



*'Honing in on the Heart!' Sermon Series*

**Sermon #1:**

*'An Overview of 1st Samuel!'*

Wednesday, January 3rd, 2024

- Everytime we start a new series, I feel it's important to take a service and to do an overview.
  - *With each book that we preach through, there's very important information included that we need to take a closer look at before we dive into the verse-by-verse exposition of the text.*
- My goal tonight is simple.
  - **To give us a macro view of 1st Samuel.**
    - *Each week on Wednesday nights during this series, we will take a Micro view.*
  - What's the difference?

- Tonight we will be looking at the book of 1st Samuel as a whole.
- Each week we will look at the text, verse-by-verse, and passage by passage.
  - *So, tonight is Macro but every week from here on out in 1st Samuel will be micro.*
- So, let's go ahead and jump in!
  - *'An Overview of 1st Samuel!'*

**Sermon in a Sentence:**

*Tonight we will look at the book of 1st Samuel by looking at the authorship, composition, purpose, culture similarities, culture differences, date/location, type of book, literary style, main characters, secondary characters, and how Christ can be seen in 1st Samuel.*

**Authorship:**

- If possible, it's always important for us to look at who wrote the Biblical book that we are studying.
- *It's important to point out that the writer of 1st-2nd Samuel is anonymous.*
  - Which means that we do not know who wrote this book.
- Now, there are several different theories and theological guesses that many scholars and theologians have come up with.
  - *In 1st Chronicles 29:29-30 it is implied that Samuel is the author who left these historical written records.*

- But this can't be entirely true because Samuel dies in 1st Samuel 25.
- *Due to the fact that 1st Samuel includes very specific details, verbatim dialogues, and details of characters and events, scholars make a strong argument that this book was written by an eyewitness.*
  - If that's the case, David M. Howard Jr. suggests that Nathan, Seraiah, Ahimaaz or Abiathar would be good guesses as potential authors of 1st-2nd Samuel.
  - *But still, the fact remains that we simply do not know who wrote 1st-2nd Samuel.*

#### **Composition:**

- One of the first things you probably noticed tonight, is that there is a 1st and a 2nd book of Samuel.
  - *It's important to mention that the earliest Hebrew manuscripts include 1st and 2nd Samuel together.*
    - When it was originally written, the books of 1st and 2nd Samuel were all together.
  - *The reason that they were separated is when the Greek translators were working on the septuagint, they divided it to make it easier.*
    - But, when interpreting this Biblical book we still need to interpret it as one book.

- All the narratives and points of the overall story of 1st and 2nd Samuel go together.
- *And we will see when we transition to studying 2nd Samuel, it is a seamless transition and fits like a glove.*
  - Because it was all originally one big story with narratives throughout.

#### **Purpose of 1st Samuel:**

- Every book in the Bible has a purpose. Whether we realize the purpose each book plays within the canon of scripture, is up to us as interpreters and students of God's Word.
- *The main purpose of the book of Samuel is to look at the Israelite Monarchy.*
  - *I believe there are 6 details of the Israelite Monarch that 1st and 2nd Samuel were originally meant to cover within the history of Israel:*
    - #1: The initial request from the people for a Monarchy.
    - #2: The actual establishment of the Monarchy.
    - #3: The tragic reign of Saul, and how the first king of Israel did not work out.
    - #4: The choosing by God of the 2nd King of Israel, David.
    - #5: God's great promises to David (Davidic Covenant).

- #6: The decline of King David in the later years of his life.
- *David M. Howard Jr. said this ‘We see both the benefits and pitfalls of kingship. Aul is depicted as a tragic hero, and David, promising a character as he is, is presented with many flaws unhidden. The climax in the two books surely is found at 2 Samuel 7, where David is promised an everlasting dynasty.’*
  - When Samuel was first written, the purpose was for historical context for the jewish communities.
    - *Now, it gives context for us as believers to have a more accurate picture in the history of Israel and how God had His hand all over them to bring forth His Son through the line of David.*
- *Robert D. Bergen said ‘These books also supply details about the religious history of Israel, including information about significant details about the religious history of Israel, including information about significant worship centers, priestly leaders, and the sacred ark of the covenant.’*
  - *The purpose for our Church?*
    - We are studying 1st-2nd Samuel during Midweek services to

deepen and widen our knowledge on the History of Israel and how it can shape and mold our lives even today, because ALL of scripture is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness.

