

Bible Study # 21
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Old Testament Series—I Samuel 1—15 and I
Chronicles 1—9
(Chart at end)

I & II Samuel and I & II Kings are a story flow. They are known as the four books of the kingdom—the First Book of Samuel, otherwise called the First Book of the Kings; the Second Book of Samuel, otherwise called the Second Book of the Kings; the First Book of the Kings, commonly called the Third Book of the Kings; the Second Book of the Kings, commonly called the Fourth Book of the Kings. They were one book that consisted of four volumes. Samuel and Kings were written to continue the historical information after Joshua and Judges.

Chronicles is different. It covers the same material, but covers it in a different way. Chronicles serves as a supplement to Samuel and Kings, not a replacement. **To give you a story flow, we are harmonizing Samuel, Chronicles and Kings.**

The thing you note about Chronicles is that it was written at a much later time than Samuel and Kings. Samuel and Kings had already been completed. Chronicles was prepared in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, at the close of the Old Testament period to summarize the history of the Old Testament. It was written from a priestly standpoint centered at Jerusalem.

I & II Samuel deal with material concerning Saul and David. Chronicles zeroes in on a handful of kings. Chronicles tells us very little about the northern kingdom—Israel is only mentioned in passing. The history of the reign of King David is focused on.

Then we focus in on Solomon, Jehosaphat and Josiah. It focuses on specific periods in history to emphasize parts of the story that had not been deemed that important 200 years earlier when Samuel and Kings had been written.

In Chronicles the historical events are presented from a religious angle, a priestly standpoint. To remind the Jews of their patriarchal origins, it gives a summary of genealogies. It summarizes information that was necessary from a historical standpoint, information that would have been otherwise lost. It served to remind the Jews of their patriarchal beginnings by tracing the genealogies all the way back to Adam.

One of the things important in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah was to establish lineage. It was

important that this documentation be presented in a right way. The line from which the Messiah would come had to be documented.

Chronicles is devoted to the reign of King David. It centers in on Jerusalem as God's chosen city and the dynasty of David as God's chosen line of kings. Chronicles focused in on the Covenant God made with David. It served to point out to the Jews the falseness of the Samaritan's claim, which said the worship of God did not have to be centered in Jerusalem. Remember the question the woman at the well asked Christ?

John 4:20-23, "Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.'" This argument was still going on at the time of Christ.

Romans 3:1-2, "What advantage then has the Jew, or what is the profit of circumcision? Much in every way! Chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God." The Jews were the ones responsible for preserving the Hebrew (Masoretic) text. This is where you look for the authoritative information, not the Samaritan text.

Chronicles was written to emphasize to the people at the time between the testaments (the fifth century B.C. to the time of Christ, a 400 to 500-year period), whom they needed to look to. It was written during a time of competing claims of who represented God. It was written to explain to the Jews from generation to generation why it was they needed to look to Jerusalem and the authority there as representative of God, and not the authority somewhere else that may claim they represented God.

Samuel wrote the early part of I Samuel, basically that part on up until his death. It was continued by others in prophetic office. Isaiah is credited among the Jews as writing part of it. Jeremiah evidently put the finishing touches on it.

Samuel and Kings along with Joshua and Judges constitute that part known as the **Former Prophets**. They give us a narrative of the history of Israel and Judah. All history has been prophecy, and all prophecy will be history. It's just a matter of your time frame.

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets are the **Latter Prophets**.

Chronicles gives a summation of the whole Old Testament. Ezra wrote it at the time of the restoration. The book of Ezra picks up the story where Chronicles leaves off.

