

CHARACTERIZATION OF SAMUEL

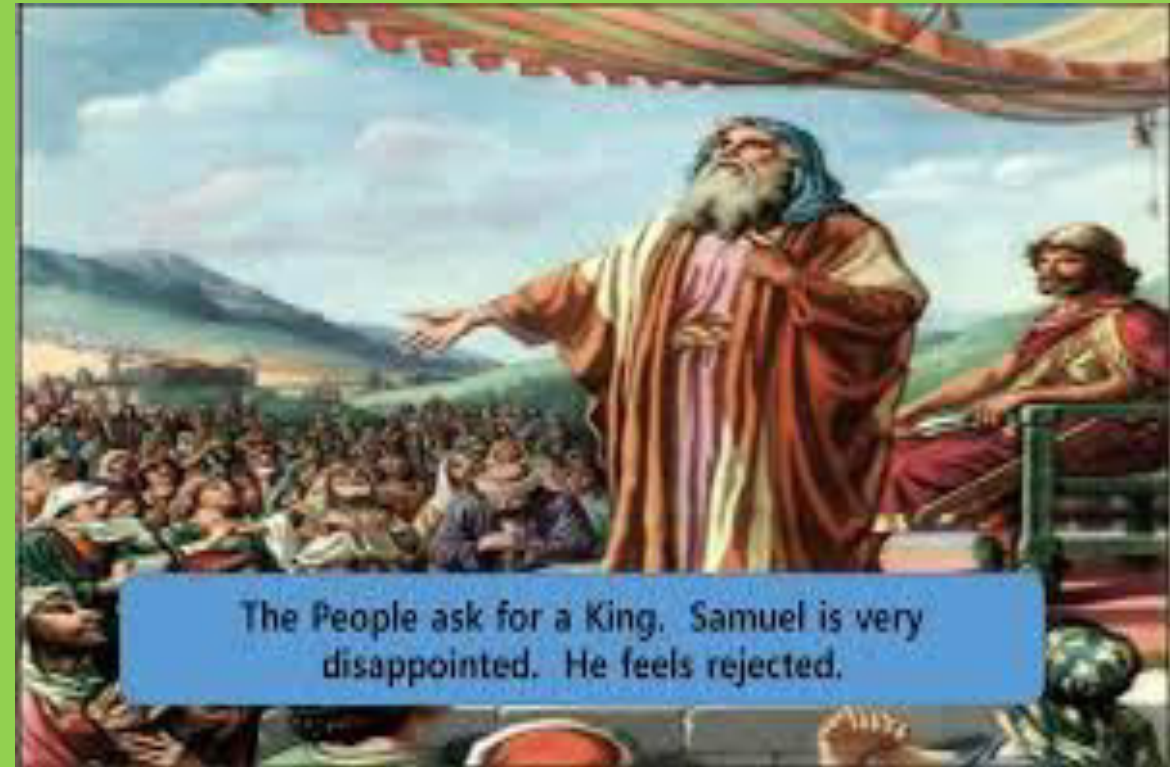
I SAMUEL (Chs.1:1-25:1)

Characterization of Samuel

(I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

SAMUEL - JUDGE



The People ask for a King. Samuel is very disappointed. He feels rejected.

Saul, Samuel and David

(1 Samuel 15-16)

Gilgal ●

Ramah ●

(Samuel's
hometown)

● Gibeah

(Saul's
hometown)

