

Chapter 12

Outline of 1-2 Samuel

- 1 Samuel 1-3: The childhood and prophetic call of Samuel
- 1 Samuel 4-6: The Ark of Covenant in Battle
- 1 Samuel 7-12: Samuel and Israel's Decision for a King
- 1 Samuel 13-31: Saul's Failure and David's Rise to Power
- 2 Samuel 1-8: David's Kingship over all of Israel
- 2 Samuel 9-20: "Succession Narrative" of David's Sons
- 2 Samuel 21-24: Appendix of other David Traditions

Study Questions

1. Describe how Samuel represents a transition from a loose tribal league to a strong centralized state.

Before Samuel, each tribe is on their own, being united only in that they worship the same God. But they were not really united militarily, and when attacked by foreign adversaries, each tribe was really on its own. Samuel comes along as priest, as judge and as prophet representing for them a singular religious authority. And he anoints for them a king to unite them as their singular political/military authority.

2. What is the significance of Saul?

Saul is the first king (significance stated above).

3. Briefly describe David's rise to power. What were his major contributions? What were his shortcomings?

He was a military and political genius, but he was also able to win the people. He was made King in Hebron by mutual agreement, not by conquest or by right. His major shortcoming is the inability to keep peace within his family - starting with the adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, the assault of his daughter Tamar by Amnon, the murder of Amnon by his brother Absalom, the plot of Absalom against his father, and then the attempt by Adonijah to take his father's throne.

4. Describe the role of Solomon in the history of Israel. What were his significant and major achievements? What were his weaknesses?

5. "The flaws and character deficiencies of a patriarch or individual leader significantly affect Yahweh's relationship and fidelity to his people." Assess the validity of this statement.
6. What were the different forms of kingship in the ancient Near East? What characteristics were usually associated with kingship?
7. Describe how Israel understood kingship. What was different or special about it?

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