I Chronicles 2, 3, and 4 give a lot of detailed information on genealogy. The Jews were coming back from Babylonian captivity. They needed to know where their roots were—the connection they had with the past. From the time Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judah (the first captivity) until the time when the Jews began to return was basically 70 years. (It has been 70 years since World War I, and people don't have a clear memory). The Jews were dislocated and taken to Babylon. The younger generation was coming back, the younger people who were born in Babylon. It was their grandparents who had come from Judah. The younger generation was coming back to Judah. This was an arduous trip. Some portions of the Bible have had more importance for certain periods of time. We wonder why all these genealogies are stuck in there. It is perhaps more important for us to understand Matthew 24 than to understand the intricacies of I Chronicles 23 and 24. But for the Jews, it was very important. All portions of the Bible are important—they all have importance, but sometimes some parts had greater importance at certain periods of time. Matthew 24 would not have been important to them; it was not even written.

The Jews that returned needed a sense of continuity—how they were related to the generations that came before. It provides us a framework of understanding. It gives us some details that do have significance in prophecy and details how the Bible fits together.

I Chronicles 5:1-2 is important, “Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—he was indeed the firstborn, but because he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; yet Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him came a ruler, although the birthright was Joseph's—”

There was a distinction between the birthright and the scepter. This is spelled out. It was information that would have been taken for granted, but now it needed to be spelled out. That needed to be clarified or people simply would not have understood.

I Chronicles 6 provides information concerning the Levites, the genealogy of the Levites.

I Chronicles 7-8 list various tribes, the genealogy of Saul (8:33).

I Chronicles 9:1, “So all Israel was recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they were inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel....”

Verses 2-34 go back and give us the story of things they reconstituted in the temple. These things had been established for many years, but there had been a break for many years. These things were actually established all the way back to King David and Samuel. By the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, you are well over 100 years after the final destruction of Jerusalem. People came on the scene and simply didn't understand. (We don't understand the way things were functioning during the time of the War Between the States.)

I Samuel 1:1 (KJV), “Now there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim, of mount Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, and Ephrathite.” He is called an Ephrathite.

In I Chronicles 6:27, his genealogy is given. He was a Levite, not an Ephraimite. It means “Ephrah,” the ancient name for Bethlehem. I call it to your attention because in some cases it is translated “Ephraimite” (NKJV, “Ephraimite”).

Verses 3-5, “This man went up from his city yearly to worship and sacrifice to the Lord of hosts in Shiloh...And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughter. But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, although the Lord had closed her womb.”

Verses 10-12, “And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the Lord and wept in anguish. Then she made a vow and said, ‘O Lord of hosts, if You will indeed look on the affliction of your maidservant and remember me, and not forget your maidservant, but will give your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life, and no razor shall come upon his head.’ And it happened, as she continued praying before the Lord, that Eli watched her mouth.” Hannah vowed a vow. He would be a Nazarite from his mother's womb.

Verse 17, “Then Eli answered and said, ‘Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him.’”

Verse 20, “So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, ‘Because I have asked for him from the Lord.’”

Verse 24, “Now when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh, And the child was young.” He was probably four years old before he was completely weaned. He was brought to the temple in Shiloh,

Verses 25-28, “Then they slaughtered a bull, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, ‘O my lord! As your soul lives, my lord, I am the woman who stood by you here, praying to the Lord. For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition, which I asked of Him. Therefore I also have lent him to the Lord.’ So they worshipped the Lord there.” He grew up there and was a servant to Eli.

I Samuel 2:18, “But Samuel ministered before the Lord, even as a child, wearing a linen ephod.” He served there in the tabernacle from boyhood up.

At this time we come across a real problem, the situation with Eli.

I Samuel 2:12, “Now the sons of Eli were corrupt [KJV, “sons of Belial”—sons of the devil]; they did not know the Lord.”

Verses 13-17, “And the priests’ custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest’s servant would come with a three-pronged flesh-hook in his hand while the meat was boiling. Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the flesh-hook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. Also, before they burned the fat, the priest’s servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, ‘Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you but raw.’ And if the man said to him, ‘They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires,’ he would then answer him, ‘No, but you must give it to me now; and if not, I will take it by force.’ Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the Lord.”

