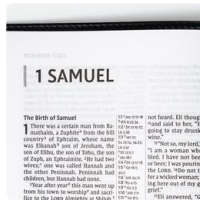


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Samuel and Chronicles - Introduction



1 Samuel - Steve Gregg

In this introduction by Steve Gregg, he discusses the books of 1 Samuel and Chronicles, highlighting their differences in focus and content. He notes that while the books were originally one, the installation of King Saul led to their separation. Gregg also speaks to the importance of the threat posed by the Philistines to the rise of monarchy in Israel. He provides an outline of the books and emphasizes their contribution to understanding the history of the Jewish community and their relationship with God.

Transcript

Today we're going to start our study in 1 Samuel, but in addition to 1 Samuel, we'll be looking at 1 Chronicles. Not that there's much that corresponds between those two books, but because the books of Samuel were originally one book, just the book of Samuel, when we include 1 and 2 Samuel together, there's quite a significant overlap in the material between that and the book that we call 1 Chronicles. And we're not taking the books of Chronicles separately.

That is, we're not going to go through 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and then 1 and 2 Chronicles. For the simple reason that Chronicles has a great deal of repetition, it'd be similar to going through two of the synoptic gospels in a row, where the material overlaps at least 50% or more, and there'd be too much repetition. I mean, not too much necessarily for some kind of benefit, but as far as the economy of our time goes, it would not be worth going additionally through all the chapters of Chronicles after we've been through Samuel and Kings, because so much of it would be repetition.

So what I want to do at this point is introduce you to the books of Chronicles, because they will be brought in in a harmonizing sort of way through our studies of the books of Samuel and Kings, which lie immediately ahead of us. And if you're not familiar with the books of Chronicles, you will find that 1 Chronicles, to a very large extent, parallels material in the books of Samuel, and 2 Chronicles parallels the books of Kings. So we go through Samuel, we go through Kings, and then when you come to Chronicles, you go through that material again.

Not all of it is the same, and there are some significant differences, omissions, and additions, but we will be able to incorporate those in our commentary on Samuel and Kings so that we don't have to take the whole books of Chronicles separately and end up repeating ourselves a great deal. Originally, the books of Chronicles were one book in the Old Testament. This is also true of our books of Samuel and books of Kings.

Each of these that we have two of were really only one of originally. There was one book of Samuel, one book of Kings, and one book of Chronicles in the Hebrew Bible. The reason they were divided into two in each case was that the Old Testament was translated into Greek in the early 3rd century BC, and during that time, when it was put into Greek, it became clear they were going to need more space because the Greek language used vowels as well as consonants, and the Hebrew only used consonants.

And so the text of the Hebrew did not require as much space. When they translated it into Greek, the sentences were longer because they had vowels as well as consonants, so it made a longer document. It was in the Septuagint, therefore, and if you see the words LXX in your notes, LXX is the symbol for the Septuagint.

Obviously, it's the Roman numeral for 70. The Septuagint is so called because it is believed that 70 Hebrew scholars worked on it. So the Roman numeral for 70, LXX, has become the established abbreviation for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

In the Septuagint, Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles were divided into two books each, but really you can see when we study 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel that one just runs right into the other, and the same thing with Kings. It's continuous, and the same thing with Chronicles. Chronicles is not merely repetition of what's in Samuel and Kings, though a great deal of it repeats.

It is not just a redundancy. There is a somewhat different purpose in Chronicles than there is in the earlier histories. The books of Samuel and Kings tell the story of the years of Israel's monarchy from the standpoint of prophets.

The writers of Samuel and Kings are prophets, and it's a prophetic history that focuses mainly on the royal history, the throne, especially the throne of David, but in the case of Kings, the nation divides into a northern and southern kingdom, and there's a throne in the north and a throne in the south. The books of Samuel and Kings are concerned about more or less the political history with religious themes woven in, but the books of Chronicles are going through the same history looking at it from a priestly point of view. The writer of Chronicles was a priest and probably not a prophet, and the focus is there not on the royal or political history of Israel and Judah, but rather of the religious history, the spiritual dimensions of the history, and so it has a lot more emphasis on the temple and on spiritual themes than do Kings and Samuel.

And so there is repetition, but there's also a different nuance, a different emphasis, and the emphasis is on the spiritual heritage of the nation. It would seem since this book was written later than Samuel and Kings, we can see that because it mentions actually the end of the exile, the very end of 2 Chronicles mentions Cyrus the Persian making a decree, the very closing paragraph of 2 Chronicles says, Now the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, the word of the Lord spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled. The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth Yahweh God of heaven has given me, and he has commanded me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judea.

