

OT 501--Old Testament Introduction

Lecture Notes—Samuel, Kings

Birth of the Monarchy *1 Sam. 1:1-2 Sam. 5:10*

Introduction to Samuel & Kings

General Introduction

--1 & 2 Samuel

--The story of three men, Samuel, Saul, & David. Their stories are told in these books, often with great detail. Both the good and the bad are displayed for all to see.

--The story of kingship

- Desire for a king (i.e. Judges)
- The beginning of the monarchy
- The failures of monarchy
- The triumph of David

--1 & 2 Kings

--The story of Israel from Solomon to Zedekiah, the Beginning & the end of a great kingdom. The story has many details in between, some good and some bad.

--King and kingdoms are measured by prophetic standards. The rising and falling of kings and kingdoms depends upon faithfulness to God's Word (law?) as announced by the prophets, many of them.

Historical Background (See Old Testament Historical Chart)

--Power Vacuum—1200-900—

--The great powers (Egypt, Hittites, Assyria, Mitanni) were weakened or destroyed by about 1200. Thus, several small states arose, including Israel, Aram, Moab, Ammon, Edom, Philistia, & Phoenicia, by 1000 or so. The intervening time, 1200-1000, was one of vying for power and consolidating kingdoms. We see this in the Book of Judges & 1-2 Samuel.

--Philistines—They appear as the major power in Canaan during Iron I (1200-1000), partly due to iron metallurgy monopoly (see 1 Sam. 13:16-22). They controlled Israel until the rise of David. Even though they were defeated by Saul & Samuel, it was David who finally vanquished them as a threat to Israel.

--Great Kingdoms arose in the ANE, 900-586

--Assyria, Babylon, and Persia were the main kingdoms, but Egypt and Aram also played a major role in Israel's history.

Chronology--Two types of chronology:

--Relative Dating--The dating of events by internal synchronisms, i.e. kings dating acc. to the dates of the predecessor or acc. to the dates of the rival kingdom.

--Absolute Dating--The dating of events by contact with known historical events. Many events can be dated with some level of precision by Assyrian, Egyptian, and Babylonian records:

- 853—Battle of Qarqar
- 841—Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III.
- 734-732—Tiglath-Pileser in Palestine.
- 722-721—Fall of Samaria
- 701—Sennacherib’s invasion of Judah & siege of Jerusalem.
- 597—First defeat of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

Rise and Fall of Kings and Kingdoms

--Samuel & Saul

--1 Samuel 1-7—Samuel’s Leadership

- Nazirite from birth, dedicated by his mother, Hannah. Unlike Samson, Samuel did not break his vows with God, rather remaining faithful throughout his lifetime.
- Replaced the priestly leadership of Eli at Shiloh, where the tent of meeting and Ark were located. The priesthood was exceedingly corrupt, with Eli’s sons stealing sacrifices & sleeping with the women who served the tent.
- Served as prophet, priest, and military leader (king?). Received & delivered messages from the LORD as a prophet, he offered sacrifices as a priest, and he led in military expeditions against the Philistines.

--Samuel and Kingship (1 Sam. 8-12)

- The people demanded a king. Why? (1) All the other nations had kings. (2) The Philistines were too powerful for them, and supposedly a king was going to help.
- Samuel opposed kingship. Why? (1) The LORD was their king. (2) They were rejecting his leadership, i.e. what had he done to be rejected? Deuteronomy contains some words for a king, suggesting that perhaps even before they had kings, at the least some provision for centralized leadership was made, so Samuel’s opposition is interesting.
- God also appears to be opposed, at least in principle, but He allows the people to receive the king that they desire, then He chooses the king.

--Saul’s Kingdom

--Rise of Saul (1 Sam. 9-11, 14)

- Saul is an able leader & has initial military success, although many of these victories are actually accomplished by Jonathan, his son. He defeated the Ammonites & the Philistines, at least initially. Actually, Saul’s kingdom was little more than a regional city-state with several loyal tribes.