The Scriptures say they were the sons of the devil, reprobates. They were not following the instruction that God had given the Levites. They were misappropriating what belonged to God. They came in and took what they wanted, generally the best part and before they burned the fat. They weren’t interested in serving God. They were interested in what they could get.

What kind of respect do you think people had for the priesthood and the tabernacle? People abhorred it. It gave people a bad attitude. Were

the people in authority setting the right example? No. What would you have done if you had lived at the time of Eli? Go out and worship Dagon? These things are here for our admonition.

There were people in the 1970s that used the excuse about what some people in high places were doing to just go off and do something else. The point is God will take care of the problem. You don’t follow the lousy example. As Christ said, respect the Pharisee’s authority, but do not after their works (Matthew 23:2-3). They are not practicing what they preached. If somebody is a hypocrite, that is human nature. What if what the hypocrite said was right? Christ said to do what he said that was right, but don’t do what he did.

Verses 22-24, “Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear, you make the Lord’s people transgress.’” He said, ‘Now you boys know better than that; you are setting a bad example.’ But he didn’t do anything about it. You know what God had to say about that?

Verse 29, “‘Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My habitation, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourself fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?’” God said, ‘You honor your sons above Me. You have placed them above Me. They should have been taken out and stoned. You have allowed this situation to continue on and on and on.’ Eli was not doing these things himself, but he tolerated it. He made excuses for them.

God allowed it to go on for years before he did something about it. God prepared someone—Samuel. They were slain by the Philistines (4:10-11). When Eli heard the news, he fell backwards and died from a heart attack (4:18).

I Samuel 3:19-20, “So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord.” God placed Samuel there. God will deal with things, but He will do so in His time.

What would you have done if you had been there? Yes, keep your eyes on your daughters; take your offering. If the priests steal, God will take care of it. God is capable of taking care of Himself. That priesthood was blotted out forever.

God can take care of things. These events parallel the time of Judges.

Eli and Samson were contemporaries. Even if you don't have anyone to look up to and respect, even in that kind of situation, here was Samuel. It's possible to do what you ought to do even in the context of others who are not. Samuel did not use the excuse to go and do what Eli's sons were doing. He grew up in that circumstance, and he believed what was taught at the temple, not what was practiced.

When Samuel was a little boy about age ten or 12, God ceased talking to Eli who was the high priest. This was a terrible insult to the high priest.

I Samuel 3:1-6, "Then the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days [KJV, "the words of the Lord were very precious"]; there was no widespread revelation. And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see, and before the lamp of God went out in the tabernacle of the Lord where the ark of God was, and while Samuel was lying down to sleep, that the Lord called Samuel. And he answered, 'Here I am!' So he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' And he said, 'I did not call; lie down again;' and he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, 'Samuel!' So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' And he answered, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.'" Samuel thought it was Eli talking.

Verses 7-8, "(Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor was the word of the Lord yet revealed to him.) And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. Then he arose and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you did call me.' Then Eli perceived that the Lord had called the boy." It dawned on Eli that God was talking to Samuel.

Verses 11-14, "Then the Lord said to Samuel: 'Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.'" Finally, God told Samuel what He wanted him to tell Eli.

Verse 18, "Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, 'It is

the Lord. Let Him do what seems good to Him.'"

Verses 19-21, "So Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the Lord. Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord."

Samuel had a reputation as he grew up. He was different than the others. He had the respect of the people because he did what he was supposed to do. *In the midst of corruption, he quietly did what he had to do.* It is an important message for all people at all times. God puts these things here and shows us how we ought to conduct ourselves if we ever find ourselves in these circumstances.

I Samuel 4:3, "And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, 'Why has the Lord defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies.'" They regarded it as a good-luck charm.

Verse 7, "So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, 'God has come into the camp!' And they said, 'Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before.'" They were superstitious about the ark. They remembered the Egyptians (v. 8).