Who is there among you of all his people? May Yahweh his God be with him, and let him go up. Now, this close makes it very clear that the writer of Chronicles lived at the time that the exile ended, because Cyrus' decree brought an end to the Jewish exile in Babylon. The books of Samuel and Kings take the history up so far as the beginning of the exile, and if the Jewish tradition is correct that Jeremiah wrote the books of Kings, he lived at the beginning of the exile, but he did not live to see the end.

Therefore, those other historical records have only the perspective of the downfall of Judah, and not its restoration, whereas Chronicles is written at the time of its restoration, and at a time when the writer apparently believes that the new Jewish community that's being formed by the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, that community needs to have a focus on its spiritual heritage, and on the degree to which the life and the fortunes of the nation depend on the quality of their relationship with God. And so, from a priestly perspective, the history has a slightly different emphasis, and there's examples that I'll bring out as we go through these notes. As far as who wrote the book, I mentioned it's priestly, it's written from a priest's point of view, or a Levite's point of view, the Jews believe that Ezra wrote it, that's their tradition, that Ezra wrote it, and there's good reason to think so, because the book of Ezra, which follows immediately after 2 Chronicles, is sort of like a third book of Chronicles in a way, it really just picks up where Chronicles ends.

As 2 Chronicles ends with the decree of Cyrus, Ezra begins with that decree and picks it up from there, and talks about how the remnant came back under Zerubbabel, and then later Ezra himself came back from Babylon, and so the story of Ezra is simply a continuation of Chronicles, and both works, Ezra and Chronicles, have a lot of things in common with each other. Whoever wrote it, we know was a scholar, because he cited from, or at least alluded to, 16 different source works. You might remember when we had our introduction to the historical books, I listed a whole bunch of works that are mentioned, the book of Jasher, and the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah, and the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel, and a lot of different works, the Acts of Solomon.

These historical works in the Bible actually are aware of previous historical works on the same subjects, and apparently incorporated them, so that it's a work of scholarship, and the scholar had a lot of resources. He used at least 16 of the 22 sources that are named in the historical books are cited in Chronicles, and Ezra was such a scholar. The Bible says he was a ready scribe.

He was a scholarly historian and scholar of the law, and he's got just the type of temperament and aptitude, no doubt, to write a book like this, but the author of both Chronicles and Ezra has a priest's perspective on things, and seems very fascinated with the details of the temple, and the Levites, and their orders, and things like that, things that would possibly bore the average person. Even the genealogies at the beginning of 1 Chronicles are a bit tedious from our point of view. There's nine chapters of genealogies at the beginning of the book.

It's not really a way to start a vigorous narrative, and really get your audience engaged right from the first page. You kind of have to wade through it, but scribes were the type of people who just loved to get that kind of detail down, and that's definitely the orientation of the author. In the books of Chronicles and Ezra, there is similar vocabulary, including quite a few, or some, Babylonian loan words, Chaldeisms as we call them.

What happens with languages is they pick up words in their vocabulary from other languages of people that they come into contact with, of course. English has a lot of things that arose out of Latin originally, but there's a lot of Germanic words, a lot of French words in our vocabulary, Spanish words have come in. Through interaction with different cultures, languages pick up words from other languages, and those are called loan words that we borrow from other cultures.

There are quite a few Babylonian loan words, or Chaldeisms, that are found in the Hebrew of these books. That was really the direction that the Hebrew language was evolving at the time of Ezra. Obviously, after spending 70 years in Babylon, the Jews, the ones that still spoke Hebrew, would have picked up some vocabulary from the Babylonian language as well.

Eventually, that evolution, that incorporation of Chaldeisms in Hebrew became what was called Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus and his disciples. At that time, the Jews in Palestine spoke Aramaic, which is kind of like Hebrew, but not exactly like Hebrew, because of this evolution of the language took over the 500 years from the time of Ezra until the time of Jesus. There are certain words that are found in Chronicles and Ezra that are not found elsewhere.

The Persian coin, the derrick, is mentioned in both works, not elsewhere. They both speak of things that are prescribed in the law. The term prescribed is an unusual word to speak of things that are written in the law, but both works use it as if the author might be the same person, has the same usage habits.

Just the Hebrew style, something that only Hebrew scholars would really pick up, and therefore I'm not a Hebrew scholar, I can't illustrate it, but Hebrew scholars say the style of Chronicles and the style of Ezra are very much the same, or very, very similar. As far as the content of these books, I mentioned that over 50% is the same as what's in Samuel and Kings. And some of it, I mean a lot of it is just verbatim, as if maybe the author had the books of Samuel and Kings as one of the sources he was using, and he wasn't trying to write a really original work, he was just trying to write an authentic and true work.