- *Nothing should be ‘out of bounds’ in the Word of God to teach us and change us, all is breathed by Him!*

#### *How is the Culture similar?*

- An important factor in studying 1st Samuel, is realizing the cultural similarities and differences.
  - *When studying a book that was written so long ago, it can be very easy to look at it and say that we can’t relate due to the amount of cultural differences.*
- *But I believe that in a lot of ways, 1-2 Samuel is much like a **mirror** of what we are seeing in our culture today:*
  - *Here is a list of the things we find in our Micro study of 1st Samuel that you can also find in our culture today.*
    - Men abusing women.
    - Wives betrayed by husbands.
    - Children gone wild.
    - Corrupt religious leaders.
    - Conspiracy to murder.
    - Deceitful politicians.

- Power struggles.
  - Horror's of war.
- **Because there are so many similarities in 1st Samuel and in our culture today, we know that the Bible and each passage we will study in Samuel is relevant to our lives.**
  - I've often heard people attempt to say that the Bible is not relevant. That the Bible is outdated. But we will see completely that this is far from the truth.
- **Due to the many challenges and issues we are facing in our culture, it is my prayer that through this verse-by-verse study we will be able to have Biblical answers for many of the problems that we are facing and that our country and culture are facing.**
  - **Here's the thing, due to sin, there's nothing new under the sun.**
    - What was evil and sin then, is evil and is sin now.

#### **How is the Culture different?**

- **While there are definitely similarities between our culture and the cultural backdrop of 1st Samuel, there are some strong differences that we need to discuss as well.**
  - I believe there are 4 ways that we can see that the culture during the time of 1st Samuel was different:
- **#1: Different Time Period.**

- Especially to the western world, specifically America, the things mentioned in 1st Samuel might be somewhat foreign to us.
  - **For example, kings, priests, prophets and witches are all foreign to people like us that have computers in our pockets (phones), modern science, and a progressive culture.**
- **Heath Thomas**, in his commentary on 1st Samuel said that '1st Samuel will take us back to the dark ages'.
  - **One narrative in 1st Samuel that will be sure to take us back to the dark ages is found in 1st Samuel 28:3-25.**
    - Where we find the witch of Endor.
    - Which political leader do you know of today that would honestly put a 'witch' in his cabinet as an advisor?
- **So, to us in the western world, the talk of witches and things seem very strange to us. But not to the context of 1st Samuel, it was a different time period.**
- **#2: Community and not just Individual Influence.**
  - When we read most Biblical texts, we can be tempted to ask what is God saying to me individually?
    - **But with 1st Samuel it's important that God wanted His people to get the**

*message that 1st Samuel attempts to get across.*

- Instead of asking each service, ‘*what does this text mean for me?*’ I want to encourage all of us to ask ‘*what does this text mean for us as a community of Believers? God’s people?*’
- *Heath Thomas said The book’s viewpoint is oriented more to the collective group than to the individual. What this means in practice is that the stories are oriented more to God’s work with the group rather than the individual.’*
  - Notice how foreign this is to us today?
  - Even as the Pastor, I’ve heard people say ‘this sermon impacted *ME*’ or ‘this message wasn’t for *ME* but it was for somebody’
- *What differentiates us from the time of Samuel is that the original recipients interpreted Samuel as ‘How is God working in us, collectively?’*
  - Sadly, our culture is to consumed with ME instead of WE.
  - *As we go through this series each week, I want us to ask ourselves what God is saying to US as a group of believers in the Church. Not, what is God saying to ME.*

