Saul out, David in
2 Sam	David

Where did it happen?

Most of the book takes place within the boundaries of Israel – though the Philistines, who for most of the book live within the borders God gave to Joshua, feature significantly.

Getting into the Story

We have seen the promises to Abraham fulfilled (in Joshua) but the sin of the people makes them constantly precarious. In the book of Judges leadership was shown to be key to the people of Israel not falling into sin, but the leaders themselves were pretty terrible and there was always a dreadful power vacuum when they died. At the end of the book of Judges we see what life in Israel is like when *“each man does what is right in his own eyes”*, and there was no King in Israel. The land is gull of idolatrous worship and broken relationships.

The books of Samuel trace the change from Israel being led by a judge (the last of which is Samuel) to being ruled by a King (the first two being Saul and David).

1 Samuel: The Last Judge (1 Sam 1-8)

- a) The miracle birth and the song of Hannah (1 Sam 1-2)
- b) How the word of the Lord comes to Israel (1 Sam 3:1-4:1)
- c) Defeat by the Philistines and the glory of the Lord is gone (1 Sam 4:2-22)
- d) “They sent us an arc...” (1 Sam 5:1-7:1)
- e) The defeat of the Philistines (1 Sam 7:2-17)
- f) Request for a king (1 Sam 8)
 - promised by God (Gen 17:6)
 - defined in the covenant (Deut 17:14-20)
 - prepared for by the judges (Jud 17:6)

BUT

- to be like the other nations
- rejection of God's rule
- deeply ironic after chapters 1-7 and their experience of hereditary leadership

2) Saul: The First King(1 Sam 9-15)

- a) Head and shoulders above the rest, Saul is made king (1 Sam 9-10)
- b) All looks good at first. Saul wins his first battle (1 Sam 11)
- c) Samuel's farewell speech where he reminds Saul and the people of the basic covenant principle (1 Sam 12)
- d) Saul takes upon himself the office of priest as he fails to wait for Samuel (1 Sam 13)

- e) The heir who was never to be king (1 Sam 14)
- f) The disobedience of Saul and the kingdom to go to another (1 Sam 15)

3 Saul out, David in (1 Sam 16-31)

- a) The surprising choice as the new king, the anointing of the spirit (1 Sam 16)
- b) The surprising victory over Israel's enemies (1 Sam 17)
- c) Two ways to respond to the anointed king (1 Sam 18-20)
- e) Enmity between Saul and David and the downward spiral for Saul (1 Sam 21-31)

4 David: The Second King (2 Sam 1-20)

- a) David's rise to power in Judah (2 Sam 1-4)
- b) David king over all Israel (2 Sam 5-9)
 - Jerusalem becomes David's city (5:1-16)
 - David defeats the Philistines (5:17-25)
 - The ark comes to Jerusalem – it is the city of God (6:1-23)
- A HIGH POINT: The Davidic Covenant (7:1-29)

	PEOPLE	PLACE	RULE/BLESSING
Promise to Abraham	Great nation, countless descendants	In a land God will give	Blessing for the world
Promise to David	David's line	Temple at Jerusalem. Rest. Secure and peaceful land	David's son the son of God

Summary: The Lord will fulfil his previous covenants through the King born to David's line, but also called son of God, through a kingdom that will last forever.

- The establishment of David's kingdom, 8:1-9:13

- c) David personal failures (2 Sam 10-12)
- War with the Ammonites (10:1-19)
 - Adultery and murder (11:1-27)
 - Confrontation, confession and consequence (12:1-25)
 - War with the Ammonites (12:26-31)
- d) Like father like sons (again) (2 Sam 13-19)
- Family rape and revenge (13:1-39)
 - Absalom returns to Jerusalem – to rebel against David (14:1-17:29)
 - The defeat and death of Absalom (18:1-34)
 - David returns to Jerusalem, but there is only discontent in Israel (19:1-20:26)
- e) An epilogue that summarises the book (2 Sam 21-24)
- A – legacy from the past, judgement seen in famine (21:1-14)
- B – David’s great victories (21:15-22)
- C – A Psalm of David, (22:1-51) and see Psalm 18
- C’ – David’s final Psalm (23:1-7)
- B’ – David’s great victories (23:8-39)
- A’ – sin, judgement and mercy again come to Israel (24:24)