So a lot of it is just word for word the same. But there are differences. For one thing, it has the most extensive genealogical records that you'd find anywhere in scripture, nine chapters worth.

And like I said, genealogies are not our favorite type of literature. In fact, many people who try to read through the Bible get discouraged when they get to Genesis chapter 5, because it's all genealogy, or chapter 10, which is extensive genealogical information, and chapter 11 has that kind of stuff in it. A lot of us don't want to be bothered with that kind of thing.

But to the Jews, genealogy was very important, because they considered that their bloodlines were what connected them to God in some respects. They believed that God cared about who their ancestors were, and what tribes they belonged to. It had a lot to do with what their inheritance would be.

When they come back to the land, people needed to know, am I of this tribe or that tribe, because this part of the land belongs to this tribe, and this to that. So when they're coming back from Babylon, genealogies would be very important for people to be able to document. In fact, there was a bit of a problem in reestablishing the priesthood after the Babylonians exiled, because some of the Levites were not able to document that they were really Levites.

They didn't have their genealogies intact. So these things were more important to them than they would be to us. After the nine chapters of genealogies, 1 Chronicles covers basically the reign of David, which is essentially the same material as is found in 2 Samuel.

Different details are given, but it's the same time period. It's about 40 years' time. David reigned for 40 years.

Then 2 Chronicles gives the remaining history of the Judean monarchy until the captivity in Babylon, and as we saw, then it skips to the end of the captivity and mentions the decree of Cyrus. Thus, apart from that last detail of Cyrus' decree, 2 Chronicles covers the same ground that 1 and 2 Kings covers for the most part, and that's about 430 years. So it covers 11 times as much as 1 Chronicles covers, as far as the number of

years.

And there are, someone has counted, 27 narratives in the books of Chronicles that are not found in Samuel or Kings, and that's a significant number. So after you've studied Samuel and Kings, there's still some reason to study Chronicles because it does have additional supplementary material. And it's interesting that the things it adds are mostly about the temple, mostly about the formal worship of Israel, because it's a priest's concerns, and because he's trying to emphasize the religious heritage of Israel and its need to be connected to God and to keep its religion pure.

And what it omits is interesting, too, because Chronicles, they leave out, for example, David's sin with Bathsheba, a very significant part of 2 Samuel. In 2 Samuel, David sins with Bathsheba, and it changes everything about his reign after that. It leads to the problems with Absalom, and Absalom occupies many chapters in the book of 2 Samuel.

Absalom's not even mentioned, that is, the story of Absalom's rebellion is not mentioned. So some of the shameful things in Judah's history are left out. In fact, the Judean kings are the only kings that are really covered in Chronicles.

Whereas in the books of Kings, that covers the kings of the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom, in the days of Rehoboam, Solomon's son, the kingdom divided. The northern ten tribes rebelled against the house of David, and Rehoboam continued to rule the kingdom of Judah in the south, but the ten northern tribes just formed their own nation, and they never rejoined again until, well, never. The northern kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 BC, and the Judean kingdom in the south continued until 586 BC, when it was taken into captivity in Babylon.

So the nation of Israel broke into two nations, and continued to have separate histories for the rest of their time. In Kings, we read alternately the history of the kings of the north and the kings of the south, that is, the Judean kings and the Israeli kings. But in Chronicles, only the southern kingdom is there.

I mean, there are references to some of the northern kings just incidentally, as they happen to interact with the southern kings, but the history of the northern kingdom is just left out altogether, out of Chronicles. And so only the pure religion of Judea is the focus here. It was the Judeans that had Jerusalem, that had the temple, that continued to worship Yahweh for the most part.

They had their times when they didn't, but that's another interesting thing. In Chronicles, even in recording the southern kingdom's history, it does not really focus at all on the kings that were bad. It focuses primarily on the few good kings, that is, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

These five kings were actually good kings, and pretty much the only ones that Judah

had. Israel, the northern kingdom, had no good kings. So this history is somewhat rose-colored, in the sense that it ignores the really scandalous things in David's administration.

It ignores the breaking of the kingdom into two. It ignores the whole apostate northern kingdom and its history. And as far as Judea's history, or Judah's history, it basically focuses on the positives, the kings that followed Yahweh, the kings that reformed things, and so forth.

So that's how the emphasis is in Chronicles. An example of how Chronicles focuses on the religious side of things would be seen in the fact that there are nine chapters about Solomon's reign in Chronicles. Six of them are about the temple.

So two-thirds of the treatment of Solomon's reign is about the building of the temple. And of course Solomon's reign included much more than that, but that's not of interest so much to the chronicler. Also, whereas the king's records in 2 Kings, it talks about Hezekiah's reforms, gives three verses to the subject.