Verses 10-11, "So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. Also the ark of God was captured; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died."

Verses 15-18, "Eli was ninety-eight years old, and his eyes were so dim that he could not see. Then the man said to Eli, 'I am he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line.' And he said, 'What happened, my son?' So the messenger answered and said, 'Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured.' Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years."

I Samuel 5:1-4, "Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. And when the people of Ashdod

arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the Lord. So they took Dagon and set it in its place again. And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the Lord. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only the torso of Dagon was left of it.”

Dagon had fallen off his throne. It had bowed down to worship and fell over. Only the stump was left.

Verse 5, “Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon’s house tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.” Ever heard of it being bad luck to step on a threshold? This is where that came from; it became a pagan custom.

Verses 6-7, “But the hand of the Lord was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He ravaged them and struck them with tumors, both Ashdod and its territory. And when the men of Ashdod saw how it was, they said, ‘The ark of the God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god.’” They decided they didn’t want the ark to stay there.

Verses 8-12, “Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the lords of the Philistines, and said, ‘What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?’ And they answered, ‘Let the ark be carried away to Gath.’ So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. And so it was, after they had carried it away, that the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction, and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, and tumors [KJV, “emerods”] broke out on them. Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, ‘They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people.’ So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, ‘Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people;’ For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the cry of the city went up to heaven.”

They decided they didn’t want the ark to stay there.

I Samuel 6:1, “Now the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines seven months.” It was there seven months. How do we get rid of it? They could understand a little bit. They said,

‘We’d better send it back with a trespass offering along with it.’

Verses 4-7-12, “Then they said, ‘What is the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?’ They answered, ‘Five golden tumors and five golden rats, according to the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague was on all of you and on your lords. Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that ravage the land, and you shall give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will lighten His hand from you from your gods and from your land. Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, did they not let the people go, that they might depart? Now therefore, make a new cart, take two milk cows which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. Then take the ark of the Lord and set it on the cart; Then send it away, and let it go. And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to Beth Shemesh, then He has done us this great evil. But if not, then we shall know that it is not His hand that struck us; it was by chance that it happened to us.’ Then the men did so, they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. And they set the ark of the Lord on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth Shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left...”

They didn’t know where their calves were. Can you imagine a cow not turning to the left or right? Sometimes God uses things in a humorous way to illustrate a point. These two old cows had enough sense to follow God’s instructions, just as God used the donkey to talk to Baalam.

Verses 15, “The Levites took down the ark of the Lord and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the Lord.”

Verses 18-21, “...even as far as the large stone of Abel on which they set the ark of the Lord, which stone remains this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh. Then He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the Lord. He struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the Lord had struck the people with a great slaughter. And the men of Beth Shemesh said, ‘Who is able to stand before this

holy Lord God? And to whom shall it go up from us?' So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim, saying, 'The Philistines have brought back the ark of the Lord; come down and take it up with you.'"

They treated the ark with a lack of reverence. Not even the Philistines had treated the ark with reverence. The Israelites should have known better. The Levites surely realized that God had warned the Israelites that death would come to any who looked into it or touched it except by its carrying poles on the shoulder. There was a lack of reverence. The ark represented God's throne. Such disrespect was bound to bring on an awful penalty.

I Samuel 7:1-13, "Then the men of Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord. Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, 'If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.' So the children of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and served the Lord only. And Samuel said, 'Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray to the Lord for you.' So they gathered together at Mizpah, drew water, and poured it out before the Lord. And they fasted that day, and said there, 'We have sinned against the Lord.' And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah. Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. So the children of Israel said to Samuel, 'Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines.' And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the Lord. Then Samuel cried out to the Lord for Israel, and the Lord answered him. Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the Lord thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. And the men of Israel went out to Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car. Then Samuel took a stone and set it up

between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, 'Thus far the Lord has helped us.' So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel."

