

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL

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The First book of Samuel by A. F. Kirkpatrick

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A. F. KIRKPATRICK

**THE FIRST BOOK
OF SAMUEL**

Moses and AARON among His priests,
And SAMUEL among them that call upon His Name:
They called upon the LORD and He answered them.

1884

PREFACE

BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

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suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

DEANERY, PETERBOROUGH.

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- * * The Text adopted in this Edition is that of Dr Scrivener's *Cambridge Paragraph Bible*. A few variations from the ordinary Text, chiefly in the spelling of certain words, and in the use of italics, will be noticed. For the principles adopted by Dr Scrivener as regards the printing of the Text see his Introduction to the *Paragraph Bible*, published by the Cambridge University Press.

THE OLD ORDER CHANGETH, YIELDING PLACE TO NEW,
AND GOD FULFILLS HIMSELF IN MANY WAYS.

THE GOODLY FELLOWSHIP OF THE PROPHETS PRAISE THEE.

INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOOK OF SAMUEL.

1. *Titles and Division of the Books.* The two Books of Samuel, like the two Books of Kings, originally formed an undivided whole¹. The Septuagint translators, regarding the Book of Samuel and the Book of Kings as a complete History of the Kingdom from its foundation to its fall, divided the work into four books, which they styled *Books of the Kingdoms* (*βιβλα βασιλειῶν*). Jerome followed this division in the Vulgate, altering the name to *Books of the Kings* (*Libri Regum*), which is retained as an alternative title in the English Bible. This division was first introduced into printed Hebrew Bibles by the Venice printer Bomberg in 1518.

2. *Meaning of the Title.* The title Samuel does not denote authorship, but like the titles Joshua, Ruth, and Esther, commemorates the prominent actor in the events recorded in the book. Its adoption shews a true insight into the connexion of the history it contains. It stands as a monument of the greatness of the Prophet who was Jehovah's instrument for establishing the Kingdom of Israel, and guiding the chosen people through

¹ The Masoretic note of the number of verses, &c., appended at the close of the Second Book in the Hebrew Bible, still treats the two books as one. Origen (quoted by Euseb, *H. E.* VI. 25. 3) mentions that the Jews of his day regarded Samuel as one book.

a crisis in its history second in importance only to the Exodus. The book begins with the account of his birth: and his direct influence extends to the close of it, in the reign of the king whom he anointed as Jehovah's choice.

3. *Who was the author of the Book of Samuel?* To this question no answer can be given. A late Jewish tradition ascribes the authorship to Samuel himself. This obviously could only apply to the first twenty-four chapters of the First Book, and as the work forms a connected whole, it is improbable that these in their present form proceeded from his pen. It is generally agreed that the Book is a *compilation* from different sources, but who was the compiler there is no evidence to shew.

4. *What then were these sources?* Ingenious attempts have been made to analyse the component parts of the book. But apart from these conjectural theories we have several indications of the sources from which the compiler drew his materials.

(a) The chief sources were probably *contemporary prophetic histories*. The compiler of the Book of Chronicles expressly names as the original authority for the history of David's reign "the chronicle (lit. *words*) of Samuel the seer (*rôch*) and the chronicle of Nathan the prophet, and the chronicle of Gad the seer (*chôzek*)."¹ It has been maintained that Samuel, Nathan and Gad were the subjects, not the authors of the works referred to. Even if this was so, it is evident that they contained much valuable material for the history of David's reign. But the corresponding reference to the original authorities for the history of Solomon's reign in 2 Chron. ix. 29 (among which the chronicle of Nathan the prophet is again mentioned), and the constant references to similar prophetic writings as authorities for the reigns of later kings², make it almost certain that the three prophets mentioned were themselves the historians of the period.

¹ 1 Chron. xxix. 29. For the distinction between *rôch* and *chôzek* see note on 1 Sam. ix. 9.

² To the writings of Shemaiah and Iddo for the reign of Rehoboam (2 Chron. xii. 15); to the commentary (*midrash*) of Iddo for that of Abijah (2 Chron. xiii. 22). Isaiah is expressly said to have written the history of Uzziah's reign (2 Chron. xxvi. 22). See also 2 Chron. xx. 34, xxxii. 32, xxxiii. 18, 19.