Chronicles gives three whole chapters to Hezekiah's reforms. So the emphasis is on the righteous times in Judah's history. And so that's where Chronicles is at.

And as we study through the books of Samuel and Kings, we're going to be correlating the material that's in Chronicles that isn't in those books, so that we'll sort of have a harmonized history of the period using Samuel and 1 Chronicles together and using Kings and 2 Chronicles together. That will be our approach. Okay, so let's now look at the book of... Well, we're going to look at 1 Samuel, but I want to give you an introduction to the books of Samuel since they were originally one book.

And we will not have a separate introduction to 2 Samuel. It doesn't make sense because the same thing that can be said introductory to 1 would be agreeable to 2. So we'll just look at the books of Samuel in an introductory way right now. Just like I said about Chronicles, and really the same is true of Kings, there was only one book of Samuel originally.

And in the Hebrew Bible, it wasn't called Samuel. In the Hebrew Bible, it was called the first... Well, kingdoms, really. I shouldn't say in Hebrew, in the Septuagint.

These books all had different names in Hebrew that were usually based on the first words in the Hebrew text. But 1 and 2 Samuel came to be separate books in the Septuagint. And there they were called 1 and 2 kingdoms.

And when they divided the book of Kings into two, they called that 3 and 4 kingdoms. Now, we don't need to know that except as a point of interest, because you're never going to have anyone refer to them by those names today, unless you're reading the Septuagint. So, 1 and 2 Samuel were 1 and 2 kingdoms originally in the Septuagint.

And 1 and 2 Kings were 3 and 4 kingdoms. Then in the Latin Vulgate, which Jerome translated the Bible into Latin, he changed the names to 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th kings. So, what we're calling 1 and 2 Samuel used to be called 1 and 2 kings.

And what we call 1 and 2 kings, they called 3 and 4 kings. He just changed the word from kingdoms to kings from the Septuagint and the Vulgate. And it wasn't until the 16th century that they came to have their present names.

I think it was in the Blumberg Bible that these books came to be called the books of Samuel. And so we've had already, I mentioned the similarities in the material between the books of Samuel and the overlap in 1st Chronicles. 1st Samuel covers more that's not in Chronicles.

Chronicles begins kind of at the end of 1st Samuel. 1st Chronicles, the history begins in chapter 10 of 1st Chronicles. And it really picks up where 1st Samuel ends with the death of Saul.

But the first book of Samuel carries a lot of information that is of great value that we don't find anywhere else in the Bible. We have the birth of Samuel at the beginning and his rise to prominence as a prophet and a leader in Israel. And he's the one who the Jews approached to make a king over them.

And so he installed their first king, Saul. And when Saul was rejected by God, Samuel also installed the next king, David, who became the leader of the permanent dynasty. And the purpose of the books of Samuel seem to record the transition from the era of the judges into the establishment of Israel's monarchy and its first two dynasties.

Many people think that the book of Samuel served to defend David's right to the throne. It certainly is a book favorable to David. And many people do believe that David's dynasty was perhaps questioned by some.

We know that it was. Actually, there's record of it. Absalom and Shimei and certain other individuals questioned David's legitimacy as king.

And so the book of Samuel could have been written with the thought in mind of showing that David really has a divine right to the throne because that's really what is illustrated there. As far as the authorship and the time of writing, Jewish tradition assigns portions of it to Samuel. However, Samuel dies in 1 Samuel, and the story continues through the end of 1 Samuel and through 2 Samuel.

So there's other authors whose works are incorporated too. But the Jews believe that Samuel wrote some of it, and Nathan and Gad, other prophets contemporary with David, wrote the rest. Now we don't know whether the book as it stands now came from the pens of those men.

We do know from 1 Chronicles chapter 29 and verse 29 that there were books written by those three prophets. No scholar in my opinion today would say that the books we have as 1 and 2 Samuel are the books referred to in 1 Chronicles 29, 29. But in 1 Chronicles 29 and verse 29 it says, Now the acts of King David first and last, indeed they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and the book of Gad the seer.

Now when he says the book of Samuel the seer, he doesn't mean the book of Samuel that we have necessarily, but he does mean that Samuel and Gad and Nathan did write books, and they are prophets. And the Jews and most scholars would say that the books of Samuel incorporate the information from those three prophetic documents. We don't have the original documents that are referred to there in Chronicles, but the author of Samuel had them.

And so there is something in Samuel that raises questions about that particular time of authorship. It's in 1 Samuel chapter 27 and verse 6. It says, So Achish gave him, that is gave David, Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

Now the writer is writing at a time where he can refer to the kings of Judah. If this was written by Samuel, Nathan, and Gad, there had only been one king, well two, Saul and David, but only David was the king of Judah. And there would be no sense in speaking of him as the king of Judah since he ruled over all Israel.