Verse 15, "So Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life." I would call your attention to something here. When Samson collapsed the walls of the Philistine temple, it marked the collapse of the Philistine power and the beginning of Samuel's judgeship. Samson and Samuel were contemporaries.

I Samuel 8:1-7, "Now it came to pass when Samuel was old that he made his sons judges over Israel. The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways; they turned aside after dishonest gain, took bribes and perverted justice. Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, 'Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now make for us a king to judge us like all the nations.' But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, 'Give a king to us.' So Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, 'Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them.'" Samuel's sons were not following his example.

Notice the logic. The reason they wanted a king was to be like everyone else. God took it personally. God said, "They have rejected Me." Notice what Samuel told them.

Verses 11-18, "And he said, 'This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots...He will take your daughters to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. And he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. And he will take your men-servants and your maidservants and your finest young men and your donkeys, and put them to his work. He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day.'"

"You are going to have the draft, a big government bureaucracy, a big income tax and you will gripe about those things throughout the

rest of your history.’ Ever hear of the fourth tithe (vv. 15, 17)? This is what the king started. This is where the income tax started. By the time of Solomon, it was so oppressive that the people were ready to revolt. The people are still complaining about all these things.

Verse 18, “...the Lord will not hear you....” ‘You wanted it; you got it. You want to be like the nations, you will get all the problems the nations get.’

I Samuel 9:1-2, “There was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish...And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome young man. There was not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. From his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people.” From Saul’s shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people, probably about seven feet tall. He was taller than anyone else in the country.

Verse 21 shows how Saul first met Samuel, “And Saul answered and said, ‘Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?’”

I Samuel 10:1, “Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him and said: ‘Is it not because the Lord has anointed you commander over His inheritance?’” Saul was anointed.

Verses 21-22, “When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, ‘Has the man come here yet?’ And the Lord answered, ‘There he is, hidden among the equipment.’”

He went and hid in the closet. He didn’t want to get in front of anyone. He had somewhat of an inferiority complex. Instead of learning to place confidence in God, Saul dealt with his problems the wrong way. Moses had a low opinion of himself and his abilities, but Moses learned to get out of the way and let God work. Saul had a low opinion, but he got in the way and tried to cover his feelings of inferiority by bluffing. He wound up in a horrible state with demon problems, and he died of his own hand. A person who has this kind of problem can go two ways. Moses handled it properly. Saul was an example of an individual who did not do so.

Verse 24, “And Samuel said to all the people, ‘Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen, that there is no one like him among all the people?’

So all the people shouted and said, ‘Long live the king!’” We have Saul’s coronation. The people were sent away (vv. 25-26).

I Samuel 11 tells the story of Saul getting stirred up to action and going out and winning the battle.

I Samuel 11:14-15, “Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there.’ So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal. There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the Lord, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.” Saul was confirmed king; all tribes were united under Saul’s leadership. They rejoiced greatly.

In I Samuel 12, Samuel begins to recount the history and to remind them of the ups and downs.

Verses 12-13, “‘And when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, you said to me, “No, but a king shall reign over us,” when the Lord your God was your King. Now therefore, here is the king whom you have chosen and whom you have desired. And take note, the Lord has set a king over you.’” God gave them an impressive-looking king. He looked like a king should look. God gave them what they asked for. Later God chose a man after His own heart (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). David was not impressive on the outside but on the inside.

Verses 19-25, “And all the people said to Samuel, ‘Pray for your servants to the Lord your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves.’ Then Samuel said to the people, ‘Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; yet do not turn aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. And do not turn aside, for then you would go after empty things, which cannot profit or deliver, for they are nothing. For the Lord will not forsake His people, for His great name’s sake, because it has pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you. But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away, both you and your king.’”

The first half of Saul’s reign was active; the second half was inactive. I Samuel 13 was the 20-year period of his active reign. The second 20-year period was an inactive reign.

I Samuel 13:2-3, “Saul chose for himself three thousand men of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent. And Jonathan attacked the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and the Philistines heard of it. Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, ‘Let the Hebrews hear!’”