● #3: *An Honor and Shame Society.*

- It’s hard for us to understand honor, and its direct opposite, shame.
  - *Within Biblical times and in the context of the ancient world, the way that people acted would dictate whether honor or shame was brought to their family.*
    - \*If you’ve ever seen the Disney movie ‘Mulan’, it gives a good example of this.
    - How her actions brought her family shame and dishonor.
- *Within the context of the OT, honor and shame was tied closely to a family’s relationship with God. And honor/shame was something that the family collective did or did not do.*
  - Just 1 family member could shame or honor the entire family.
  - *Let me show you several examples of an honor and shame society from the book of 1st Samuel that we will be taking a closer look at in this series.*
- *1st Samuel 2:12, 2:17:*
  - The sons of Eli were Hophni and Phinehas. Elis was a priest and so were his sons. But the actions of his sons as described in these scriptural texts brought shame to Eli & their household, but also to God.

○ **1st Samuel 26:8-25:**

- David takes care of Saul's household and family members. He does not want to be rude to Saul or his bloodline as to dishonor his anointing that God has given Him.
- *There are many other examples, but they are found in 2nd Samuel. Tonight I want us to look solely at 1st Samuel.*

● **#4: Sexual and Family Structures.**

- The way that the ancient culture at the time of 1st Samuel dealt with Sex and the family is much more different than the way we view it today. (imagine that, even though our culture doesn't deal with it very well).
- **Polygamy.**
  - Within 1st-2nd Samuel we find that polygamy is very common.
  - *For example, King David had at least 7 wives which didn't include concubines (mistresses essentially).*
    - We can't downplay polygamy, it's wrong now and it was wrong then.
    - *But just because the text describes the polygamy that David committed does not mean that God affirms it.*

- We know that elsewhere in scripture He condemns it and scripture can't contradict scripture.

- Due to David's decision of polygamy, we see how dysfunctional his family truly is all throughout the books of 1st-2nd Samuel.

- *I think the way that 1st Samuel is written, it allows us to see that the sinful decisions David made were not ideal and we shouldn't follow those decisions.*

- *In many eastern cultures today, Polygamy is an issue that many evangelical Churches are dealing with.*

- Heath Thomas worded it this way, **'Those who read scripture with non-western eyes perhaps can grasp the nettle of sex and sexuality in Samuel better than western readers.'**

- In our study of 1st Samuel we will come to hard passages that deal with different sexual and family structures than we are used to. We won't avoid these texts, we will take them head on, as we rely on the whole counsel of God's Word.

- *Realizing how different the culture was, is imperative to understanding how we must interpret 1st Samuel each week.*

### **Date & Location:**

- **We do not have a specific date as to when the book of 1st Samuel was actually written.**
  - *But we do have some pretty good clues that give us a pretty solid indication.*
    - The author most likely wrote Samuel **after** the division of the kingdom between Israel and Judah.
      - Because there are many references to Israel and Judah as distinct entities/different nations.
      - *So, this would mean that it was after 931 B.C., because that's when the kingdom divided.*
    - Most scholars usually point to 1st Samuel 27:6 to show that it was a time after the division of Israel had occurred.
  - *But the events of 1st Samuel-2nd Samuel happen between 1050 and 970 B.C. which would have been before the Kingdom split.*
    - So it is likely that the writing and composition of 1st Samuel was later on.
  - *Exactly when, we don't know, but we have a good idea of WHEN the events recorded occurred.*
- **As far as the location/setting of this book, we know that it took place mainly in the promised land, Canaan.**
  - The architecture of Israel at this time was modest as the big building projects usually

didn't take place until the reigns of David and Solomon.

- *For those who have read the book of Judges, the setting and location is very similar, because as far as chronologically, 1st Samuel would come after the time of the Judges.*
- As far as 1st Samuel, when discussing setting it's important to mention that the threat of the **Philistines** was the biggest external problem that Israel had.
  - *The Philistines were a thorn in the side of the Israelites from 1124-1084, which is the time that the book of Judges took place.*
    - Remember Samson for example, one of the judges, was able to have several victories over the Philistines but was not able to ultimately defeat them.
  - *1st Samuel will show us that the Philistines continued to be a consistent foe for the Israel even into the kingship of Saul.*
    - (Which shows that they were an enemy that only God could defeat, and not men in and of their selves.)