To speak of the kings of Judah, it sounds like it intends a contrast between them and the kings of Israel. As if that statement in verse 6 of chapter 27 was written after the kingdom had divided into two, and there were kings of Israel and kings of Judah, and the kings of Judah still possess Ziklag. Simply to refer to the kings of Judah suggests a mentality that there are kings of Judah as opposed to kings of Israel.

Because David, for example, would not have been called the king of Judah, although he was of the tribe of Judah. He would have been called the king of Israel because the nation as a whole was called Israel. Saul would not have been called the king of Judah because he was not only not of the tribe of Judah, but the nation was one nation.

He was not just a tribal leader, but the national leader. So the term kings of Judah would only make sense after the kingdom divided. And that would mean that this statement must have been written after the time of those prophets that we named, after the time of David and after the time even of Solomon and of Rehoboam.

So it would be at least three generations after David that that comment could have been made. However, there's no reason to doubt that that comment could have been inserted by a later editor because from time to time, that's what we find. Even in Genesis and books written by Moses, there are occasional insertions by editors that kind of explain to

a later generation of readers that this condition continued to this day or whatever.

So I'm of the opinion that the authority behind these works are Samuel's and Gad's and Nathan's authority. And that whoever put it together in its final form, we can't be 100% sure because the book is anonymous. It doesn't really say who wrote it.

We only have the Jewish tradition and evidences of the sort that we have mentioned, which don't really tell us a lot specifically. Now, the main character in the first book of Samuel is Samuel himself. And he's very important.

In fact, scholars believe he is second only to Moses in importance in the national history of Israel. Moses obviously is the most important because he established the nation. He led them out of Egypt and he gave them the law at Mount Sinai and he organized them into, instead of a band of slaves, into a nation that was able to conquer and occupy a land and start a country.

And so Moses is considered the greatest and most important leader in Israel's history. Samuel is considered to be the second most because he led the nation in the transition from the judges to the kings. And he was the counselor and prophet to the first and the second of the kings.

And so he got the nation established as a monarchy, which became its identity forever afterwards. Samuel is sometimes called the king maker. He himself served as a judge and a prophet and a priest.

He was apparently not of the sons of Aaron, but he was a Levite. So we read in 1 Chronicles 6, we're not told it in 1 Samuel, but this is one of the areas where the genealogies at the beginning of Chronicles give us valuable information. Because in 1 Chronicles 6, which falls within, of course, those chapters of genealogies, in verse 33 it says, These are the ones who ministered with their sons of the sons of the Kohathites.

Now the Kohathites were one third of the, one of the three branches of the Levites. And it says, Of the sons of the Kohathites were Haman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, the son of Elkanah, the son of Jehoram, the son of Eliel, the son of Toa, and it goes back. But the point is that Samuel, the son of Elkanah here is our Samuel, and he is a Kohathite, that is, he is a Levite.

We wouldn't know that from 1 Samuel because we're simply told that his father was from, what, the hill country of Ephraim. But of course, Levites lived all over the country. But there was a certain man of Ramathaim, Zophim, in the mountains of Ephraim in 1 Samuel 1. And so the location that Samuel grew up in was the mountains of Ephraim in a town called Ramah.

But his tribal association was Levite. And he served as a judge. He's in fact considered to be the last of the judges.

So the period of the judges is really the period we're looking at when we start the book of Samuel. And in chapter 7, verses 15 through 17, it says, So Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places.

And he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there. There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar to the Lord. So he was a judge for his lifetime.

He also was a Levite. And we find him doing priestly things like offering sacrifices. In fact, he's permitted to offer sacrifices when even the king himself is not.

And Saul offered a sacrifice once wrongfully because Saul's of the tribe of Benjamin and couldn't offer sacrifices. But he was supposed to wait for Samuel to come to do it. Samuel wasn't really a priest either.

But you know, in Samuel's adult life, the priesthood at Shiloh was destroyed pretty much. At least Shiloh was destroyed. The ark was taken.

And the normal priestly functions were interrupted. There was not the altar and so forth that Moses had them build because that had been apparently destroyed. So it was God allowed there to be people acting as priests who didn't have the pure priestly blood.

But being a Levite was better than nothing. But also that he was a prophet is mentioned in 1 Samuel 3 and verse 20. It says, And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of Yahweh.

Samuel is actually considered to be the last of the judges and the first of the prophets. Now the first of the prophets doesn't mean that there was never anyone who prophesied before that because in the book of Judges there was a man who prophesied. And Deborah also prophesied.