Verse 5, “Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel....”

Verses 6-9, “When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he was still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. So Saul said, ‘Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me.’ And he offered the burnt offering.”

We come to the first great sin that Saul committed as king. Samuel was late. The point was Saul should have waited, even if everybody left and there was nobody but Saul and God. He offered the burnt offering himself, which was contrary to the Law.

Verses 10-12, “Now it happened, as soon as he had finished offering the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might greet him. And Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’ And Saul said, ‘When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that you did not come within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, then I said, “the Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the Lord.” Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering.’”

Just about the time he was finished, Samuel showed up. ‘You were late; so I thought I would take over.’

Verses 13-14, “And Samuel said to Saul, ‘You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have

not kept what the Lord commanded you.’” His kingdom was not to continue.

I Samuel 14:24, “And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, ‘Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies.’ So none of the people tasted food.”

Verse 27, “But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened.” Jonathan ate some honey. You begin to see the erratic way Saul begins to function. This is a situation that shows some of the things of his character and leadership.

Verses 29-30, “But Jonathan said, ‘My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies, which they found! For now there would not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?’”

Verses 43-45, “Then Saul said to Jonathan, ‘Tell me what you have done.’ And Jonathan told him, and said, ‘I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that was in my hand. So now I must die!’ And Saul answered, ‘God do so and more also; for you shall surely die, Jonathan.’ But the people said to Saul, ‘Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great salvation in Israel? Certainly not! As the Lord lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked with God this day.’ So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.”

Verses 47-48, “So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he harassed them. And he gathered an army and attacked the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.”

Verse 52, “Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, he took him for himself.”

I Samuel 15:1-3, “Samuel also said to Saul, ‘The Lord sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the Lord. Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I will punish what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him on the way when he came up

from Egypt. Now go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.”” The Lord said, ‘Smite the Amalekites; don’t spare anything.’ What happened?

Verse 9, “But Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all that was good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.” He took Agag the king alive. He destroyed what he didn’t want.

Verses 10-11, “Now the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, ‘I greatly regret that I have set up Saul as king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not performed My commandments.’ And it grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the Lord all night.” The Lord said, ‘It makes Me sorry I ever made him king.’

Verses 13-15, “Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you of the Lord! I have performed the commandment of the Lord.’ But Samuel said, ‘What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?’ And Saul said, ‘They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the Lord your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”” Saul said, ‘We are going to sacrifice them to God.’

Verse 17, “So Samuel said, ‘When you were little in your own eyes, were you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the Lord anoint you king over Israel?’”

Verses 20-21, “And Saul said to Samuel, ‘But I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and gone on the mission on which the Lord sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the Lord your God in Gilgal.”” He said, ‘I have obeyed, but maybe not in every detail. The people took of the spoil.’

Verses 22-23, “Then Samuel said: ‘Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and

idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king.”” To obey is better than sacrifice.

Verse 24, “Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voices.”” Saul was not a leader but a follower.

