

INTRODUCTION TO 1 SAMUEL

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This book of all the books of scripture has detained me twice as long as I would have desired. Due to a corrupting of external hard disk files I utterly lost two months intense work on the book. This finally by the grace of the LORD I was enabled to reverse and the present commentary and translation is the end result.

There are many truths that have emerged from the second reading. To quote but a few (1) I have arrived at a better understanding of the two references to Goliath (1 Samuel 17 & 2 Samuel 21) because I worked on both books simultaneously and I hope you will find the resulting comments on the Giants illuminating.

(2) The comparison of the Passover when David broke with Saul in its relationship to the First Easter and Passover featuring the atoning death and resurrection of our LORD emerged from further thinking with its useful lessons.

(3) Further consideration of the “Hebrew textual gaps in both 1 & 2 Samuel became possible and with more detailed thinking the benefits of a positive provenance as opposed to a literary critical viewpoint increasingly commended itself to me.

The book is as the rabbis say virtually 50-50 action and conversation. That is to say half of its content is remarkably preserved verbal exchange. The conversations lead to the hearts of the speakers and a very great deal stands to be learned about human character and righteous and virtuous and courageous living from their study.

At least 40 times the writer(s) say “It came to pass”. This familiar form of words I have translated by “history tells us” or “it is a fact” of suchlike in either book. What I mean to convey is the original dynamic presence of the LORD in the passing events. Things do not happen by chance. God is amid every coincidence as the best rendering of Romans 8.28 avers: “In all things God works for the good of those that love Him”. So in the Samuels we are following the story of a Theocracy and even though Ichabod is writ large over Saul’s period God is active and the future is being shaped and David’s glorious rule is being prepared.

This book takes its place in holy writ deservedly. Much of its earliest detail came from the mouth and pen of Samuel himself. Later figures such as Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud and **the Hittite war correspondent** of David who was doubtless responsible for the narrative featuring so honestly the dastardly demise of Uriah by the scheme of David that caused the Holy Spirit to flutter like a curtain in the wind as to residing with the king at this time-hence David’s “take not thy Holy Spirit from me”. The thought of Israel’s second king in despair passes mercifully and quickly as the divine sovereign purpose and covenant moves on toward Messiah from that terrible moment.

So we learn from Samuel to appreciate the awesome honesty and immense mercy of God. Saul would be alongside Samuel at the last and Jonathan too. David would become the anointed of “the LORD of my (Messianic anointed) LORD” and as this book climaxes would meet the angel of the LORD who stemmed the judgment short of his palace at the hill of Moriah where that “angel of the LORD” that is Christ pre-

incarnate in later time would Himself take David's sin and that of you and me upon Himself. With these remarks I commend the book to the reader.

Bob Coffey, Westgate. July 2011.