EXPOSITION OF 1–2 SAMUEL

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by

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Canonical Context

All 66 inspired books of the Protestant canon relate to the progressively revealed Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible, but not in the same way. Each book either *carries* the metanarrative,[1] *contributes* to it but does not carry it,[2] or *contemplates* the metanarrative.[3] A book's placement into one of these three categories does not necessarily depend on genre, even though a correlation frequently exists. Rather, a book's categorization depends on its contents and its relationship to other books.[4]

In the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of Scripture, the following compose the major elements of the story:

Table 1: Elements of the Metanarrative of Scripture

Setting:	Heaven and earth	Gen 1–2
Hero:	God the Father	Gen 1–2
Hero's desire:	Image bearers to rule the earth	Gen 1:26–28
Problem:	Image bearers gave their rule to the serpent	Gen 3
Solution (the plot):	Promise seed will strike the serpent and restore rule to image bearers	Gen 3:15–Rev 19
Turning point:	The Cross	Gospels
Climax:	The Great Tribulation	Rev 6–19
Resolution / denouement:	Image bearers again rule the earth	Rev 20–22

[1] The carrier category refers to biblical books that carry the primary plotline of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Many books of historical narrative and certain parts of prophetic books fall into this category because they carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative. Such books describe the outworking of the promise in Genesis 3:15–16.

[2] The contributor category refers to biblical books that contribute to, but do not carry, the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Most prophetic books and certain parts of the NT epistles fall into this category because while they do not carry the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative, they contribute important (often prophetic) information about that metanarrative. Additionally, certain historical narratives run in parallel to one another (e.g., Kings and Chronicles, the four Gospels). In these cases, 1–2 Kings function as the carrier and 1–2 Chronicles as the contributor. Among the Gospels, Matthew functions as the carrier and the other three as contributors.

[3] The contemplator category refers to biblical books that neither carry nor contribute to the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-ruler metanarrative of the Bible. Rather, these books reflect upon (contemplate) the realities of that narrative. Books of wisdom, poetry, and most NT epistles fall into this category, because in light of the Genesis 3:15 promised seed having come, they address how the people of God should live until he returns to establish his kingdom.

[4] For this reason, certain biblical books fit into more than one of these three categories.

As shown in Table 1, the Bible as a whole presents God as the hero of the story who desires his image bearers to rule the world on his behalf. This metanarrative begins in the book of Genesis and concludes in the book of Revelation. Genesis presents the setting,[5] the characters,[6] the plot problem,[7] and the beginning of the rising action. The problem identified in Genesis 3 did not change God's desire for his image bearers to rule the world. The prophecy of Genesis 3:15–16 indicates a war between the serpent's seed and the woman's seed. This battle is the central conflict in the entire biblical narrative; a conflict not resolved until Revelation 20. In this prophecy, God promised the seed of the woman—a man—would defeat the serpent, restore humanity to the garden, and restore rule of the earth to God's image bearers. The anticipation of this promised seed drives the plot of the biblical narrative. The entire plot of the metanarrative thus revolves around how Genesis 3:15–16 comes to fruition. This prophecy reaches the first phase of its fulfillment in Revelation 20 in the thousand-year kingdom of Christ on earth, and its final phase of fulfillment in Revelation 21–22 in the new heaven and earth.

In narrative (or a metanarrative such as the whole Bible), "The story is the meaning."[8] Every book must be interpreted in light of the plot problem, rising action, and resolution. Recent decades have seen advances in narrative criticism applied to biblical texts which have brought to light the complexity and skillful crafting of biblical narratives. Such complexity is not merely limited to individual biblical books. As one scholar noted, "Narrative structure, usually interconnected to plot or characterization, may extend across several books, supporting the evangelical concept that the divine author provides unity and continuity in the biblical story."[9] This paper, then, recognizes the place of Samuel in light of the divine author's total metanarrative. Indeed, "The Bible's total story sketches in narrative form the meaning of all reality."[10]

The entire Pentateuch forms a serial narrative in five parts which are all geared toward preparing the second generation of Israelites to possess the land of promise and live there in covenant faithfulness. Just as humanity was banished east of the garden (Gen 3), by the close of the Pentateuch the nation of promise camped on the eastern shore of the Jordan ready to head west into the Promised Land. Deuteronomy concludes with the death of Moses, and Joshua begins, "After the death of Moses" (Josh 1:1) and recounts Israel's failed attempt to dispossess the Canaanites of that Promised Land. Joshua closes with Joshua's death, and Judges opens with, "After the death of Joshua" (Judg 1:1). Whereas Deuteronomy 16–18 delineates the roles of judges, kings, priests, and prophets, so-called "Deuteronomic history" plays out in Joshua–2 Kings as the judges, kings, priests, and prophets fail to produce covenant faithfulness in the "holy nation" of "royal priests." Just as post-flood humanity had descended into rebellion at the

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[5] Heaven and earth, Genesis 1–2.

[6] God, the hero of the story; mankind, the object of God's desire; and the antagonist, the serpent.

[7] Despite God's desire for mankind to rule the earth on his behalf, the man and woman gave their rule over to the serpent (Gen 3).

[8] Leland Ryken, *Words of Delight* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 88.

[9] J. Daniel Hays, "An Evangelical Approach to Old Testament Narrative Criticism," *BSac* 166 (2009): 8.

[10] Richard Bauckham, *God and the Crisis of Freedom: Biblical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 64.

tower of Babylon (Gen 11), the failure of these offices resulted in the chosen nation's exile east into the new Babylon, echoing the exile east of the garden.[11]

If the Pentateuch was aimed primarily at why the Israelites should enter the promised land and how to live in covenant fidelity and so enjoy blessing in the land, the rest of Deuteronomic history (Joshua–Kings) describes how the nation's covenant infidelity resulted in banishment from the land and Babylonian exile. Moses' establishment of four offices in Israel, judges, priests, kings, and prophets (Deut 16–18), and deuteronomic history successively reveals the failure of each office to do so. The book of Judges described the failure of the judges (chs. 3–16) and the Levites (chs. 17–21) and set the stage for the failure of the levitical high priest (1 Sam 1–7), the kings (1 Sam 9–2 Kgs 25), and the prophets (1 Kgs 17–2 Kgs 13).[12] The prophets Elijah and Elisha, and even the so-called "good" Judean kings who effected spiritual and cultic reformation (e.g., Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah) ultimately failed to bring about lasting righteousness. These failures ultimately point to the need for the eternal Judahite king (king-priest-judge-prophet) as per the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7) who would restore covenant fidelity to the people and place them in the promised land forever as per Yahweh's promise (Deut 30:1–10) in the Land Covenant.

The books of 1–2 Samuel explain the rise of the Israelite monarchy following the period of the judges, and they serve as pro-Davidic / Judah royal propaganda contra Saul / Ephraim / Israel. Whereas Judges concluded with chaos in Israel for lack of a king (Judg 21:25), Samuel's appointing of Saul and Saul's subsequent failure demonstrated the need for a greater king. In contrast to Saul, David appeared as that greater king. Yet, his own failures similarly led to the bloodshed and chaos typified in Judges. However, David responded penitently and his sins did not annul the eternal covenant. Yahweh had indeed chosen David as king of Israel, but David's failures only pointed the readers ahead to the ultimate Davidic king who would unite all Israel and fulfill the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7).

The Hebrew Bible considered 1–2 Samuel as a single work (the book of Samuel) while the Septuagint called it First and Second Kingdoms, while the English 1–2 Kings was called Third and Fourth Kingdoms.[13] 1–2 Samuel is placed, then, in the serial narrative from Genesis through Kings and *carries* the plot of the Messiah-redeemer-rule metanarrative as the nation waits for the ultimate Davidic prophet-king-priest-judge.

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[11] Gary E. Schnittjer, *Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2023), 38.

[12] David Klingler, "Validity in the Identification and Interpretation of a Literary Allusion in the Hebrew Bible" (PhD diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 2010), 210.

[13] See R. K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1969), 695.