But there were none who held what was considered to be the office of a prophet. In Israel's later history from Samuel on, the kings were expected to obey Yahweh and the prophets were there to tell them what Yahweh wanted them to do. And the prophets either had an official position in the government with the kings or else simply had access to the kings to bring the word of the Lord to them.

And Samuel was the first of those. And of course there was an order of prophets. In fact, Samuel established an order of prophets as we shall see.

But just to illustrate that Samuel came to be considered the last of the judges because the period of the judges ended when he established Saul as king. In Acts chapter 13, Paul treats Samuel as if he's the last of the period of the judges. In Acts 13 and verse 20 in Paul's sermon at Pisidian Antioch, he's summarizing the history of Israel.

And he says, After that he, that is God, gave them judges for about 450 years until Samuel the prophet. So they had judges until Samuel. Now we know that Samuel was a judge because we just read that in chapter 7 verses 15 through 17.

He judged Israel. So the judges period lasted until Samuel. And Samuel was the last person to hold that title.

But he's also the first of the prophets and the book of Acts tells us that too. In Acts chapter 3, Peter's sermon, Acts 3.24, Peter said, Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken have foretold these days. So Peter refers to all the Old Testament prophets beginning with Samuel.

Paul talks about all the judges ending with Samuel. Samuel's the one man who overlaps and occupies both those categories. In Hebrews chapter 11 also, Samuel is spoken of as if he's the first of the prophetic order.

In Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 32, it says, And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David, and Samuel and the prophets. Samuel seems to be mentioned as the sort of the first of the prophets and rightly so because Samuel established the prophetic order. He established companies of prophets or prophetic communities.

Some scholars refer to them as prophetic guilds. No one knows exactly what the nature of them was except that we find throughout the books of Samuel and Kings wandering groups of prophets. Often they're musicians.

They're playing musical instruments and singing and occasionally when someone comes in contact with them, the spirit comes on the person like Saul. When Saul was pursuing David, he came through a company of prophets and the spirit came on Saul and he fell down on the ground and prophesied all day himself. It became almost a joke in Israel saying it's Saul also among the prophets.

Certainly he didn't seem like a candidate for that. But the prophets became a known what shall we say vocation that some people had and Samuel established and led a number of enduring prophet communities or guilds. We read of them, for example, in 1 Samuel 10.5 and they're usually referred to in well, they have more than one way they're referred to, but they're sometimes referred to as simply a company of prophets and they seem to be centered in certain cities more than others where Samuel frequented.

But in 1 Samuel 10.5 Samuel's talking to Saul and says, after that you should come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is and it will happen when you've come there to the city that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high places with a stringed instrument a tambourine, a flute and a harp before them and they will be

prophesying. So here's a group of prophets and then he meets them in verse 10 says when they came there to the hill there was a group of prophets to meet him then the spirit of God came upon him and he prophesied among them also in 1 Samuel 19.20 1 Samuel 19 verse 20 it says then Saul sent messengers to take David and when they saw the group of prophets prophesying and Samuel standing as leader over them the spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied. So here we see a group of prophets in this case at a place called Naoth and Samuel is standing among them as their leader.

The groups of prophets that are here mentioned eventually came to be called sons of the prophets that doesn't mean that their actual fathers were prophets but the word sons is used in scripture in quite a variety of ways but sons of the prophets would simply mean those who are following in the steps of the prophets like a son usually follows in the steps of his father or it used to be the case in 1 Kings chapter 20 we see an example of this usage 1 Kings 20 in verse 35 it says now a certain man of the sons of the prophets spoke to Othello and we won't go into the information at this point but a man who was of the sons of the prophets it mentions in 2 Kings chapter 2 verse 3 it says and the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha and said to him in verse 5 the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him and then in chapter 2 Kings chapter 4 verse 1 it says a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha and also 2 Kings 6 verse 1 and the sons of the prophets said to Elisha see now the place where we dwell with you is too small for us notice that in the book of 2 Kings Elisha seems to be the leader of the sons of the prophets in 1 Kings almost certainly Elijah was but the first founder of this order of prophets was Samuel and he was their first leader and he was the first of the prophets but it would appear that many of the later prophets who wrote books were probably probably rose up through these groups we don't know very much about these groups but it would seem likely that God began to put his spirit on certain individuals in Israel and they would seek fellowship with others who had the similar gift and they would gather together in prophetic communities and live together they seemed to live together in that case in chapter 6 verse 1 of 2 Kings and we eventually find there are these groups of prophets in several different cities one was in Samuel's hometown Ramah where there was a portion of the city called Nath but it was apparently the prophetic community living there Nath is a word that means dwellings and apparently within the city of Ramah which was Samuel's hometown where he spent most of his time there was this section this neighborhood this little enclave within the city called Nath which was where the prophets lived together with Samuel there were eventually prophetic communities at Bethel as we saw just a moment ago in 2 Kings 2 3 and in Jericho in 2 Kings 2 5 also Gilgal 2 Kings 4 38 mentions there was a prophetic community at Gilgal and I say possibly at Mizpah there's no reference to them being at Mizpah but we did see in 1 Samuel 7 that Samuel made a circuit of several cities and Ramah and Bethel and Gilgal were among them and so was Mizpah and these were the places where he judged Israel so it's possible that we know that he had

