

INTRODUCTION TO FIRST SAMUEL

Key Verse: 2:30b

"Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained."

The book of Judges ends with the words, "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit" (Jdg 21:25). The book of 1 Samuel describes the transition of Israel from a loose confederation of tribes into a monarchy. Samuel himself was the bridge. He personally opposed the monarchy, for he saw the people's desire for a king as a rejection of God's rule. But he was the king-maker, the man who anointed both Saul who failed, and David who became the model for all kings everywhere down through the ages.

God himself raises up shepherds for his people. Who, then, is the leader who can serve God and God's people? 1 Samuel deals with this question using two contrasts: Eli's sons, heirs to the priesthood, were corrupt; Samuel, who obeyed God's word from his youth, replaced them. Then the writer contrasts Saul and David. David is called a man after God's own heart. 1 Samuel is about his training in the wilderness. [2 Samuel is about his life as the shepherd king who founded the monarchy. His kingdom fulfilled prophecy by expanding the borders of Israel to include the land God promised Abraham; it became a symbol of the messianic kingdom of Christ, the descendant of David who would come to restore all things. Thus, God prepared his people to put their hope in the kingdom of God.]



Brief Outline of 1 Samuel

1. Eli and Samuel (1:1-7:17)
 - a. Samuel's birth and childhood
 - b. War with the Philistines
2. Samuel and Saul (8:1-15:35)
 - a. Saul becomes king of Israel
 - b. God rejects Saul for disobedience
3. Saul and David (16:1-31:13)
 - a. Samuel anoints David
 - b. David and Jonathan become friends
 - c. Saul pursues David
 - d. Saul's defeat and death