Jerusalem ●

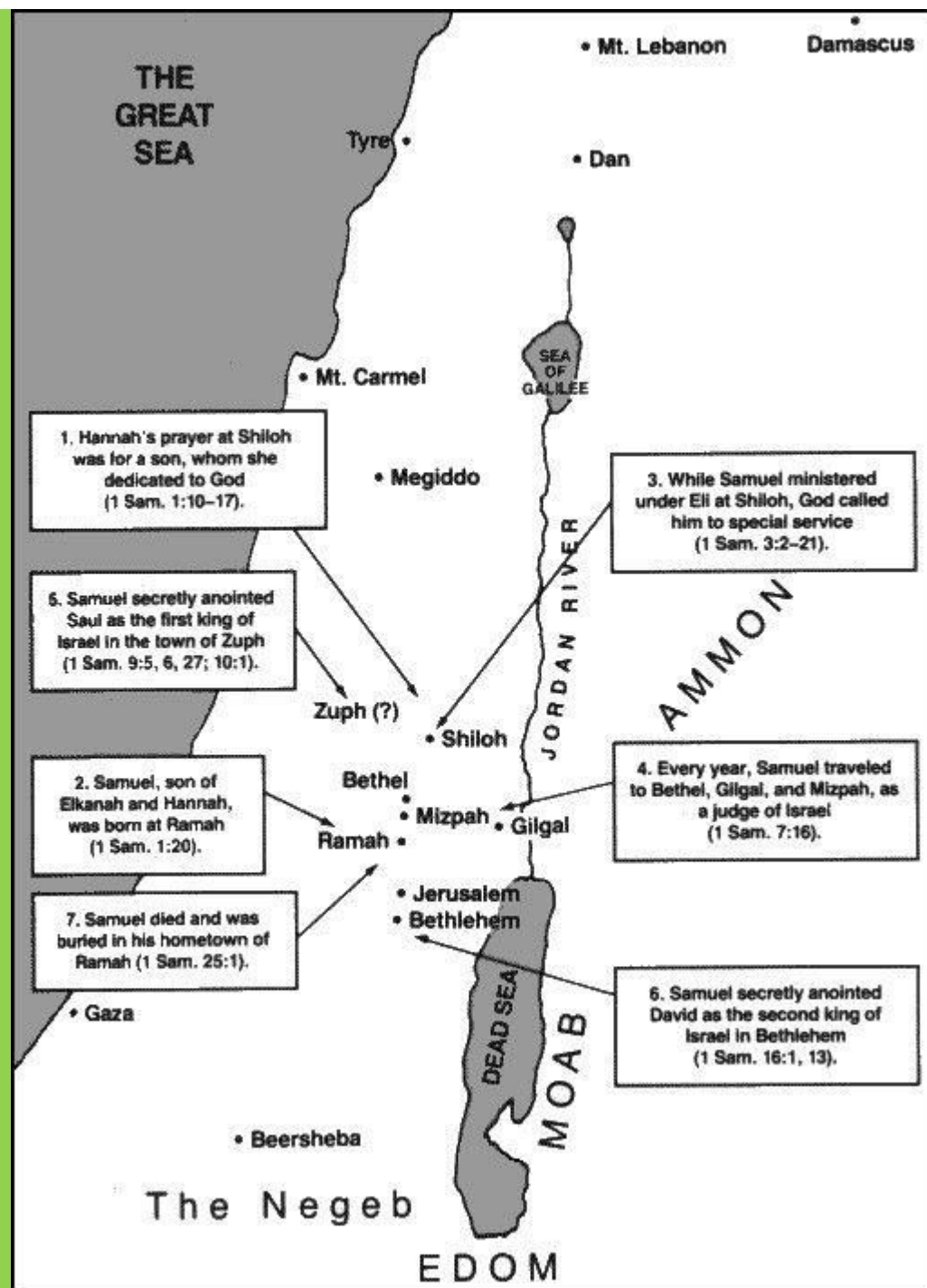
(Jebusites)

Bethlehem

● (David's
hometown)

Jordan River

Dead Sea



Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- The **Last leader** of the **pre-monarchical period**. He functioned as a *priest-prophet at Shiloh*, as *seer and man of God* and as the *last judge* in early Israel at **Ramah** (*seer and man of God* are the **titles for the prophets** in the bible).
- His **birth** could have been dated in the **beginning of 11th century B.C.**
- **Samuel's parents** were **Elkanah, Ephraimite (I Sam 1:1)** and **Hannah** who was previously barren. Hannah also bore three other sons and two daughters (I Sam 2:21). **Hannah prayed at Shiloh for the gift of the child and promised to dedicate him to JHWH.**

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- The name **Samuel (1090 – 1020 B.C.)** is meant, “**His divine name is EL**” There are also other explanations given in I Sam 1:20,28 as “**I have asked him of the Lord**” or “**I have lent him to the Lord**” or “**I have given him to the Lord**”.
- Some even suggest that the **birth story described in I Samuel was previously attributed to the birth of Saul.**
- Samuel was to **abstain from alcoholic drinks** and was **not to cut his hair because he was a Nazarite** (I Sam 1:11,22; Heb. fragments of Sir 46:13).
- Samuel is identified as a **Levite**. Albright, a **biblical scholar suggests that Samuel was an Ephraimite by birth, but was attached to the tabernacle as a Nazarite and was therefore drawn by Levitical tradition.**

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- **In a dream JHWH revealed to Samuel how he is going to bring disaster to the family of Eli, the priest due to the wickedness of the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas (I Sam 3:11-14; 2:12-17; Cf. 2:27-36). The sons were killed in a battle with the Philistines at Ebenezer (I Sam 4:11). Eli also died after the capture of the Ark of the Covenant by the Philistines (I Sam 4).**
- **Since Samuel received the Theophany of God regularly at Shiloh the people of Israel accepted him as the prophet of Israel (I Sam 3:20 ff.).**
- **Samuel did not have any role in the Ark of the Covenant narrative (Ch. 4-6).**
- **Samuel led the people of Israel to a burnt offering and an erection of a commemoration stone called Ebenezer at Mizpah where he asked the people to repent and prayed for their victory against the Philistines (I Sam 7:3-12).**