Glossary of Literary Terms and Devices[14]

Acrostic: A poem in which the successive units begin with the consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
Allegory: A work of literature in which some or all of the details have a corresponding other meaning and refer to either a concept or historical particular.
Alliteration: involves the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words in close proximity, used to create rhythm or emphasis.
Allusion: a reference to another work of literature, person, or event, often used to enhance meaning or provide deeper insight.
Ambiguity: the use of language that allows for multiple interpretations or meanings, adding complexity and depth to the narrative.
Anti-hero: a literary protagonist who exhibits an absence of the character traits that are conventionally associated with literary heroes.
Anti-romance: a work of literature, or part of a work of literature, that presents unideal experience; a literary world of total bondage and the absence of the ideal.
Anthropomorphism: the attribution of human characteristics, emotions, or behaviors to animals, inanimate objects, or deities.
Antagonist: the character or force that opposes the protagonist, thus creating conflict in the narrative.
Antithetic parallelism: a two-line poetic unit in which the second line states the truth of the first in the opposite way or introduces a contrast.
Aphorism: a short, memorable statement of truth.
Archetype: an image, plot motif, or character type that recurs throughout literature and is part of a reader's total literary experience.
Blazon: a love poem that praises the attractive features and / or virtues of the beloved by means of a catalogue or listing technique.
Calling stories: in the Gospels, stories in which Jesus calls a person to follow him or to respond to a command. Also called vocation stories.
Canonical form: the present or final form of the text as it appears within the canon of Scripture, as opposed to a hypothetical form the text may have had before it was placed in its present location in the canon of Scripture.
Characterization: the process by which the author reveals the personality, traits, and attributes of a character or group of characters in a narrative.
Climax: the moment of peak tension / plot conflict in the story.
Climactic parallelism: a form of parallelism in which the first line is left incomplete until the second line repeats part of it and then makes it a whole statement by adding to it.
Comedy: a story with a U-shaped plot in which the action begins in prosperity, descends into potentially tragic events, and rises to a happy ending.
Conflict / plot tension: the central struggle or problem between opposing forces that drives the plot forward. This can be internal (within a character) or external (between characters or between

[14] This list is a composite of terms from four sources: (1) Ryken, *Words of Delight*, 513–17, (2) Schnittjer, *Torah Story*, 8–19, (3) Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *Interpreting the Historical Books: An Exegetical Handbook,* edited by David M. Howard, Jr., Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2006), 227–31, and (4) David R. Klingler, "Bible Exposition Template and Instructions," unpublished manuscript, 2023.

a character and an external force). The plot tension generally revolves around the protagonist's desire and the antagonistic elements (see "antagonist") working against that desire.
Conflict stories: Gospel stories that narrate Jesus' controversies with an opposing person or group. Also called controversy stories.
Denouement: the last phase of a story, following the climax; literally the "tying up of loose ends."
Didactic: having the intention or impulse to teach.
Discourse: an address to an audience.
Dramatic monologue: a literary work in which a single speaker addresses an implied but silent listener and in which various details keep this dramatic situation alive in the reader's consciousness.
Dramatic structure: the arrangement of a story's scenes and episodes, sometimes distinguished in the story's discourse structure.
Emblem: a symbolic and sometimes pictorial image to which a person or thing is compared.
Emblematic blazon: a love poem that lists the features of the beloved and compares them to objects or emblems in nature or human experience.
Encomium: a work of literature that praises an abstract quality or a generalized character type.
Encounter stories: gospel stories in which a person is confronted with the claims of Jesus, which that person must either accept or reject.
Epic: a long narrative having a number of conventional characteristics.
Epiphany: a moment of heightened insight in a literary work.
Episode: An incident or a series of incidents that forms a distinct literary subunit in a narrative or story; an episode can include two or more scenes.
Epistle: a letter that attains literary status by virtue of the literary techniques used in it.
Epithalamion: a lyric poem that celebrates a wedding.
Epithet: an exalted title for a person or thing; a feature of the high style, especially as found in epic.
Explication: the literary term for close reading of a text. It implies not only careful analysis of a text but also putting one's analysis into organized form for written or oral presentation to an audience.
Exposition: the opening phase of a story in which the writer presents the background information that the reader needs in order to understand the plot that will subsequently unfold.
Expository writing: writing whose main purpose is to convey information.
Ellipsis: the author may drop an element of what is expected in the story in order to draw attention to it.
Extended Echo Effect: the repetition of parallel ordering, elements, or features in multiple narrative units (A-B-C, A-B-C). Similar to "typological pattern," but without the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Flashback: a scene that interrupts the narrative to show events that happened at an earlier time, providing background or context.
Foil: a character who stands in contrast to another, thereby highlighting one or more of the latter's characteristics or traits.
Foreshadowing: involves hints or indications of what is to come later in the story, creating anticipation or suspense.
Folk literature: literature couched in the language of everyday speech and appealing to the common person. Also called popular literature.

Genre: a literary type or kind.
Hero: a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hero story, heroic narrative: a story built around the character and exploits of a protagonist who is exemplary and representative of a whole community.
Hybrid forms: narratives that combine elements of one or more genres.
Hyperbole: a figure of speech in which a writer uses conscious exaggeration for the sake of effect, usually emotional effect.
Imagery: descriptive language that appeals to the senses, helping to create a vivid mental picture for the reader.
Image: any concrete picture of reality or human experience, including any sensory experience, a setting, a character, or an event.
Inclusio: the bracketing of a unit of text identified by the repetition of features or elements at the beginning and end of the unit.
Interchange: an alternation of elements in the story which can cause heightened literary irony or develop comparative imaging.
Irony: a contrast between expectation and reality which can take various forms:

- **Verbal Irony:** occurs when a speaker says one thing but means another.
- **Situational Irony:** occurs when there is a discrepancy between what is expected to happen and what actually occurs.
- **Dramatic Irony:** a situation where the reader knows something which some or all the characters in a story are ignorant.

Janus: a bidirectional turning point looking both backward and forward.
Juxtaposition: placing two contrasting elements side by side to highlight their differences or create a particular effect.

- **Comparison:** the juxtaposition of similar elements such as words, imagery, or events.
- **Contrast:** the juxtaposition of dissimilar elements such as words, imagery, or events.

Lyric: a short poem containing the thoughts or feelings of a speaker. The emotional quality, even more than the reflective, is usually considered the differentia of lyric.
Metaphor: a figure of speech in which the writer makes an implied comparison between two phenomena.
Miracle stories: gospel narratives that focus on miracles that Jesus performed.
Motif: a recurring element, theme, or idea in a narrative that has symbolic significance and helps to develop the story's themes.
Narrative Perspective (Point of View): the lens through which the story is told, affecting the reader's perception. Common perspectives include:

- **First-Person:** the narrator is a character in the story, using “I” or “we.”
- **Second-Person:** the narrator addresses the reader directly using “you.”
- **Third-Person Limited:** the narrator is outside the story but knows the thoughts and feelings of one character.
- **Third-Person Omniscient:** the narrator knows all the thoughts and feelings of all characters.

Narrative space: narrators may employ physical space / locations as part of the setting, but may also assign symbolic meaning to certain physical spaces.
Narrative sequence: narrators may employ dischronological narrative in the form of previews or flashbacks in an advantageous way to the story.

Narrative time: in real history, time is a constant. But in narrative literature, the narrator may speed up (pass many years briefly) or slow down (focus an extended portion of text in a brief window of time) according to his discretion.
Narrative typology: a case in which, by design of the narrator, an earlier character or event supplies the pattern for a later character or event in the story.
Normative character: a character in a story who expresses or embodies what the storyteller wishes us to understand is correct.
Occasional literature: a work of literature that takes its origin from a particular historical event or a particular situation in the writer's life.
Ode: an exalted lyric poem that celebrates a dignified subject in a lofty style.
Paneled sequence: a literary structural technique where repeated elements appear in successive movements, yielding a structure of ABC // ABC.
Parable: a brief narrative that explicitly embodies one or more themes.
Paradox: an apparent contradiction that upon reflection is seen to express a genuine truth; the contradiction must be resolved or explained before we see its truth.
Parallelism: the verse form in which all biblical poetry is written. The general definition that will cover the various types of parallelism is as follows: two or more lines that form a pattern based on repetition or balance of thought or grammar. The phrase thought couplet is a good working synonym.

> **Stairstep parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which the last key word of a line becomes the first main word in the next line.
> **Synonymous parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which two or more lines state the same idea in different words but in similar grammatical form; the second line repeats the content of all or part of the first line.
> **Synthetic parallelism:** a type of parallelism in which the second line completes the thought of the first line, but without repeating anything from the first line. also called growing parallelism.