--Fall of Saul (1 Sam. 13, 15-24, 28, 31)

- Saul offered a sacrifice. Samuel told Saul to wait for him to come and offer the sacrifice before battle, but Saul became impatient & offered it himself. This was the beginning of Saul’s end.
- Saul spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and his livestock. Agag was under “the ban,” i.e. “devoted to the LORD,” but Saul kept back some of the best livestock and allowed Agag

to live. At this point, the LORD rejects Saul as king, although he is not removed from office.

--Saul became insanely jealous of David. He tried to kill David & chased him across the wilderness. Note the contrast between Saul and Jonathan, one of whom recognized what God was doing and the other who did not, or who at least worked as hard as possible to keep God's will from taking place.

--Saul visited a medium, or diviner (KJV "witch"), to gain advice from Samuel, who had died. This was in contrast to God's laws, laws which Saul had earlier sought to enforce, a fact not lost by the medium herself (1 Sam. 28).

--David's Kingdom

--Rise of David--

--He began in Saul's service: playing the harp, armor-bearer, and slaying Goliath. He was faithful to Saul through everything (see below under Theology). He also served a Philistine king during the time of running from Saul. Here he built up a mercenary army, apparently a formidable one.

--He became king over Judah at Hebron after Saul's death. Seven years later he became king over all Israel.

--He conquered Jerusalem. Actually Joab conquered Jerusalem, but he was in David's service. Jerusalem became David's capital & the site of Yahweh worship. This was probably one of David's wisest moves, because it moved his capital outside of any tribal land and established capital city that could be his own and not the property of any single tribe.

--David defeated all of Israel's enemies (except for sin!). He conquered the Philistines, Moabites, Ammonites, and Arameans. This established a firm kingdom centered in Jerusalem.

--Fall of David

--Bathsheba—

--Why did this sin occur? David should have been at war, but instead was at home relaxing and enjoying the scenery, so to speak. He should not have been in a position to admire Bathsheba, but he was & acted on his lustful thoughts.

--Succession of the Throne—

--Absalom's Revolt (2 Sam. 13-19)—Beginning with the rape of Tamar by Amnon, ending with Absalom's full-scale revolt against his father. The revolt was successful until Joab led in the overthrow of Absalom.

--Sheba revolted, but Joab also put this revolt down.

--Adonijah set himself up as king until Nathan and Bathsheba intervened and had David appoint Solomon as his official heir.

Israel's "Golden Age"

2 Sam. 5:11-1 Kings 11:43

--Solomon's Kingdom

--Rise of Solomon

--Solomon asked for wisdom from God (1 Kings 3). This was an act of a good leader who recognized his dependency upon the LORD. Solomon thus became the quintessential wise man in Israel.

--Solomon established an effective administration & wealthy kingdom (1 Kings 4, 9-10). In fact, the wealth was well known in the region.

--Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem. It was a magnificent place to worship Yahweh. He acknowledged the need for faithfulness and humble worship, and his dependency upon the LORD for ruling.

--Fall of Solomon

--Solomon became wealthy, powerful, & complacent. He forgot his dependency upon God, the law, & worship of Yahweh alone. He built temples for his many wives. He married a multitude of foreign women, and the north began to revolt, apparently because of preferential treatment.

Divided Monarchy/Judah Alone *1 Kings 12:1-2 Kings 25*

Important People and Events:

--Rehoboam & Jeroboam

--A kingdom divided. These two kings simply represent the leaders of two opposing groups that were never truly unified. David's strong leadership in a time of trial, namely the Philistine wars, united them into a single kingdom; but the forces separating north from south were stronger than the later kings could overcome. Jeroboam is famous (infamous?) for setting up rival worship places to Jerusalem, at Dan and Bethel.

--Omri, Ahab, Jezebel, & Elijah

--A nation built & corrupted. Omri's alliance with the Phoenician kings brought militant baalism into the northern kingdom of Israel, primarily through the influence of Jezebel.