*What type of book is this?*



- The book of 1st Samuel is what we would call ‘a historical narrative’.
  - *It explains many of the historical events in the nation of Israel but does in stories.*
    - Many scholars comment that whoever wrote 1st Samuel, was an extraordinary storyteller.
    - The stories in this book are often told to our children when they are very young in Sunday School.
  - *But even as adults, it’s my prayer that these stories we find in 1st Samuel will open our eyes more than ever before on what God can and wants to do through His people as we look at the history of Israel.*

#### *Literary Style & the Hebrew Text:*

- *To Bible scholars, Hebrew Scholars, and OT scholars, it is very well known that the Hebrew Masoretic text of 1-2 Samuel is very well known for being very challenging.*
  - Samuel and Jeremiah are the two Biblical books were the ancient greek translations and the Hebrew are different in some places.
  - *One reason that the Hebrew Masoretic text is hard to understand, is due to the fact that 1st Samuel was written as a story, and it was written to be heard orally.*
    - Because of this, there are spots in Samuel where the Hebrew follows the

actual pronunciation instead of the standard ancient Hebrew.

- *The Literary style of 1st-2nd Samuel is also much different than other historical narrative books in the OT.*
  - *Samuel is more focused in on heroes, than it is on broader groups of people seeking to cover more information.*
- That’s why we need to look at the Main Characters as well as secondary characters.

#### *Main Characters:*

- *Most scholars can all agree that the book of 1st-2nd Samuel has three main characters.*
  - But before we look at each of those ‘main’ characters can I remind you that there is really only one main character in 1st-2nd Samuel, the Lord Himself!
  - I love what John L. Mackay said when he said *‘The principle lesson taught in the books of Samuel is that God is the one who shaped the action and outcome of the narratives, from His initial withholding of children from Hannah in 1st Samuel to His acceptance of David’s sacrifice in 2nd Samuel 24.’*
- *As far as the narrative flow, there are three main characters that the book follows.*
  - *Samuel: 1st Samuel 1-12*
  - *Saul: 1st Samuel 13-31*
  - *David: 2nd Samuel*



- *We are going to learn how God is going to use all three of these people in different ways to show us some very valuable lessons in scripture.*

#### *Secondary Characters:*

- Other notable characters within the narrative of 1st-2nd Samuel that come to mind are:
  - *Hannah.*
  - *Eli.*
  - *Eli's Sons.*
  - *Johnathan.*
  - *Goliath.*
  - *Jesse (David's Dad).*
  - *Philistines.*
  - *Amalekites.*

- *And many more!*

#### *Christ in 1st Samuel:*

- In every book of the Bible, Christ is at the center.
  - *I'm also a firm believer that every Biblical text ultimately points to Christ Jesus.*
- *The book of Samuel is no exception to this.*
  - I believe we can see God working in this book by the fact that this book shows God's continued care for His people.
  - *While Saul failed, God didn't give up on them and gave them a new King, David.*

- *We can see Christ in Samuel by the fact that from King David, in spite of his moral failures and shortcomings, would*

*come from Him a ruler who would lead Israel and all the World. A ruler who is now leading us.*

- 1st-2nd Samuel point to the fact that the Kingship of Jesus is everlasting, eternal and effective.

#### *Conclusion:*

- Just as we did for the Malachi series, I want us to spend time praying around the alter tonight.
  - *Tonight we've taken a Macro view of the book of 1st Samuel.*
  - *But it's my prayer that even tonight the Lord has shown you that He wants to use the book of 1st Samuel to move mightily in all of our lives.*
- *Let's close our service tonight by coming together and praying that God will use this series, His Word, in the life of our Church. To enhance and equip us with a better understanding of Him.*