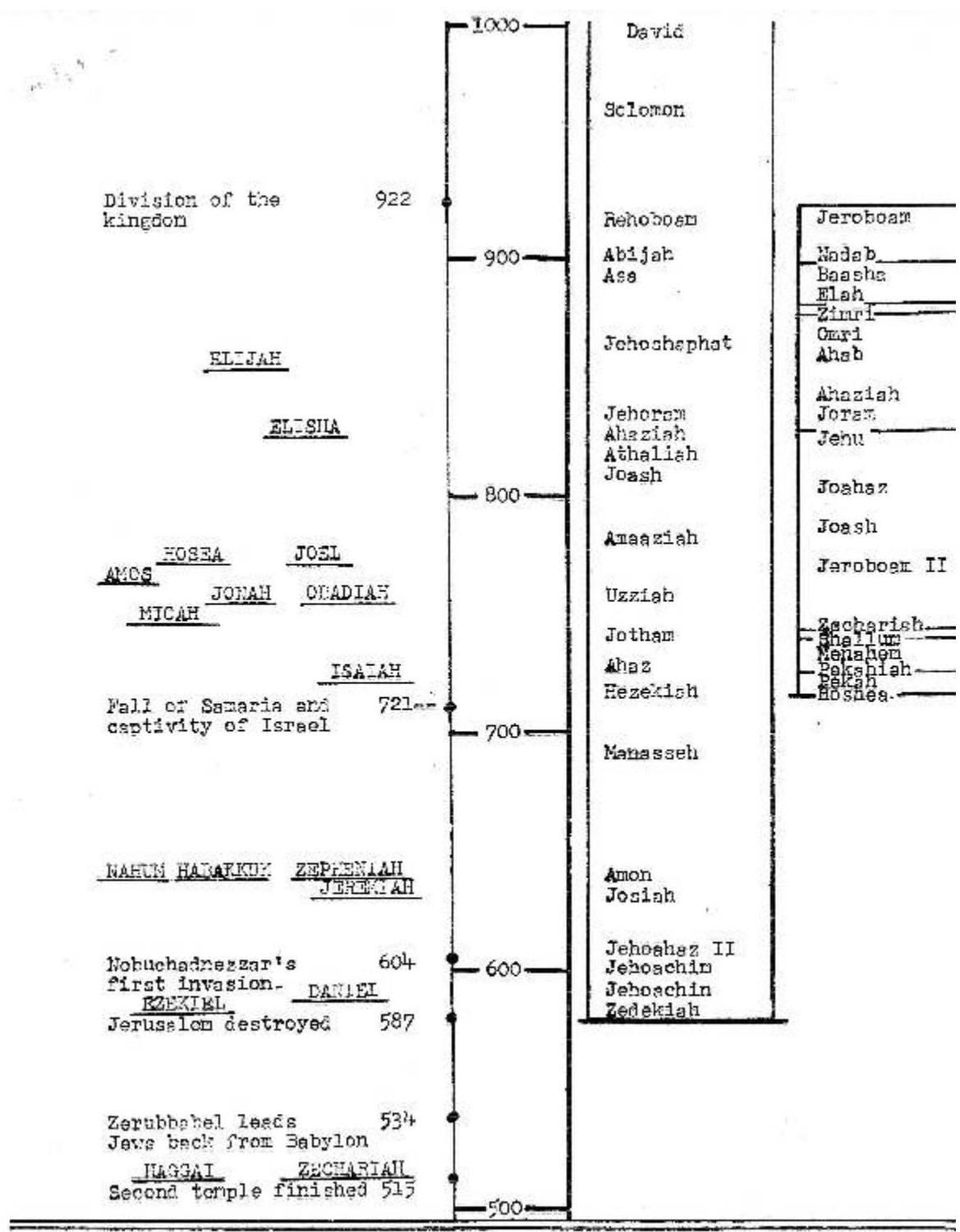
Verses 32-33, “Then Samuel said, ‘Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.’ So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, ‘Surely the bitterness of death is past.’ But Samuel said, ‘As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women.’ And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal.”

Samuel executed Agag himself. Saul had not only let him live, but he had let some of his family get away because later on in the book of Esther (3:1), you read of “Haman the Agagite.” There would never have been that problem if he had done what he was told.

Verse 35, “And Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.” Saul didn’t follow instructions. That was the real key, the real problem. He didn’t do what God told him to do. He had his own ideas, his own approach.

Perhaps we can get an overview of this, as people sought to take things into their own hands to solve the problems. Realize human nature remains much the same generation to generation, to the extent that we learn the lessons that are recorded here—what Samuel did, what Saul did and how we might respond to certain things that happen in our lives. This is an overview of God working with Israel.

I Samuel will be completed next Bible study, and then we will begin to get into II Samuel.



Chronology of Kings and Chronicles