--Pekah, Rezin, Ahaz, Isaiah, and the Assyrians

--A nation dies. False worship, greed, and power brought down the northern kingdom in the second quarter of the 8th century. The mighty Assyrians held sway in the Ancient Near East for more than a century.

--Hezekiah

--A nation reformed & saved. The first great reform in Judah was led by Hezekiah. He withstood the onslaught of the mighty Sennacherib (barely!), primarily under the influence of the prophet Isaiah.

--Josiah

--Josiah led a nation to revival. His brief reform was remembered as a great revival, but it was only a blip on the screen of Judah's history, ending abruptly with his death in 609.

--Jehoiakim, Zedekiah, and Nebuchadnezzar

--Rebellion kills the nation. Blatant rebellion against God, as evidenced in Jeremiah's prophecies, finally brought down the nation in 587/586, after Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd major invasion of Judah. Jerusalem was destroyed and much of Judah's population was exiled to Babylon.

Theological Themes of Samuel and Kings

1. Prophecy

--Roles of Prophets

--Royal Advisors—We see this role performed by several prophets, including Samuel (& even Eli), Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Micaiah, Isaiah, & several unnamed prophets.

--Covenant Watchmen—Elijah, Ahijah, and various others called Israel & Judah back to the covenant with Yahweh. The kings are judged by two primary criteria:

--Worship practices, thus Josiah & Hezekiah are given favorable ratings &

--Justice in the land, i.e. oppression of the less fortunate, namely the orphans, widows, poor, and sojourners.

--Predictors of the future—Ahijah, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah, Jehu ben Hanani, and others predicted the future, both for good & evil, judgment and hope. This included the division of the kingdom, fall of kings, and natural phenomena.

2. The Davidic Monarchy

--David as ideal king

--All kings are measured against David. He was the ideal king, who walked “after God's own heart.” (ISA 13:14). David sought the Lord & served Him faithfully during most of his lifetime.

--How does this align with the affair with Bathsheba? Some would say that it is a fiction. We should examine other possibilities. He committed a gross sin, in fact several gross sins. However, when he was confronted, David made no excuses & begged for no special mercy. He accepted his sin & the resulting consequences. He repented & confessed his sin to God. This apparently is even more important than the sin being committed. (Remember Jesus said that he came for the sick, not the well.)

--David's Faithfulness

--David's Faithfulness to Saul's Family—David refused to kill Saul. David refuses to rejoice in the death of Saul or Ish-Bosheth, rather he executes their killers. David mourns for Saul & Jonathan. David is generous to Mephibosheth.

--David's innocence concerning bloodguilt—David always maintains innocence. Someone else always kills his rival (sometimes very conveniently). Those guilty are then punished because of their presumption.

--David's attitude of contrition before the Lord. He accepts his sins & the punishment that he is to receive for them. He acknowledges his need for Yahweh in everything that he does.

--The Eternal Throne

--David was promised a throne for eternity. Yahweh chose David as His king. Thus the throne would always be occupied, although periods of discipline would be necessary.

--This became a source of false hope for Judah, as did the presence of the temple in Jerusalem. The kings & the nation thought that Yahweh could not allow them to be defeated because that would take away the promised throne.

--As the failure of the kings became more & more apparent, a messianic hope for the future arose. Yahweh would eventually replace the present faulty system with a new king who would rule righteously. We likely see this hope beginning in the release of Jehoiachin at the end of the book.

3. Covenant

--Mosaic Covenant

--The judgments of the prophets & the Dtr are based upon the Mosaic covenant, esp. as represented in Deuteronomy, as well as portions of Exodus & Leviticus. The treatment of people & property, as well as attitudes of commitment to & worship of Yahweh, is spelled out here.

--Davidic Covenant

--The covenant between Yahweh & David does not supersede the Mosaic covenant. This is often overlooked in biblical study. If the kings, or the people, broke the old covenant regulations they were still held accountable. This would be the basis for judgment or discipline of the kings. Ultimately, the force of the Mosaic covenant actually superseded the Davidic covenant, resulting in the downfall of the kingdom of Judah.