

1 SAMUEL

AN OVERVIEW

Purpose

To record the life of Samuel, Israel's last judge; the reign and decline of Saul, the first king; and the choice and preparation of David, Israel's greatest king.

Author

Possibly Samuel, also includes writings from the prophets Nathan and Gad.

Date

The final form of 1 Samuel did not take shape until after Solomon's reign, 940 BC.

Audience

The people of Israel at the beginning of the monarchy.

Setting

First Samuel begins in the days of the judges and describes Israel's transition from a theocracy to a monarch.

Special Features

First Samuel is a hero story. The author did not choose the common method of Old Testament historians in giving coverage to a broad span of people and events but instead focused primarily on three heroic leaders whose stories are elaborated at length: Samuel, Saul, and David.



Key Verses

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." (16:7 ESV)

And Samuel said, "Has 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 listen than the fat of rams." (15:22 ESV)

Key People

Eli, Hannah, Samuel, Saul, Jonathan, David.

Key Places

Ramah, Shiloh, Kiriath Jearim, Mizpah, Gilgal, valley of Elah, the Desert, Gath, Ziklag, Mount Gilboa.