

**ANALYSIS OF THE FIRST
BOOK OF SAMUEL. FOR THE
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE
LOCAL EXAMINATIONS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649324804

Analysis of the first book of Samuel. For the Oxford and Cambridge local examinations by
Various

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VARIOUS

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OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE
LOCAL EXAMINATIONS**

A N A L Y S I S
OF THE
FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE
LOCAL EXAMINATIONS.



LONDON:
T. J. ALLMAN, 463, OXFORD STREET.
1878.

1072. F. 3.

114.



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THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL.

INTRODUCTION.

THE two books which bear the name of Samuel anciently made but one book among the Jews, called by them the **Book of Samuel**. The division of the Books of Samuel into two was derived from the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures, and the Vulgate, the Latin version. But although the book bears the title of the **Book of Samuel** in the ancient Hebrew copies, it is a matter of some doubt whether it was so called at the very earliest period; the Seventy, the translators of the Septuagint, call it, as well as the two succeeding books, the **Book of Kings**, or rather of **Kingdoms**, which title appears very suitable, as the books relate in detail the institution of the monarchy and the reigns of the kings. This has been imitated in the Vulgate, which calls the two Books of Samuel the First and Second Book of Kings; it is also preserved in the second title of our version. The Syriac version names this book "**The Book of Samuel the Prophet**;" the Arabic version calls it, "**The Book of Samuel the Prophet, which is the First Book of Kings.**"

The Jews were a people "dwelling alone," therefore we know nothing of their early literature beyond the books which are contained in the Old Testament. It has been conjectured that Moses formed a library of the Sacred Books of the Hebrews, also that Nehemiah "gathered together the acts of the Kings and the Prophets and David."

There is every reason to believe that the Jews exclusively made use of parchment for transcribing. Josephus states that Ptolemy Philadelphus was struck with admi-

ration when the volume or roll containing the law of God in golden letters was unfolded.

The opinion of the Jews, which has been adopted by the most learned fathers of the Church, is that the first twenty-four chapters of the First Book of Samuel were written by Samuel the Prophet, and that the remainder of the book was committed to writing by the prophets Gad and Nathan, agreeably to the practice of the prophets, who wrote memoirs of the events of the times in which they lived.

Abarbanel, a Spanish rabbinical doctor (1437), and Grotius, a Dutch scholar (1640), suppose Jeremiah to be the author of both Books; another great writer conjectures that a large portion of Samuel was written by the author of the Pentateuch, and of the Books of Joshua and Judges. The peculiar theory of Jahn, a German theologian of the present century, is that the Books of Samuel and Kings were written by the same person, and at a date so recent as the thirtieth year of the Babylonish Captivity.

The First Book of Samuel is said by some authorities to have been compiled from old written sources and from traditions in the lives of Samuel and Saul. Some use was probably made of previously-existing documents, as **the Song of Hannah**. The prophets were wont to write a history of their own time. That Samuel did so is evident from the statement that "he wrote the manner of the kingdom in a book, and laid it before the Lord"—1 Sam. x. 25. That there were written records by the prophets Gad and Nathan is also certain, for in 1 Chron. xxix. 29, we read: "Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written . . . in the Book of Nathan the prophet, and in the Book of Gad the seer."

The portion of the book ascribed to Samuel was probably composed by him towards the latter end of his life. The narrative contains so many natural allusions that indicate that the writer was personally cognisant of the events related; but he must certainly have lived some *time after these* events, from the expression "unto this

day," which he makes use of several times. The style of this book is clear, simple, and forcible, and the Hebrew remarkably pure and free from Chaldaisms. It is rich in lively pictures of character, and contains several striking discourses and addresses interspersed in the course of the history. It also contains one of the two sacred lyrics which we meet with in the time of the Judges.

The principal of these beautiful narratives are: The vision of Samuel, the death of Eli, the anointing of Saul, the anointing of David. The chief discourses are: The address of Samuel to the people on their demanding a king, Abigail's address to David imploring him to spare the house of Nabal. The sacred lyric is the Song of Hannah, which has been aptly styled the "**Magnificat** of the Old Testament Church."

The First Book of Samuel contains the history of the Jewish nation from the birth of Samuel, at the time Eli judged Israel, to the death of Saul, the first king, a period of nearly one hundred years, from B.C. 1151 to B.C. 1051.