Parody: a work of literature that parallels but inverts the usual meaning of a literary genre or a specific earlier work of literature.
Passion stories: gospel stories that narrate the events surrounding the trial, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
Pastoral: literature in which the setting, characters, and events are those of the shepherd's world.
Personification: a figure of speech in which human attributes are given to something nonhuman, such as animals, objects, or abstract qualities.
Plot: the sequence of events in a story, usually based on a central conflict and having a beginning, middle, and end.
Plot Twist: an unexpected or surprising turn of events in a narrative that alters the direction of the story or changes the reader's understanding of the plot.
Poetic justice: the feature of stories by which good characters are rewarded and evil characters are punished.
Poetic license: figurative language that is not literally true or factual.
Prolepsis (opposite of flashback): interrupts the chronological flow of a story by jumping ahead in time to reveal something that will happen later. Prolepsis can take several forms, such as a direct flashforward showing future events, or more subtly, through hints or statements that suggest what will happen.

Proportion: highlighting a work's emphasis by the quantitative amount it occupies in the narrative.
Protagonist: the leading character in a story, whether sympathetic or unsympathetic.
Proverb: a concise, memorable expression of truth.
Pun: a play on words, often using a word that sounds like another word but that has a different meaning.
Repetition: the recurrence of similar or identical elements (words, actions, concepts).
Resolution: following the climax, the part of the story where the conflict is resolved and the narrative comes to a conclusion. It ties up loose ends and provides closure for the characters and the plot.
Rhetorical question: a figure of speech in which the writer asks a question whose answer is so obvious that it is left unstated; a question asked, not to elicit information, but for the sake of effect, usually an emotional effect.
Rising Action: rising action is the building of tension as the plot conflict escalates towards the climax.
Sarcasm: the use of irony to mock or convey contempt, often through exaggerated statements that are not meant to be taken literally.
Satire: the exposure, through ridicule or rebuke, of human vice or folly.
Satiric norm: the standard by which the object of attack is criticized in a satire.
Scene: a subunit of an episode; it records an incident that takes place in a different place and/or at a different time than the incidents that precede and follow it.
Setting: the time and place in which a story occurs.
Simile: a figure of speech in which the writer compares two phenomena, using the explicit formula "like" or "as."
Suspense: the feeling of anticipation or anxiety about what will happen next in the story, often created through uncertainty or danger.
Symbol: any detail in a work of literature that in addition to its literal meaning stands for something else.
Symbolism: involves the use of symbols to represent ideas or concepts beyond their literal meaning, often conveying deeper significance.
Temporal overlay: a literary technique where the narrator juxtaposes episodes or scenes that overlap chronologically, rather than presenting events in strictly chronological succession.
Theme: a generalization about life that a work of literature as a whole embodies or implies.
Tone: the attitude or emotional stance of the narrator or author towards the subject matter, conveyed through word choice and style.
Tragedy: a narrative form built around an exceptional calamity stemming from the protagonist's wrong choice.
Turning point (character): the place in a narrative where a character's characterization changes significantly due to events in the plot.
Turning point (plot): the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved.
Typological pattern: the prophetic expectation of similarities in character or events. Similar to "extended echo effect," but with the inclusion of prophetic expectation.
Voice: the distinct personality and style of the narrator or author, influencing how the story is perceived.

Well-made plot: a plot that unfolds according to the following pattern: exposition (background information), inciting moment (or inciting force), rising action, turning point (the point from which, at least in retrospect, the reader can begin to see how the plot conflict will be resolved), further complication, climax, and denouement.

Witness stories: gospel stories in which either Jesus or another character testifies about Jesus or his works. Also called testimony stories.

Occasion

Who?

The text does not identify its author / editor / compiler. Some scholars have posited possibilities like near-contemporaneous composition by two of the faithful high priests during David's reign, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok (2 Sam 15:36) or Abiathar the son of Ahimelech (1 Sam 22:20–23). Jewish tradition proposed Samuel as the author of 1 Samuel 1–24 (up to Samuel's death) and the remainder to the prophets Nathan (2 Sam 7:2) and Gad (1 Sam 22:5).[15] In the end, it is not possible to conclude with certainty the identity of the author / editor / compiler.

To Whom?

The question of audience intrinsically connects to the date of composition, which is also an unknown variable. The text does not explicitly identify its audience. Based on its apparent rhetorical purpose to bolster support for the Davidic king and its anti-Saul / Ephraim / Israel polemic, however, an audience consisting of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah following Solomon's death serves as a reasonable supposition. While this cannot be validated with certainty, this paper will assume an Israelite audience during the divided kingdom era. While the author certainly wanted the Southern kingdom to maintain their loyalty to the Davidic dynasty (most of whom did so anyways), the application of 1–2 Samuel would be especially relevant for the rebellious northern tribes (the kingdom of Israel). Ever since Solomon's son Rehoboam, the Northern Kingdom had lived in rebellion against the Davidic king. In this case, the author of 1–2 Samuel probably wrote this book after Solomon's reign (ending 931 BC) but prior to the fall of Samaria (722 BC).

When?

The text does not indicate its date of composition. Proposals range from near-contemporaneous to the events contained in the text, to as late as the post-exilic period. Based on its apparent rhetorical purpose to bolster support for the Davidic king and its anti-Saul / Ephraim / Israel polemic, however, an audience consisting of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah following Solomon's death serves as a reasonable supposition. The author of 1–2 Samuel probably therefore wrote this book after Solomon's reign (ending 931 BC) but prior to the fall of Samaria (722 BC). While this cannot be validated with certainty, this paper will assume a date of composition somewhere during the two centuries spanning the 920's BC to the 720's BC. Nevertheless, even if written during the exilic or post-exilic periods, the message would not change. Israelites of every age needed to accept that Yahweh had chosen David and his seed to rule Israel forever and pledge their allegiance to him.

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[15] See Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 699–700, and Tremper Longman, III and Raymond B. Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 153.

Where?

No textual information is given regarding the location of composition. Given the apparent rhetorical purposes of Samuel, a location in Judah and possibly Jerusalem itself seems reasonable, although this cannot be validated with certainty.

Why?

The book of Samuel functions as a defense of the Davidic kingship in Judah. In the biblical metanarrative, Samuel follows the book of Judges which concluded with chaos in Israel for lack of a king (Judg 21:25). In Samuel, the appointing of Saul as king hardly resolved the problem, however. Saul's failure demonstrated the need for a greater king, and he ultimately served as a character foil for David. In contrast to Saul, David initially appeared as an ideal Israelite king. His own failures and covenant violations, however, led to the internal strife and bloodshed typified in Judges. Yet, Yahweh's granting of the Davidic Covenant confirmed that while David would not be *the* promised king / promised seed, nevertheless a Davidic descendant would eternally reign on his throne.

Likely written during the period of Israel's divided monarchy (ca. 920s BC to 720s BC), the book of Samuel functioned as an anti-Saul / Ephraim / Norther Kingdom polemic and would serve to bolster support for the Davidic king and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. It demonstrated to its audiences that while Saul and David both committed covenant violations, Saul's sins rightly resulted in his deposition as king. On the other hand, Yahweh preserved David's throne and his dynasty despite David's violations due to (1) his penitent response, and (2) the eternal covenant Yahweh made with him. The author intended all Israelites, and especially those in the rebellious north, to preserve loyalty to the Davidic King in Judah while awaiting the ultimate Davidic king who would fulfill the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7).

Genre

The book of Samuel was written as an historical narrative.

Textual Issues

The Masoretic Text of Samuel contains corruptions in many places. The Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls serve helpfully in moving toward a Hebrew *vorlage* considerably less corrupt than the MT. For the purposes of this paper, the MT will serve as the assumed baseline text. As needed, notes will provide explanations for choosing LXX or DSS readings over the MT.

