

# KINGS OF ISRAEL I: 1 & 2 SAMUEL

## WEEK 4

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# OUTLINE

## INTERLUDE ON GOD'S WORD

Oracles and Structure  
Theological Tension

## RISE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

Struggle with House of Saul  
Establishing Lord's House

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# GOD'S WORD AS FRAME

The major joints of the book(s) are God's word.

<b>Opening, Historical Setting</b>	
I Sam 1:1-2:26	Hannah's Struggle & Eli's Sons Wickedness
I Sam 2:27ff	God Judges House of Eli, Predicts Godly Priest
I Sam 3	Samuel established, confirms oracle
I Sam 4-6	House of Eli Judged, Disgraced
I Sam 7	Samuel Delivers Israel from Philistines
I Sam 8	God Allows King, Predicts Trouble
I Sam 9-10	Reluctant King Anointed
I Sam 11-12	Saul Established as King, Samuel Exits as Judge
I Sam 13	Saul Rejected, Predicts Godly King
I Sam 14-15	Saul's Foolishness on Display
I Sam 16	David Anointed
I Sam 17-31	Rise of David, Fall of Saul

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The major joints of the book(s) are God's word.

II Sam 1	Saul and Jonathan Mourned	
II Sam 2-4	Game of Thrones: Houses of Saul & David	
II Sam 5-6	Political and Religious Center to Jerusalem	
II Sam 7	God Will Preserve House of David Forever	
II Sam 8-10	David's Victories, Righteousness	
II Sam 11-12	David Fails, God Predicts Judgment	
II Sam 13	Amnon & Tamar	
II Sam 14	Absalom Kills Amnon	
II Sam 15-19	Absalom's Conspiracy and Defeat	
II Sam 20	Sheba's Conspiracy and Defeat	
<b>Epilogue, Summary—II Sam 21-24</b>		

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## SOVEREIGNTY AND OMNIPOTENCE

Sovereignty is a clear theme in I & II Samuel, portraying God as a king whose word is law. God is not merely represented as seeing the future, but securing or executing it. In these examples, God appears to be unjust, wicked or employing evil agents to accomplish his goals.

- ▶ Extreme language of Hannah's song: "The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to Sheol and raises up. The LORD makes poor and rich; He brings low, He also exalts." (I Sam 2:6,7)
- ▶ Saul's harmful spirit from the Lord. (I Sam 16:14)
- ▶ The Lord strikes down David and Bathsheba's son (II Sam 12:14,15).
- ▶ There is a famine relieved by killing Saul's family (II Sam 21:1,14).
- ▶ God incites David to take the census (cf. I Chron 21:1) and then judges.

How can we resolve the tensions these create?

# SOVEREIGNTY AND OMNIPOTENCE

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1. Even if we take everything at face value, anything short of total judgment right now is merciful. God slows down our own self-destruction while working out his plan of redemption (cf. Gen 6:5,6; Matt 24:22; II Thess 2:6,7). Smaller, shorter-term judgments play a part both in the immediate and eternal context.
2. We think in “rule-of-law” terms with democratic contours: God is an idealized supreme court judge. But in Scripture, he’s not just a passive judge. He’s the creator, the basis of all morality and supreme Monarch (Psalm 135:5-7).

# SOVEREIGNTY AND OMNIPOTENCE

How can we resolve the tensions these create?

3. We need not take them at face value. The text itself slows us down:
  - ▶ Given the context of the people rejecting God as king, one can easily imagine the author highlighting how God is still the Holy Suzerain.
  - ▶ Consider the language, “Obama raised insurance premiums.” We speak truly of the person who superintended, oversaw certain sociopolitical effects even if he neither acted directly, nor even ordered them to happen.
  - ▶ In Exodus 34:6,7 God places his compassion first and judgment second; indeed, he is “slow to anger.” As a judge, God operates with extraordinary patience both here and throughout history.