prophetic communities in 3 of those 4 whether he had one in Mizpah also we aren't specifically told but you can see that this was a time where God was beginning to raise up people to speak prophetically to the nation as well as raising up kings and that's because the kings needed to know what God wanted them to do because what was established was a theocratic monarchy now in the period of the judges it was a pure theocracy theocracy means governed by God there was no king in Israel and so everyone was expected to answer directly to God they didn't do real well at it obviously and what people were supposed to do and what they did do are not the same thing but the way God had things set up during the period of judges was the nation was supposed to be governed directly by God through the priesthood and the priest would teach the law and the people were supposed to keep the law and that was how God intended for the nation to be and everyone would do pretty much as their conscience would dictate according to the law as I said it didn't work out that way because of the corruption of people's hearts and their refusal to obey God's law but still that's how God set things up but now the monarchy is not going to be directly governed by God in the same sense because there would be an earthly king but he was still supposed to maintain the theocratic character of the nation he was supposed to govern under God this is how Israel was different than other nations even after the king was given to them when the people came to Samuel in 1 Samuel 8 and said give us a king to reign over us like all the nations they did receive a king but it wasn't really supposed to be like all the nations like all the nations they got to have an earthly king but it was not supposed to be the same kind of monarchy because in other nations, in pagan nations the kings ruled over the priests the kings were the heads over the religion and that's in many cases in pagan lands the king was sort of the chief god or the chief overseer of the religious system as well in Israel the king was not even able to be involved in the religious system directly in the leadership he was of a different tribe the Levites had the religious system to control and the king had to be subject to them because he was subject to God in a theocratic monarchy the king has to answer to God because God is really the ruler of the nation and the king is sort of a figurehead a functionary of the real king but how would a king know what God wanted him to do well that's what the prophets were there for of course and the priests, the priests still would teach him the law there was, if you look back at Deuteronomy chapter 17 God had anticipated a time when Israel would ask for a king and where he would comply with their request even though it wasn't something he wanted and if you look at Deuteronomy 17, 14 God said when you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you and possess it and dwell in it and say I will set a king over me like all the nations that are around me you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses one from among your brethren you shall set his king over you and you may not set a foreigner over you who is not your brother but he shall not multiply horses for himself nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses for the Lord has said to you you shall not return that way again neither shall he multiply wives for himself lest his heart turn away nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself now notice this also it shall be that when he sits on the throne of his kingdom

that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book from the one before the priests and the Levites when a man would come to the throne in Israel God said he needs to get a copy of the law from the priests and make his own handwritten copy that he writes with his own hand anyone who has done any serious Bible memorization knows that the best way to memorize it or at least a major step in memorizing it is writing it down many people have memorized numerous books of the Bible verbatim and some of them say that in the process they found it necessary to actually first verbally say it out loud and then write it down from memory but when you write it down it implants it in your memory somewhat more because you're seeing it and thinking it at the same time and writing it, it just is a way to ingrain it in you and so that's what the kings were supposed to do, they were supposed to become intimately acquainted with the law and they were supposed to make their own handwritten copy now a priest could always hire a scribe to do anything he wanted but he's supposed to write this by his own hand and it shall be with him that is the law will be and he shall read it all the days of his life that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of the law and these statutes and so forth. Now therefore when a theocracy was established, I mean a monarchy was established in Israel, it was a theocratic monarchy and the king had to obey the laws of God because God was really the king and the prophets were there also to advise him usually to call him back to the law if he was neglecting it or to give him counsel in specific things like whether God wants him to go to war or not in a given case. The prophets were there to be therefore God's spokesman to the kings and to the nation when the kings would not listen to the prophets, the prophets would speak to the nation itself directly for God because when the king was not obeying God then he was not really acting in his proper sphere of authority and the prophets who spoke for him would go directly to the people and prophesy to the people and say this is what God commands you to do even if the king was not on the same page with him.