Proposed Message Statement

In order to address the Northern kingdom of Israel's rebellion against Jerusalem and the Davidic king, an unknown author composed an historical narrative for all Israelites during the divided kingdom period (probably ca. 920's–720's BC) to explain that Yahweh had chosen David and his seed to rule eternally instead of Saul, so that Israelites in both kingdoms would abandon loyalty to the Northern king and pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

Proposed Outline[16]

I. Samuel's qualifications to install Israel's king (1 Sam 1–7)
   A. Samuel's miraculous birth to a godly mother (1 Sam 1:1–2:10)
   B. Samuel's victory over the Philistines (2:11–7:15)
II. Samuel's installation of Saul (1 Sam 8–12)
III. Samuel's deposition of Saul (1 Sam 13–15)
IV. Saul's tragedy and David's rise (1 Sam 16–31)
V. Yahweh's establishment of David (2 Sam 1–10)
VI. David's non-disqualifying sins (2 Sam 11:1–21:14)
VII. Epilogue of David's reign (2 Sam 21:15–24:25)

Use of Rhetoric in 1–2 Samuel

Classical rhetoric employs three modes and three species of rhetoric. The three modes of rhetoric include *logos*,[17] *pathos*,[18] and *ethos*.[19] The three species include judicial,[20] epideictic,[21] and deliberative[22] rhetoric.[23] As will be demonstrated in the proposed argument exposition below, the author of 1–2 Samuel had an overall deliberative purpose of persuading his audience to pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. To that end, the author primarily employed judicial rhetoric by urging his audience to rightly cast judgment and blame upon Saul by showing that Saul rightly had the kingdom torn away from him. On the other hand, he sought to persuade the audience that David was superior to Saul in every way, and that even David's own sins did not disqualify him from the eternal covenant. The second major rhetorical approach of the author involved logic (*logos*)

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[16] Proposed outline adapted from Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, ed. Mark L. Strauss, John H. Walton, and Rosalie de Rosset, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 4.

[17] The rhetoric of *logos* employs logical arguments intended to appeal to rational principles found within the author's discourse.

[18] The rhetoric of *pathos* employs arguments intended to arouse an emotional reaction and play upon the audience's feelings.

[19] The rhetoric of *ethos* makes ethical appeals on the basis of credibility: good character or authority.

[20] With judicial rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to make a judgment about events that occurred in the past. This judgment often deals with questions of truth or justice, and can be positive (a defense or "apology" of correctness / innocence) or negative (a prosecution, emphasizing guilt).

[21] With epideictic rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade his audience to hold or reaffirm a certain point of view in the present time. The author wants to increase (or decrease / undermine) his audience's asset to a certain value or belief. To this end, epideictic rhetoric will frequently use examples of *praise* and *blame*.

[22] With deliberative rhetoric, the author seeks to persuade the audience to take (or not take) some action in the (often near) future. Deliberative rhetoric deals with questions of self-interest and future benefits for the audience, and appears in the form of exhortation (positive) or warning (negative).

[23] For a complete discussion of classical rhetoric in biblical studies, see George A. Kennedy, *New Testament Interpretation through Rhetorical Criticism*, Studies in Religion (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

and appeal to authority (*ethos*). The author demonstrated that Samuel was an authorized prophet-judge-priest as the leader of Israel. Samuel both appointed Saul as king, but then deposed him and anointed David in Saul's place. Since Samuel acted on Yahweh's authority, all Israelites should follow the dynasty of the king whom Samuel appointed.

Proposed Argument Exposition

With the opening of the book of Samuel, the narrator identified **Samuel's qualifications to install Israel's king (1 Sam 1–7)**. The narrator pointed to (1) Samuel's miraculous birth to a godly mother who hoped in the promised seed, and (2) Samuel's victory over the Philistines in contrast to Eli's failure, in order to establish the credentials of Samuel as the king-anointing prophet and judge of Yahweh. Since Samuel will eventually anoint David as king, a rebellion against David and his dynasty represented a rebellion against Samuel who spoke for Yahweh, and therefore a rebellion against Yahweh. Thus, because Samuel functioned as the authorized prophet of Yahweh, the Israelite audience should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

With his recounting of **Samuel's miraculous birth (1:1–2:10)**, the narrator demonstrated the godly heritage and divine administration of Samuel's birth. That the barren Hannah fit the archetype of barren women like many of the matriarchs of Israel (e.g., Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and also Samson's mother), established the pattern that Yahweh would work through her and her son for Israel's benefit. Yet, barrenness was a covenant curse for disobedience (28:18; see Deut 7:14; 28:4, 11). Considering the extremely negative portrayal of Ephraimites in Judges, the book's opening introduction of a man from the hill country of Ephraim (1:1) sets the reader's expectation for a negative character, possibly along with his wife. Instead, the man faithfully offered sacrifices in Shiloh annually and loved his barren wife Hannah (1 Sam 1:3–5). Hannah's vow to give her son as a Nazirite to Yahweh (1 Sam 1:11) characterizes her as a God-fearing woman and links her son to Samson, also a deliverer of Israel, thus foreshadowing her son's future use by Yahweh. Her fulfillment of the vow demonstrated her fidelity to the Law (Deut 23:21, 23). This introduction also characterizes Eli as a foolish and uncaring priest unable to tell the difference between a drunk woman and a vexed woman (1 Sam 1:13–14). That Hannah conceived (1 Sam 1:19) after Yahweh had shut her womb (1 Sam 1:5–6) demonstrates the miraculous nature of Samuel's birth.

The narrator established the story's setting in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:3, 9, etc.). In Judges, the idolatrous, covetous, and corrupt priest Micah (Judg 17–18) had carved and set up an idolatrous divine image in Shiloh (Judg 18:31). Between the opening mention of a certain man from the hill country of Ephraim, and the setting of Shiloh, the audience can expect problems. Indeed, the priesthood in Shiloh is still corrupt and incompetent, but the hope portrayed through the characters Elkanah and Hannah perhaps foreshadow Shiloh's redemption as well. Indeed, with Samuel's service, Yahweh's presence returned to Shiloh (1 Sam 3:21), so redeeming the corruption cause by Micah.

Hannah's prayer (2:1–10) illuminates her as a godly woman looking for Yahweh's promised seed / anointed one / Messiah to rule on his behalf. Her prayer shared many of the sentiments evoked in David's songs from 2 Samuel 22:1–23:7, as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Shared themes in the songs of Hannah and David[24]

Theme	Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10)	David (2 Sam 22:1–23:7)
Deliverance from enemies	2:1	22:3–4
God as a "Rock"	2:2	22:32
Sheol and death	2:6	22:6
Yahweh thundering from heaven	2:10	22:14
Yahweh's protection of those with חֶסֶד (loyal love)	2:9	22:26
Yahweh's חֶסֶד (loyal love) for his anointed	2:9	22:51

Hannah's song thus serves as a prophetic view of what Yahweh will accomplish through her son Samuel and king David whom he would anoint. David would live to see its realization in his lifetime, and his song (2 Sam 22:1–23:7) looked back to celebrate the same things Hannah hoped for.[25] In this way, the two songs demonstrate to the audience that Yahweh truly worked through Hannah, Samuel, and David. Hannah hoped for a son whom she would dedicate to Yahweh; Samuel became the leader of Israel and anointed king David; therefore, the Israelite audience of the book of Samuel should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

The book of Judges had described the failure of the judges (chs. 3–16) and the Levites (chs. 17–21) and set the stage for the failure of the levitical high priest (1 Sam 1–7). With his recounting of **Samuel's victory over the Philistines in contrast to Eli's failure (2:11–7:15)**, the narrator characterized Eli the high priest as an ineffective and failed leader. As summarized by Chisholm:

> (1) he [Eli] initially misjudged Hannah's character (1:14), (2) he heard about, rather than saw for himself, his sons' sins and then made only a half-hearted attempt to stop their behavior (2:22–25), (3) he did not immediately recognize that the Lord was calling young Samuel, probably because prophetic revelation was rare in those days (3:1–9), and (4) … he is one of the last in the town to discover the news of Israel's defeat (4:12–14). His blindness (3:2; 4:15) may epitomize the fact that he was continually 'in the dark' about people and events. In the same way the references to his sitting on his chair at both the beginning and end of the story may reflect the fact that he is a relatively passive and ineffective leader, always waiting to receive information from others.[26]

That the sons of Eli ate the fat of sacrifices (1 Sam 2:12–17) and committed adultery (1 Sam 2:22) showed their disregard for the Law by committing high-handed, presumptuous sins worthy of death (Lev 3:15–16; 7:25; Num 15:30–31; Deut 5:18; 22:22–29). Their failure to listen to their father also revealed a covenant violation and their status as rebellious sons who were

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[24] Data in this table adapted from Longman, III and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 158.