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# GAME OF THRONES

This is the most destructive section of the book. Many people needlessly die during the civil war:

- ▶ Three of Saul's sons die in the battle with the Philistines. Jonathan made a covenant with David, so he did not have to die for David to be king. With defeat predicted by Samuel, Saul could have kept his sons from battle.
- ▶ Asahel, brother of Joab and Abishai, was killed by Abner in part of a military contest. These brothers are referred to as sons of Zeruah, David's sister (1 Chron 2:16); i.e., David's nephews.
- ▶ Note: as Saul's sons perish, the author points to the growth of David's family.

# GAME OF THRONES

## Destruction Continued:

- ▶ Abner, Saul's long time commander, defects to David after being accused of a power grab (sleeping with Saul's concubines; cf. II Sam 16:20ff; I Kings 2:13-25) by Ish-Bosheth, Saul's last son. David requires of Abner Saul's daughter, signaling restored unity between the two houses.
- ▶ Joab slaughters Abner in revenge for Asahel and perhaps out of jealousy.
- ▶ Some of Saul's men kill and decapitate the innocent, sleeping Ish-Bosheth. David kills them and cut off their hands (instruments of murder) and feet (instruments of delivery) and hangs them out.

Many commentators have observed that David did almost nothing to inherit the throne. The only thing he does is defend Saul!

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# DAVIDIC COVENANT

The Davidic covenant is among the most sweeping covenants in biblical history. In terms of impact, demonstration of God's grace, and biblical allusion, its only rival is the Abrahamic covenant.

The unconditional terms:

- ▶ God will establish David's house forever.
- ▶ One of David's seed will build God's temple.

The conditional terms (I Kings 9:1-9):

- ▶ Individual participation in the eternal house is at least predicated on obedience to the Mosaic law.
- ▶ Failure to obey the law will result in some kind of judgment, though not permanent rejection.

Cf. Participation in Abrahamic covenant through circumcision.

## THE SOVEREIGN ESTABLISHES A DYNASTY

One is struck immediately by the small place David plays in the moment when he's promised an eternal dynasty. This is another example of the book representing God as the true king, the great Suzerain establishing terms with his vassal. These features of Nathan's oracle establish this:

- ▶ God credits David's success to His own presence in David's life.
- ▶ God forbids David from building His house. The time, place and person are up to Him alone. A similar pattern of God unilaterally setting the terms of reconciliation is found in extraordinary detail on Sinai (Ex-Lev).
- ▶ God employs word play to emphasize these ironic reversals. David may not build God's house (temple), but God will establish David's house (dynasty). Israel (through David) may not determine a place (temple) for God, but God will plant Israel in a permanent place (land of Canaan).

## SOLOMON AS TYPE

There is a short term fulfillment in Solomon (I Chron 28:5,6), but Solomon serves as a type of Christ. This prophecy is an example of a "type-gap." The following are unambiguous aspects of the prophecy:

- ▶ Solomon builds the physical temple. Jesus builds the temple of his own body (John 2:15-22, cf. I Cor 3:16-17, 12:27).
- ▶ Solomon enjoys special favor with God (II Sam 12:24-5) and is referred to as His son (I Chron 22:10). The father-son relationship is undeniable for Jesus Christ and God the Father (Matt 3:17; John 17).
- ▶ The posterity of Solomon's dynasty depends largely on how we interpret Jesus' genealogy (-ies). Regardless, Jesus is singularly an eternal Davidic king.

## SOLOMON AS TYPE

Here are more delicate features of the prophecy:

- ▶ Solomon reigns during a time of peace and his name means “man of peace.” (I Chron 22:8-10) During Christ's earthly ministry, Israel did not have rest from enemies. Presumably this aspect will have to wait until Jesus returns (Ps 110:1).
- ▶ Solomon is censured by God for his unfaithfulness (I Kings 11:1-9), possibly fitting the “punishment” of 7:14. Jesus does not obviously fit this either given the “when he does wrong” remark. It could stand for Christ “becoming sin” (II Cor 5:21) and the cross as the “punishment”. Neither interpretation is straightforward.

The Qumran community (of Dead-Sea scrolls fame) also viewed I Sam 7 as a messianic text.

## REFERENCES

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3. Youngblood, Ronald F. *Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 3: 1 & 2 Samuel*, edited by Frank Gaebelin. Zondervan, 1984.