It consists of three parts:

- (i.) The transactions under the judicature of Eli (chap. i.—iv.).
- (ii.) The history of the Israelites during the judicature of Samuel (chap. v.—xii.).
- (iii.) The history of Saul and the transactions during his reign (chap. xiii.—xxxi.).

Many portions of this book are of considerable importance for illustrating the Book of Psalms, for at that period commenced the golden age of Divine psalmody. The manner in which our blessed Lord and His Apostles cite this portion of the Hebrew Scriptures clearly implies its supernatural inspiration and Divine authority.

CHAPTER I.

B.C. 1171—1165.

ELKANAH THE LEVITE. He had married a woman named Hannah; she had no children, and, according to the custom of the age, he allied himself to a second wife, *Peninnah*, by whom he had sons and daughters.

"HE WENT UP OUT OF HIS CITY FROM YEAR TO YEAR." The Tabernacle had been pitched in Shiloh from the days of Joshua, and in accordance with the command of God the Israelites went up thither to sacrifice at the appointed Feasts.

"ELI THE PRIEST SAT UPON A SEAT." Inside the gateway of the city, leading to the Tabernacle, was a seat or throne in which the high priest was accustomed to sit and watch the worshippers who came up to the Feasts.

HANNAH PRAYED UNTO THE LORD. The bitterness of her grief led her to call upon God to take away her reproach. Eli saw that her lips moved, but as he did not hear her voice, he thought she was drunken, and reprov'd her. She told him her sorrow, and he replied, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of Him."

"THERE SHALL NO RAZOR COME UPON HIS HEAD." This was the vow of the Nazarites, so called from the Hebrew to separate. The vow was to abstain from wine; to eat no grapes; to avoid contamination from corpses and sepulchres; to let the hair grow; and not to mourn the dead. It extended sometimes only a limited time; at others, as in the case of Samuel, who was consecrated before his birth, during life.

"THAT HE MAY APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD." As a descendant of Levi, Samuel was the property of the Lord from the age of twenty-five to fifty; but the vow of Hannah consecrated him to God from his infancy to his death.

SAMUEL BROUGHT TO SHILOH. Hannah took the son, given to her in answer to her prayer, and devoted him to the service of God in the Tabernacle at Shiloh; he was left in charge of Eli, to whom he ministered.

"THREE BULLOCKS." The Septuagint version says, a bullock of three years old. So also the Syriac and Arabic, and this is confirmed by the following verse, in which they are said to have slain one bullock.

"LENT TO THE LORD." The word lent here used is to be taken in the sense of returning or giving back.

QUESTIONS.

1. To what tribe did Elkanah belong?
2. Explain the following:
 - "To sacrifice unto the Lord of Hosts in Shiloh."
 - "A seat by a post of the Temple of the Lord."
 - "No razor shall come upon his head."
3. When was the Tabernacle first pitched in Shiloh?
4. Give the signification of the following names:
 - Eli—Samuel—Shiloh—Hannah.
5. In what capacity did Eli govern Israel?
6. At what period was Samuel born?

REFERENCES.

- Verses 1.*—"Elkanah the son of Jeroham." 1 Chron. vi. 27.
Verses 3.—"Went up . . . yearly to worship." Exod. xxiii. 14.
Verses 11.—"She vowed a vow." Num. vi. 5.
Verses 17.—"The God of Israel grant thee thy petition." Psalm xx. 4.
Verses 24.—"The House of the Lord in Shiloh." Joshua xviii. 1.

CHAPTER II.

B.C. 1165.

HANNAH'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING. This sublime Hymn of Thanksgiving, in which the pious mother pours forth her gratitude, is one of the most remarkable specimens of Hebrew poetry extant.

"**MINE HORN IS EXALTED.**" The horn is the symbol of power and strength as being the chief instrument of defence to the animals which possess it. In the East it is very common for women to wear a sort of horn on their heads, sometimes of silver studded with jewels; over this projection a long veil is thrown, so as completely to conceal the face.

"**HE BRINGETH DOWN TO THE GRAVE.**" To the lowest state of degradation and misery.

"**INHERIT THE THRONE OF GLORY.**" Possess seats of honour.

"**HE WILL KEEP THE FEET OF HIS SAINTS.**" This is a metaphorical expression, signifying to preserve them from transgression or falling into sin.

"**AND THE WICKED SHALL BE SILENT IN DARKNESS.**" In the Septuagint it is, "He giveth the object of his petition to him that prays, and bleaseth the years of the righteous."