[25] David of course recognized that he himself was not the promised one, but he looked to the covenant promises that one of his male heirs would eternally rule.

[26] Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., "Characterization in 1–2 Samuel: The Use of Quotations and Intertextual Links," *BSac* 174 (2017): 47.

worthy of death (Deut 5:16; 21:18–21). Even further, Eli's status as high priest meant they also violated obedience to a leader in Israel and so deserved death (Deut 17:9–12). Eli's unwillingness to condemn his sons (1 Sam 2:19) showed his inability to judge impartially as per the requirements of Israel's leaders (Deut 1:17).

In contrast to the blind and clueless Eli, Samuel heard directly from Yahweh (1 Sam 3:1–14) and acted faithfully upon his words (1 Sam 3:18). With Samuel's initial response of, "Here I am!" (1 Sam 3:4) to Yahweh's call, the narrator positively characterized Samuel because his response echoed those of Abraham (Gen 22:1, 11), Jacob (Gen 31:11; 46:2), and Moses (Exod 3:4). The reader could therefore expect that the son born of a barren mother and eagerly presenting himself at Yahweh's service will be used of Yahweh. Indeed, all of Samuel's prophecies came true (1 Sam 3:19), including the fall of Eli and his sons (1 Sam 4), and all Israel (not just the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) recognized Samuel as a legitimate prophet of Yahweh (1 Sam 3:20). This would speak especially to the readers in the Northern Kingdom, that their own tribal ancestors from the north accepted Samuel (indeed, an Ephraimite himself) as a priest and prophet. The Chronicler noted that Samuel came from the line of Levi (1 Chron 6:16–28). Samuel could therefore legitimately function as a priest even though (as suited the author's purposes) the author did not mention the levitical lineage, but instead emphasized Samuel's provenance from the tribal inheritance of Ephraim.

With (1) the Israelite defeat at the hands of the Philistines under the spiritual leadership of Eli and his corrupt sons (1 Sam 4),[27] and (2) the Israelite victory over the Philistines under Samuel's leadership (1 Sam 7), the narrator established a juxtaposition by comparison: the prophetic words of Samuel regarding the deaths of Eli and his sons came true. Instead of the corrupt Levitical priesthood, Samuel would now function as leader, having been appointed by Yahweh and recognized by the entire nation. That the Israelites asked for the reason of their initial defeat (1 Sam 4:3) echoed a similar question about the initial defeat at Ai (Josh 7:7). And like Ai, the Philistine victory occurred on account of Israelite sin—probably a combination of Eli, his wicked sons, and the syncretistic idol-worshipping Israelites (1 Sam 7:3–4).[28] Image 1 below identifies the journey of the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to the battlefield, among the various Philistine cities, and its return to Israelite territory.

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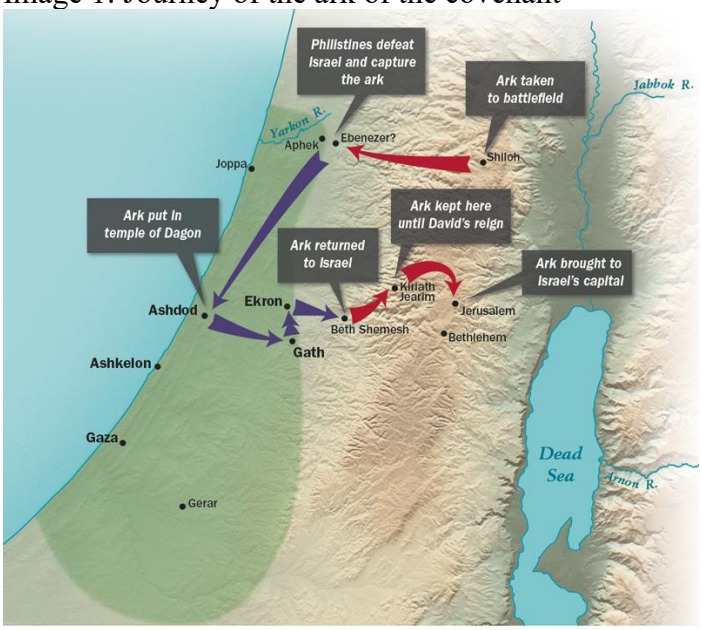
[27] Moses had ordered priests to be present on the day of battle to exhort the army (Deut 20:2–4). Yet Eli and his sons remained in Shiloh, well away from the battle front (1 Sam 4:

[28] Indeed, the wicked sons of Eli who despised Yahweh were present by the ark (1 Sam 4:4).

Image 1: Journey of the ark of the covenant[29]



The Israelites' second defeat despite the presence of the ark in battle (1 Sam 4:7–11) sets the reader's expectation that perhaps the ark and the incumbent presence of Yahweh which it represented, was not powerful. Yet, the gods of the Philistines had not conquered the God of Israel, as the ark proved too much for the Philistines and their gods (1 Sam 5), showing that the issue of Israelite defeat was not a lack Yahweh's power (for the ark represented his very presence). Rather, the military defeat was on account of the sin of those who despised Yahweh (1 Sam 2:30). Similar attitudes to those of Eli's sons (1 Sam 2:30) include the Philistines (1 Sam 5) and the seventy residents of Beth Shemesh (1 Sam 6:19), accounting for, respectively, their plagues and their deaths.[30] That the pagan Philistines would seek to present guilt offerings to a foreign God (Yahweh) (1 Sam 6:3–4) and give glory (כָּבוֹד) to Yahweh (1 Sam 6:5) is situational irony because the *Israelites* were the ones in need of repentance before their God. In this way, the Philistines function as character foils to (1) the irreverent residents of Beth Shemesh (1 Sam 6:19) and (2) to the "heavy" (כבד) Eli who honored (כבד) his sons more than Yahweh (1 Sam 2:29).[31]

With the passing away of Eli and his household, Samuel's leadership brought spiritual revival (1 Sam 7:3–4) and national repentance (1 Sam 7:5–6), along with the attendant military victory (1 Sam 7:7–14). That the victory involved Yahweh "thundering" against the Philistines (1 Sam 7:10) recalls Hannah's prayer that Yahweh "thunder" against his enemies (1

[29] Image from Robert B. Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, ed. Mark L. Strauss, John H. Walton, and Rosalie de Rosset, Teach the Text Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 28.

[30] The seventy deaths at Beth Shemesh foreshadow the death of Uzzah (2 Sam 6:6–7).

[31] Chisholm, Jr., Chisholm Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, 38.

Sam 2:10).[32] His victory likewise foreshadows the coming victories of the king he will anoint. Samuel's exhortation to remove the foreign gods in Israel (1 Sam 7:3) echoed the same command of Joshua (Josh 24:23). Samuel's intercession for Israel (1 Sam 7:8–9) painted him as a Moses-type figure.[33] That Samuel named a stone "Ebenezer" (1 Sam 7:12) after his military victory is situational irony because it was at "Ebenezer" (literally, "stone of the one who helps") that the Philistines had previously defeated Israel and stolen away the ark (1 Sam 4–5). Samuel's annual judging circuit (1 Sam 7:15–17) demonstrates that he did indeed rule all of Israel. The narrator thus presented a clear contrast between the corrupt Levitical priesthood on the one hand, and Samuel the prophet-priest-judge who functioned as Israel's new leader, on the other. While Eli didn't even manage his own household, Samuel led a nation. While Eli could not secure spiritual revival and military victory (the two went hand-in-hand), Samuel did both.