The prophets would sort of go over the king's head and speak to the people about what God is saying because God was the king still even when the monarchy was established. Now one of the things that permeates the books of Samuel and contributed to the rise of the monarchy in Israel was the threat of the Philistines. In the period of the judges there were a number of different nations that attacked Israel and God raised up judges to drive them out but they never were able to fully drive out the Philistines.

The Philistines were people who had come from southern Asia minor and had lived in Crete and then had sailed to Egypt to try to establish themselves there and had failed, the Egyptians had repelled them and so they had sailed up to the west coast of Palestine and established five city states there under five lords. There were five lords of the Philistines and they had five cities on the coastal plain of Israel and this was true around the time that the Israelites came into the land and while the Israelites drove out most of the Canaanite nations, they never really were able to drive out the Philistines. The Philistines had iron this was the iron age and the Philistines had mastered the iron works.

Israel had not gotten into that yet they were just not iron workers for one thing they had been slaves in Egypt and then they were wandering in the wilderness not really a good situation for setting up iron smelting plants and things like that and as wanderers and nomads they just never had gotten into that technology but the Philistines had they had mastered it and therefore they had iron chariots and iron weapons and blacksmiths and so forth and Israel was just not able to defeat them for one thing Israel was often not armed with metal weapons what swords they had I don't know if they made them out of flint or what when they circumcised they used flint knives or they may have been able to get their hands on some metal weapons just from defeating certain enemies and taking their weapons from them but Israel was not really set up to manufacture metal weapons and they were living in I guess more like the stone age I think the bronze age more like but in any case Israel was under armed against the Philistines and the Philistines even at certain times would not even allow Israel to have swords and if the Israelites had metal farming implements they had to take them to a Philistine blacksmith to have them sharpened that's how things were set up the Philistines oppressed Israel in the end of the period of the judges Samson of course was fighting against Philistines and the Bible says he began to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines but he did not succeed partly because of his own lack of self control and his own going the wrong direction in his own life possibly if he had been more consecrated to God he would have delivered the nation from the Philistines because he it doesn't matter how many iron weapons you have if you've got superman on your side and Samson had the potential of being superman but he instead fell to his own weakness his own inner weakness so God did not deliver Israel from the Philistines in the time of Samson but it's possible that Samuel was born and coming up even in the lifetime of Samson and that it was Samuel who eventually brought a decisive victory over the Philistines but they did come back in the time of Saul and Saul was killed in war with the Philistines but it was David who finally drove out the Philistines and totally subdued them so in the period of the book of Samuel the Philistines are a major threat a principal threat to Israel in the early chapters they capture the Ark of the Covenant and kill the priests at Shiloh so the Philistines are woven into this story quite a bit because they are the principal enemy of Israel during this entire time of the books of Samuel until David takes care of them which is late in the book now as far as the character of this narrative it is as I mentioned it's history from a prophetic point of view whereas Chronicles is a history from a priestly point of view this is from prophets like Samuel and Gad and Nathan and seeing God's approach to things theology is in the books but it's depicted in the form of stories and events and human situations rather than just it's not like a theological textbook but you see God and what he's like and what he stands for through the stories in this and the characters in it are really real characters you can tell they are not fictional characters they are multi-dimensional it's hard to tell if they are good or bad especially Saul but even Samuel who is almost entirely seen as good ends up having bad sons Saul is a really interesting psychological study because he seems like a good and humble man at the beginning and then he becomes a crazy man and a megalomaniac and a murderous tyrant and it's an

interesting development of his life David himself of course is the hero but Samuel depicts him as a man who is not above doing some very treacherous murderous things and adulterous things himself so these characters are like real people they are not one dimensional heroes or one dimensional bad guys the bad guys have their hard charming and winsome sides and the good guys have their feet of clay as well it is said that the books of Samuel have some of the very most engaging story telling in the bible that is the story teller is skilled at telling a good story and engaging you in it probably more than the chronicler is or maybe the author of the books of kings well I want to just point out to you in the notes I've given you there is an outline of the books of Samuel we won't go over that now because we've run out of time but you can see how the book is laid out in this outline and then on the back of that sheet where it says the books of Samuel and first chronicles I have listed for you all the parallels between the books of Samuel and the book of first chronicles and what the subject matter is of those parallels then below that I've listed all the significant omissions in first chronicles that is the things that are found in the books of Samuel but which chronicles doesn't mention I've given you those references and then at the bottom of that page the significant additions in first chronicles that are not found in Samuel and so you can by looking at the back of this sheet easily compare first chronicles and Samuel in terms of what is and what is not included and we will be harmonizing these as we go through you have it all written down on a page here but we won't take time to look at it now this will be the stuff that will come out in the course of our exposition so with that introduction we'll close and begin first Samuel in our next lecture