

**Why study Samuel? It’s God’s Word, therefore profitable, 2Tim.3v16, Rm.15v4, 1Cor.10v11.**

**Where does it fit into big picture? A vital part of the historical books. 1&2Samuel: two scrolls but one book.**

- The Pentateuch, 5x books of Moses, contain quite a lot of history too!
- The Historical books, typically approx 300pages of your Bible. They span from the dawn of history until around 400BC. 1&2Sam is 4<sup>th</sup> out of 9: Josh, Judg, Ruth, 1&2Sam, 1&2Kgs, 1&2Chr, Ezra, Neh, Esth.
- The Poetical / Wisdom books, x5.
- The Prophets, x17.

History = His story. Important. ‘*Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*’ Santayana.

**How should we approach the historical books, and Samuel in particular?**

(a) A fund of stories? Various – moving (chp1), charming (chp3), hilarious (chp5), pathetic (chp10), exciting (chp17), disturbing (chp28), grim (chp31). But NT makes clear - more than a fund of stories!

(b) Examples to follow or avoid? To follow: Hannah’s praying, Samuel’s faithfulness, Jonathan’s courage, David’s resilience, etc. To avoid: Eli’s weak parenting & feeble leadership, Israel’s superstitious reliance upon the Ark, Saul’s disobedience & insane jealousy, etc. Yet not like Aesop’s fables! Besides, ‘*The only thing we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history.*’ Hegel.

(c) Pointers to & preparation for Jesus Christ. **The most important thing is that it points to & prepares for the coming of King Jesus.** Jn.1v45, 5v39, Luke 24v27, Ac.3v24,10v43, 26v22-23. A variety of ways –

- Specific prophecies: eg 1Sam.2v10, 2Sam.7v12-16 (one of the most important OT prophecies).
- Salvation stories: God worked many lesser deliverances for his people before Christ came. Eg from Philistines, chps7,14,17, from Ammonites, chp11. Foretastes of the great salvation that Christ would work.
- Types & patterns: eg Hannah gives her firstborn son. Samuel: son of miracle birth, prophet, judge & intercessor. David: king & prophet. Ark: symbol of God-with-us, pointing to Christ in so many ways.
- Failures of men: prophet (eg Samuel’s blind spot), priest (eg Eli & sons), king (eg Saul, David & Bathsheba). These all leave us longing for a perfect: Prophet / Priest / King.

**What’s Samuel about? The Kingdom & its King.**

Launch pad: ‘*no king in those days*’ Jdg.17v6, 18v1, 19v1, 21v25. Human story: 3 men, Samuel, Saul, David whom God used them to establish a kingdom upon earth. Heavenly story: a God who promises to establish his heavenly kingdom upon earth, 2Sam.7v12-16.

- Section 1. 1Sam.1-7: How the Kingdom came into being. Main focus **Samuel**, raised up by God to lead Israel and to be the ‘king-maker’ under God’s direction. Summary: 1Sam.7v15-17.
- Section 2. 1Sam.8-14: Main focus **Saul**. God is their King, 1Sam.8v7, yet he intends to appoint ‘*a man after his own heart*’ to rule on his behalf. But first he lets them have man’s type of king. Summary: 1Sam.14v47-52.
- Section 3. 1Sam.15-2Sam.8: Main focus **David**. His rise from obscurity to the throne, the kingdom established, and Israel’s enemies subdued. Summary: 2Sam.8v15-18.
- Section 4. 2Sam.9-20: Main focus **David**. One of the best of men, and yet he too is a sinner. His sin, its consequences, and his decline. Summary: 2Sam.20v23-26.
- Section 5. 2Sam.21-24: A kind of postscript. What does the kingdom depend upon? Kingdom built upon **The Rock**. At heart of these 4 chps: 2Sam.22v2, 22v32, 22v47, 23v3.

Throughout 1&2Kgs and 1&2Chr: repeated comparisons with David, ‘*there must be something better than this!*’ ‘*If only David would come back!*’ God’s answer via the prophets: ‘*He will!*’ Jer.30v9, Ezk.34v22-23, 37v23-26. It turns out that the first David is but the pattern for Another David, ‘*Great David’s greater Son*’, even God’s own Son, Ps.2v6-7. He alone is the One who is truly ‘*a man after God’s own heart*’.

The story of **the Kingdom and its King** is one part of preparing for the coming of King Jesus. Have no doubt as to why Jesus came! Mk.1v14-15, Lk.4v43. Don’t be surprised that God’s book has so much to say about God’s Son. The Father’s infinite and eternal delight is above all else in his Son, so what else would we expect? His beloved Son is never far from his thoughts, and he speaks of him a great variety of ways.

- As we read and study Samuel, may God’s beloved Son never be far away from our thoughts also!