Thus, the narrator portrayed Samuel as a leader (1) like Moses, who interceded for Israel, (2) like Joshua, who rid the nation of idols, and (3) like Samson, who began (but did not complete) Israel's deliverance from the Philistines.[34] Ultimately, the narrator's entire account of Samuel's birth and his rise to leadership (1 Sam 1–7) revealed the juxtaposition by comparison between the corrupt Levitical high priest, Eli and his household, and Samuel. The narrator wanted his Israelite audience to recognize that a prophet-priest-judge from Ephraim (a proper noun commonly used synonymously with "Israel" and the "Northern Kingdom") had legitimately risen to power, was authorized by Yahweh, and had installed David as king at Yahweh's behest. This further strengthens the author's case for his audience—especially those in the north—to follow the Davidic king. Since a legitimate prophet of Yahweh from their own tribe had anointed David, and Yahweh had promised David an eternal dynasty, they too should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king. In these ways, this section contributed to the author's overall deliberative purpose that Israelites in both kingdoms would abandon loyalty to the Northern king and pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

Having established the stellar qualifications of Samuel as a legitime prophet of Yahweh and the recognized leader of Israel, the narrator then introduced Saul as a character in the story and described **Samuel's installation of Saul (1 Sam 8–12)**. The narrator characterized Saul negatively such that Saul's entire function in the plot is to serve as a character foil for David. Saul's characterization and actions in this section prepare the reader for his downfall in the next (1 Sam 13–15). The author intended his Israelite audience, and particularly the northern tribes, to recognize the failure of the king from Benjamin and therefore to abandon the divisive and rebellious Northern Kingdom and instead pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. In contrast to David, the narrator employed echoes and narrative analogies to identify how Saul more closely resembled the failed judges (see Table 3 below). In line with the entire purpose of the book of Samuel, the author wanted to bolster support for the line of David and discredit any challengers from Saul /

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[32] That Yahweh threw the Philistines into a panic (המם) (1 Sam 7:10) indicates Yahweh's faithfulness to his covenant to deliver the Canaanites over to Israel by throwing them into a great confusion (מְהוּמָה) (Deut 7:23)

[33] This is validated by Jeremiah who declared, "Even if Moses and Samuel stood before me …" (Jer 15:1).

[34] Neither does Samuel complete this task, but the king he anointed (David) will do so.

Ephraim / the Northern Kingdom. With narrative analogies between the reigns of Saul and David and the judges, the author cast the monarchy of Saul of negative light as a foil against the Davidic monarchy. Othniel, the good Judahite judge, corresponded to David while all the other bad judges corresponded to Saul.[35] Table 3 below summarizes the narrative analogies between the judges and the reigns of David and Saul.

Table 3: Narrative analogies between the judges and the reigns of David and Saul[36]

Judge / King	Analogy / Correspondence
David / Othniel	• Faithful to Yahweh
Saul / Ehud	• Both from Benjamin • Both fought the Moabites and Amalekites (3:12–30; 1 Sam 11:1–11; 14:48) • Ehud permitted the idols to remain at Gilgal (Judg 3:19, 26); Saul made burnt offerings at Gilgal (1 Sam 13:7–14) and spared the Amalekite king at Gilgal (1 Sam 15)
Saul / Barak	• Both received a prophetic summons for battle (Judg 4:6–7; 1 Sam 15:1–3) • Barak failed to slay Sisera (Judg 4:15–17); Saul failed to slay Agag (1 Sam 15:9) • Jael—a substitute for Barak—slew Sisera (Judg 4:21); Samuel—a substitute for Saul—slew Agag (1 Sam 15:33) • A Kenite (Jael) is near the battle (Judg 4:11, 17, 21); Kenites are near Saul's battle with the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:6) • Sisera's mother lost her son (Judg 5:28); Agag's mother lost her son (1 Sam 15:33)
Saul / Gideon	• Both called גִּבּוֹר חָיִל, mighty warriors (Judg 6:12; 1 Sam 9:1) • Both minimize their own importance (Judg 6:15; 1 Sam 9:21) • Both were empowered by Yahweh's Spirit (Judg 6:34; 1 Sam 10:6) • Both were offered the kingship (Judg 8:22–23; 1 Sam 11:15) • Both separated their army into three companies (Judg 7:16; 1 Sam 11:11) • Israelites hid in caves (Judg 6:2; 1 Sam 13:6) • Both summoned their armies with trumpets (Judg 6:34; 1 Sam 13:3) • Both faced enemies numbered like the sand of the seashore (Judg 7:12; 1 Sam 13:5) • Both had trembling (חרד) troops (Judg 7:3; 1 Sam 13:7) • Both faced tests of self-control (Judg 7:4–8; 1 Sam 13:6–14) • Both had enemies in panic and confusion (Judg 7:22; 1 Sam 14:15–20) • Both caused Ephraimites to pursue the enemy (Judg 7:24; 1 Sam 14:22) • Gideon requested food for his men (Judg 8:5); Saul forbade food (1 Sam 14:24) • Gideon made an ephod (Judg 8:27); Saul made an altar (1 Sam 14:35)

[35] See this author's argument of Judges demonstrating that the author of Judges portrayed all of the judges, with the exception of Othniel, in negative light as a means of discrediting Saul / Ephraim / the Northern Kingdom.

[36] This table is adapted from Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 284–96, and Chisholm, Jr., "Characterization in 1–2 Samuel," *BSac* 174, 52–54.

	• Both slaughtered Israelites (Judg 8:17–21; 1 Sam 22:18–19)[37] • Both obsessed with avenging their personal enemies (Judg 8:4–21; 1 Sam 14:24) • Both had their military forces encamped at Gilboa (Judg 7:1; 1 Sam 28:4) • Both had enemy forces on the slope of Mount Moreh (Judg 7:1, 8; 1 Sam 28:4)[38] • Both were afraid of the enemy (Judg 7:10; 1 Sam 28:5) • Gideon encouraged by a dream at Endor (Judg 7:13–15); Saul discouraged by lack of a dream and sought a medium at Endor instead (1 Sam 28:6–7) • Gideon's son afraid to kill a king (Judg 8:20); Saul's armor bearer afraid to kill Saul (1 Sam 31:4)
Saul / Abimelech	• Both had rivals to the throne—Abimelech's 70 half-brothers (Judg 9:2) and David (1 Sam 20:30–31 • Abimelech slaughtered his 70 half-brothers (Judg 9:5); Saul slaughtered 85 priests (1 Sam 22:18) • Abimelech slaughtered the citizens of Shechem (Judg 9:40–45); Saul slaughtered the citizens of Nob (1 Sam 22:19) • Jotham the sole escapee of Abimelech Judg (9:5); Abiathar the sole escapee of Saul (1 Sam 23:20) • Jotham's rebuke cursed Abimelech and his subjects (Judg 9:7–21); Samuel's rebuke cursed Saul and his subjects (1 Sam 8:4–22; 12:1–25) • Both obsessed with avenging their personal enemies (Judg 9:31–50; 1 Sam 14:24) • Both had evil spirits (Judg 9:23; 1 Sam 16:14) • Both gave a suicidal command to their armor bearers (Judg 9:54; 1 Sam 31:4)
Saul / Jephthah	• Both called גִּבּוֹר חָיִל, mighty warriors (Judg 11:1; 1 Sam 9:1) • Both made a self-centered vow (Judg 11:30–31; 1 Sam 14:24) • Both made vows motivated by vengeance on their enemies (Judg 11:36; 12:1–6; 1 Sam 14:24) • Both made an unwitting offer of their offspring (Judg 11:34; 1 Sam 14:27–28) • Jephthah claimed his daughter had "brought disaster" on him (Judg 11:35);[39] Jonathan claimed his father had "brought trouble" on the nation (1 Sam 14:29). Both echoed Joshua's accusation to Achan that he had brought trouble on the nation (Josh 6:18; 7:25) • Jephthah's daughter complied with the vow to die (Judg 11:36, 39); Jonathan complied with the vow to die (1 Sam 14:43)

[37] Gideon killed because of refusal to feed his troops. Saul killed priests for their willingness to feed David and his troops. Thus, in a movement from lesser to greater, the author casts Saul in even worse light than Gideon.

[38] Shunem (1 Sam 28:4) is on the western slope of Mount Moreh.

[39] The Hiphil form of כרע is understood in the metaphorical sense of "bringing disaster" (*HALOT*, s.v. כרע).