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- He did his duty as Judge through his yearly round up to the holy places like Gilgal, Mizpah, Shiloh, Bethel etc. (I Sam 7:15-17). He also judged the people of Israel staying at Ramah, his hometown.
- Samuel's two sons, Joel and Abijah served as judges at Beersheba (I Sam 8:1-3).
- The corruptive minds (looked for gains, took bribes and perverted justice) of the sons of Samuel led the people of Israel to demand the office of the king, which irritated and displeased Samuel.
- JHWH granted their request but warned the people through Samuel of the taxes they have to pay to the king, the servile works that they have to do to the kings and his family and the subjugation that they have to experience in the hands of the king loosing all their properties to the king and his family (I Sam 8:11-17).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- He **anointed Saul and David**.
- Samuel is connected with three ceremonies in the accounts of Saul's rise to power (9:1-10:16). 1) Samuel could have secretly **anointed Saul as king of Israel probably at his hometown *Ramah*** (I Sam 10:1). He **exercises three signs** in the process of anointing (I Sam 10:1 - ***took the vial of oil, poured it on his head and kissed him***). 2) After repeated objections to kingship Samuel **presided over a lot casting ceremony at *Mizpah*** that pointed Saul as **JHWH's choice** (I Sam 10:17-27). Samuel **explained the rights and duties of the kingdom to the people** and at the end of the ceremony at Mizpah he **deposited the book containing the details of the rights and duties of the kingdom in the sanctuary** (I Sam 10:14-27). 3) After conquering the Ammonites Samuel **advised the people to go to *Gilgal* and proclaimed him as the king of Israel** (I Sam 11:12-15).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- Samuel demonstrated his own innocence and the righteousness of JHWH in his farewell message. He warned the people that their inappropriate demand of asking for the king would be acceptable and would be a success only if they were obedient to God and his commandments. Both the people and the king would be swept away if they acted wickedly. He promised to pray for the people and teach them the way they should live (I Sam 12).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- Samuel rejected the dynastic rule of the family of Saul because of the incident that took place at Gilgal (I Sam 13:8-14). Saul, without waiting for the coming of Samuel, presided over the sacrificing ceremony. It was a breach of the compromise formula made between the king and the prophet (I Sam 7-11). According to this compromise the duty of the king is to carry out the military activities of the Judges of the pre-monarchical period. The prophet would preside over the sacrifice and find out the JHWH's authorization for war and communicate that message to the king.
- Samuel is considered the first prophet of Israel in the strict sense of the term.

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- Samuel who functioned as a prophet advised Saul to attack Amalek (I Sam 15:1-3). Since Saul spared the Amalekite king Agag and the best of his livestock, Samuel announced that JHWH had rejected Saul as King (15:23,26). While pleading for forgiveness Saul got hold of the hem of the robe of Samuel but it was torn. Samuel pronounced that the kingdom of Saul would also be torn into pieces and given to his neighbour who was better than Saul (I Sam 15:26ff; 28:17). Samuel himself executed Agag (I Sam 15:32). Samuel did not meet Saul again until the day of the death of the latter (I Sam 15:35; 19:18-24; Ch 28). Samuel mourned for Saul and JHWH was also sorry making Saul king (I Sam 15:35).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- On JHWH's advice Samuel in a private sacrifice anointed David the youngest of the sons of Jesse as king of Israel at Bethlehem (I. Sam 16: 1-13; II Sam 2:4; 5:3). While David was blessed with the gift of the Spirit as a result of the anointing, the spirit of JHWH departed from Saul (I Sam 16:14; 10:6,10; 11:6).
- In the course of his struggle with Saul David was under the safe custody of Samuel at Ramah, which was 3 K.M. from Gibeah the town of Saul. Samuel's assistance, support and help to David in his flight from Saul gave prominence to the future king.
- Samuel was buried in Ramah and the whole Israelites mourned for his death (I Sam 25:1; 28:3).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- After the death of Samuel Saul consulted a woman medium to inquire the will of God. She brought a divine being from *Sheol*, the underworld. Saul recognized the man wrapped himself in the robe. He was none other than the prophet Samuel.
- Later biblical traditions highlight the role of Samuel as intercessor (Jer 15:1; Ps 99:6) and associate with David in the establishment of the office of the Gatekeepers (I Chr 9:22).

Characterization of Samuel (I Sam Ch.1-16, 19, 25, 28)

1090 – 1020 B.C.

- **II Chr 35:18 speaks of a Passover of Josiah as the first of its kind since the days of Samuel.**
- **NT refers to Samuel as the first prophet (Acts 3:24; 13:20).**
- **The prophetic character of Samuel is summarized in Sir 46:13-20. The author of Hebrews includes Samuel among the great heroes of faith (Heb 11:32).**