	• Jephthah had a remorseful attitude to his vow (Judg 11:35); Saul had a callous attitude to his (1 Sam 14:44)
Saul / Samson	• Both fought the Philistines (Judg 13:5; 1 Sam 9:16) • Samson empowered by Yahweh's Spirit (Judg 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14), as was Saul (1 Sam 10:6, 10; 11:6; 19:23) • Both experienced the departure of Yahweh's Spirit (Judg 16:20; 1 Sam 16:14) • Both obsessed with avenging their personal enemies (Judg 15:7; 16:28; 1 Sam 14:24) • Both uttered a death wish prior to dying (Judg 16:30; 1 Sam 31:4) • Samson humiliated by the Philistines prior to his death (Judg 16:21, 25); Saul humiliated by the Philistines after his death (1 Sam 31:9–10) • Samson committed suicide in great victory (Judg 16:30); Saul committed suicide in great defeat (1 Sam 31:4)

As demonstrated in the above table, the author of Samuel employed echoes and narrative analogies between David and Saul and the various judges to make a significant point.[40] Othniel, the Judahite judge who alone served faithfully, ran parallel to David, the faithful Judahite king. On the other hand, the analogies between Saul and the other judges (besides Othniel) show how Saul was in fact *worse* than the judges and thus deserving of even more condemnation. With such a goal, the author employed judicial rhetoric in his attempt to convince the audience to prosecute the guilty Saul. Since Saul (and by extension all the Israelite kings of the north) was not a viable choice for the nation's leadership, the audience would need to look to the legitimate Judahite king instead. The narrator's recounting of Saul's life therefore functioned to impel the Israelite audience to pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

The failure of Samuel's sons to follow in his righteous ways (1 Sam 8:2–3; see Deut 16:19) demonstrated that lasting covenant fidelity would not come through Samuel or his line. Indeed, Samuel himself showed signs of violating the covenant. For example, Samuel sanctioned sacrifices at high places (1 Sam 9:12–25), but Yahweh despised the high places of Canaan (Lev 26:30) and commanded the Israelites to destroy them (Num 33:52; Deut 12:2–3). Any Israelite found offering a sacrifice at an illegitimate location—such as a detestable high place—was guilty of bloodshed and deserved death (Lev 17:3–4). Additionally, Samuel's failure to restrain his evil sons (1 Sam 8:1–3) contains an echo of Eli in that neither father condemned their sons, and thus showed Samuel's inability to judge impartially (Deut 1:17) and follow the law requiring the execution of rebellious sons (Deut 21:18–21). Judges in Israel were to be haters of dishonest gain (בָּצַע) (Exod 18:21), the exact word used to describe Samuel's sons (1 Sam 8:3). Likewise, the narrator's identification of Samuel as "old" (1 Sam 8:1) echoes the same description of Eli (1 Sam 2:22). In both cases, the adjective "old" is connected to a leader with two unjust sons in positions of authority.

This recognition of Samuel's unjust sons served as the impetus for the Israelites demanding a king as the Gentiles had (1 Sam 8:5). This request advances the plot to the kingship

[40] The elements of this table include data from Saul's introduction (1 Sam 8) until Saul's death (1 Sam 31). The table is therefore not limited to the current "section" of text (1 Sam 8–12). Instead, the table is intended to present all the data in one place to identify the patterns and rhetorical function of the narrative analogies between Saul and the judges.

of Saul and ultimately of David. The request for a king only revealed the nation's rejection of Yahweh, however (1 Sam 8:7).[41] Wanting a king to fight their battles (1 Sam 8:20), they failed to recognize the military success Yahweh had given them against the Philistines following the revival Samuel instigated (1 Sam 7).

The Israelites had asked (שׁאל) for a king (1 Sam 8:10), and soon the narrator introduced Saul (שָׁאוּל), whose name means "being asked," and is derived from the passive form of the same verb. The reader can thus anticipate this man will "be asked" to serve as king. In this section, the narrator characterized Saul "as one who is hesitant and who tends to impede, not advance, both the plot and Yahweh's purposes for Israel."[42] For example, despite a good social standing and striking physical appearance, Saul was introduced into the story as a lost-donkey-finder, and not even a good one, at that (1 Sam 9:1–4). Unable to accomplish his task, he easily gave up (1 Sam 9:5). Saul's objection to the servant's suggestion that they inquire of Samuel (1 Sam 9:7) demonstrated his passivity and spiritual unawareness. Later, Saul's shying away from the kingship (1 Sam 10:22), refusal to fulfill the Law in executing those who rebelled against Israel's leader (1 Sam 10:27; 11:12–13; see Deut 17:9–13), and his return to farming (1 Sam 11:5) after being appointed as king (1 Sam 10:24–25) enhance those same characteristics. That Gibeah held the moniker, "Gibeah of God" prior to the kingship (1 Sam 10:5) but became "Gibeah of Saul" afterward (1 Sam 11:4) portends the departure of God from Saul.

The siege of Jabesh Gilead by the Ammonite king Nahash provided the opportunity for Saul to lead Israel to a military victory (1 Sam 11). The name of King Nahash (נָחָשׁ) is identical to the serpent (נָחָשׁ) of Genesis 3. The narrator therefore portrayed these descendants of Lot as a nation led by the serpent. Since Goliath will likewise be described as serpent-like (see notes on 1 Sam 17), Saul and David both defeated serpent-seed nations. David, however, did this alone while Saul required an army of 330,000 soldiers. Saul needed to threaten dismemberment to force the Israelites to fight, while David willingly volunteered. David expressly fought in the name of Yahweh, while Saul never mentioned his God. David cut off the head of his enemy, while the narrator gave no indication of Saul taking an active fighting role aside from leadership. Indeed, the reader discovers that Nahash died sometime later—well after David's kingdom was established (2 Sam 10:1). In every way, then, between the two battle accounts (Saul vs. Nachas and the Ammonites and David vs. Goliath and the Philistines) the narrator portrayed David as superior.

Having now installed Saul as king, Samuel's farewell speech functions in the narrative to serve as a testimony of his blameless leadership. While he did commit covenant violations as mentioned above, the Israelites' testimony of his blameless life (1 Sam 12:1–5) show that from beginning to end, Samuel had served with integrity as the leader of Israel.[43] Thus, none of the readers could claim a fault to Samuel—they must necessarily accept Samuel's coming deposition of Saul and his anointing of David as Saul's replacement. The miraculous sign of a thunderstorm during the wheat harvest (1 Sam 12:16–18) confirmed his words as authorized by Yahweh.

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[41] Moses had foreseen the Israelites asking for a king like the Gentiles (Deut 17:14), and such a desire held a negative connotation.

[42] Chisholm, Jr., "Characterization in 1–2 Samuel," *BSac* 174, 49.

[43] Samuel's integrity contrasted sharply with Eli and Eli's sons, and also Samuel's sons after him.

Through the testimonies of Samuel himself, the people of Israel, Yahweh, and Saul, the narrator attested to Samuel's just service as a leader. The miraculous thunderstorm added further confirmation from Yahweh to Samuel's words. Thus, by all accounts Samuel faithfully served Israel as priest-prophet-judge. His exhortations for covenant fidelity and warnings against rebellion and idolatry (1 Sam 12:14–15, 20–25) would speak especially to the readers in the Northern Kingdom, where they lived in nearly unbroken idolatry and rebellion against the Davidic dynasty. Given Samuel's widely attested credibility and authority, the audience should therefore pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (i.e., the author's overall deliberative purpose).

Following the narrator's account of Samuel's installation of Saul (1 Sam 8–12), his recounting of **Samuel's deposition of Saul (1 Sam 13–15)** demonstrates the failure of Saul and the reasons for his deposition. The deposition is important because in Saul's place, Samuel would anoint David as the true king of Israel. This section demonstrates the disobedience of Saul to Yahweh's words. In contrast to Jonathan's faith in Yahweh and his resultant military success, it revealed Saul's ineffectiveness as a military leader due to his own lack of faith. It further displayed his irrational and foolish behavior. All of these contribute to the message that while Samuel had indeed anointed Saul as king (1 Sam 8–12), due to Saul's many failures, Yahweh through Samuel had legitimately and legally deposed the king in favor of another—soon to be revealed in the narrative as David.

The narrator created a juxtaposition by contrast between the characters of Saul and Jonathan. While Jonathan successfully attacked a Philistine garrison (1 Sam 13:3), Saul failed to inspire confidence among his troops, who hid in caves, quaked with fear, and deserted him (1 Sam 13:6–7). Moses had instructed fearlessness in the face of enemies (Deut 20:1) and that the priest address the army prior to battle (Deut 7:17–23; 20:2–4). Any who feared should return home (Deut 20:8). Saul's offering of a sacrifice (1 Sam 13:9) pre-empted Samuel's priestly role and resulted in Samuel's declaration that his kingdom would not endure, but that someone else after Yahweh's heart would replace Saul as king (1 Sam 13:8–14). At this point in the narrative, Jonathan appears as the likely candidate to replace Saul. While Yahweh would seek someone after his own *heart*, Jonathan's armor-bearer indicated Jonathan should do all that was in his *heart* (1 Sam 14:7), and that he (the armor-bearer) was with Jonathan's *heart* (1 Sam 14:7). Jonathan's heart was clearly in tune with Yahweh's, since he trusted in Yahweh's deliverance through many or few (1 Sam 14:6).

The narrator's juxtaposition between Saul and Jonathan continued with Jonathan's successful attack against the Philistines with few against many (Lev 26:8; Deut 32:30) because of his faith in Yahweh (1 Sam 14:1–14). Jonathan's initial success led to even greater military victory (1 Sam 14:15–23). The aftermath of the battle revealed even more failures on Saul's part. First, Saul's rash vow (1 Sam 14:24) resulted in trouble for the nation because the victory could have been even greater against the Philistines (1 Sam 14:29). Second, Saul failed to fulfill the prescribed Mosaic punishment of death for Israelites who ate blood (1 Sam 14:32–34; see Lev 7:26–27; Deut 12:23–25). Third, he sinned by building an altar and offering sacrifices at an unauthorized location (1 Sam 14:35; see Deut 12:5–7, 13–14). Fourth, his failure to keep his second rash vow of executing Jonathan for breaking his first rash vow (1 Sam 14:44–45) likewise violated Mosaic Law regarding keeping vows (Deut 23:21–23). Fifth, Yahweh's refusal to answer Saul (1 Sam 14:37) demonstrated his abandonment of Saul and his kingship. With Jonathan's (1) faithful trusting of Yahweh for military victory (1 Sam 14:6–14), (2) calling out of

Saul's foolish vow (1 Sam 14:29), and (3) his willingness to face execution on account of Saul's second rash vow (1 Sam 14:43), these all serve to portray Jonathan as a character foil for his father Saul. That Saul would demand Jonathan's death for eating honey (1 Sam 14:43–44), which was not a covenant violation, and yet fail to execute those eating blood (1 Sam 14:32–34), which was, showed Saul's failure to effect covenant fidelity.

The narrator's summary that Saul fought valiantly (with חַיִל, 1 Sam 14:48) is verbal irony bracketed by accounts of his failures: first with the Philistines (ch. 14) and second with the Amalekites (ch. 15). The narrator intended to make the audience question such a statement, thus forcing them to conclude, as the rest of this section (1 Sam 13–15) demonstrates, that Saul had genuinely failed as king and his deposition was legitimate. While Saul's entire reign was characterized by hard warfare with the Philistines (1 Sam 14:52), eventually under David, Yahweh would give Israel rest on all sides (2 Sam 7:1).

Saul's failure to obey Yahweh's commands in wiping out the Amalekites and their plunder (1 Sam 15:1–35), which was a covenant command from Moses (Deut 25:19), furthered the author's case against Saul and his deposed kingdom. The narrator highlighted no fewer than six negative declarations from Yahweh about Saul's kingship and its termination:

- Yahweh declared Saul's kingdom would not endure (1 Sam 13:13–14)
- Yahweh regretted giving Saul the kingship (1 Sam 15:12, 35)
- Yahweh rejected Saul as king (1 Sam 15:23, 26)
- Yahweh tore away the kingdom from Saul (1 Sam 15:28)

The reasons for Saul's deposition are summarized in Samuel's poetic speech (1 Sam 15:22–23): Saul had disobeyed Yahweh, failed to heed Yahweh, rebelled against Yahweh, acted arrogantly, and rejected Yahweh's word. The disobedience, rebellion, and failure to listen occurred with Saul's failure to execute Agag and his keeping the plunder. His arrogance appeared in his building of a monument in his own honor (1 Sam 15:12), whereas Moses had commanded against such boasting (Deut 9:4–5). Failing to listen to Yahweh would result in death (Deut 8:20). Saul also failed to wipe out the Canaanites as instructed by Yahweh, Moses, and Samuel (see Deut 20:16–18).

Thus, the narrator's account of **Samuel's deposition of Saul (1 Sam 13–15)** functioned to attest the failures of Saul as the reasons for his deposition by Yahweh through the faithful prophet Samuel. The character juxtaposition between Saul and Jonathan leads the reader to think that perhaps the "neighbor better than you" (1 Sam 15:28) is Jonathan. While that won't turn out to be the case, Jonathan is shown as superior to Saul. Between Saul's deposition and Jonathan's later endorsement of David as king, the author continued to build his case that the audience should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (his overall deliberative purpose).

In a lengthy section on **Saul's tragedy and David's rise (1 Sam 16–31)**, the narrator introduced David to the story and portrayed the divergent trajectories of David and Saul. While David grew in power and is depicted as superior to Saul, Saul descended to extreme and shameful lows, culminating in his pitiful seeking of a medium and his tragic battlefield suicide. The author intended his audience to recognize that David was the legitimate—and superior—successor to Saul, and therefore the audience should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

David's anointing by Samuel the prophet-priest-judge at Yahweh's command (1 Sam 16) showed the divine choice of David as king. Just as Saul had legitimately been anointed and

then deposed as king, that same Samuel, again authorized by Yahweh, now anointed David as king of Israel. The narrator juxtaposed by comparison the coming of the Spirit upon David (1 Sam 16:13) with the Spirit's departure from Saul (1 Sam 16:14). Instead, Saul faced the tormenting of an evil spirit (1 Sam 16:14) which (1) negatively likened him to Abimelech the judge (Judg 9:23), and (2) was only relieved by David's musical abilities (1 Sam 16:23), thus indicating the early stages of David's superiority over Saul.

In the contest between David and Goliath (1 Sam 17), the narrator portrayed Goliath with serpent-like language. For example, four times the word "bronze" (נְחֹשֶׁת) described Goliath's equipment (1 Sam 17:5–6), a word extremely similar to נָחָשׁ, meaning "serpent." That Goliath was clothed with "scale armor" (1 Sam 17:5) also pointed to his serpent-like characteristics. Just as Saul had previously battled "king serpent" (נָחָשׁ) of the Ammonites (1 Sam 11:1–11), now David would likewise battle a serpent-like foe. The narrator juxtaposed by comparison Saul and all the Israelites with their extreme terror at Goliath's taunts (1 Sam 17:11), with David's confidence to face him in battle (1 Sam 17:32–37). Fear of enemies was actually a covenant violation (Deut 7:17–21; 20:1). Ironically, Israel's "giant" (for Saul was a head taller than everyone else, 1 Sam 9:2) would fail to stand against the Philistine's giant. That David's brothers were previously insinuated as being tall and handsome (1 Sam 16:7) and David only as "handsome" (1 Sam 16:12) suggests David was not particularly tall. Yet despite this shortcoming, David's trust in Yahweh for the battle victory (1 Sam 17:37, 45–47) suggested his greater faithfulness than Saul. Indeed, his proclamation of killing lions and bears (1 Sam 17:34–37) suggested that he, being obedient to the Law, was part of Yahweh's plan to rid both wild animals (Lev 26:6) and foreign enemies (Lev 26:7–8) from the Promised Land. That David struck Goliath's head and cut it off (1 Sam 17:49–51) hailed back to Genesis 3:15, where the promised seed would strike the head of the serpent. David was Yahweh's anointed, and Goliath represented the serpent.

In the rest of this lengthy portion of narrative, the author continued to portray the rise of David and the downfall of Saul. This is accomplished through numerous means.

First, David's rise and Saul's tragedy are explained through the relationship between David and Jonathan. David and Jonathan's binding of souls and their covenant together (1 Sam 18:1–4) attest to Jonathan's unitedness with David and strengthens his later endorsement of David's kingship. The covenant was reaffirmed forever (1 Sam 20:1–17), and the two made an oath of peace between their descendants forever (1 Sam 20:42). They further made a covenant that when David was king, Jonathan would be second after him (1 Sam 23:17–18). Since the narrator had portrayed Jonathan as superior to Saul, and Jonathan endorsed David, then the readers should as well. By contrast, Saul responded with anger at the covenant relationship between his son and David (1 Sam 20:30).

Second, David's rise and Saul's tragedy are explained through the various contrasts between Saul and David. David's military success and growing favor with the soldiers and the people showed the beginning of his growing power and influence (1 Sam 18:5–7), but this was contrasted by Saul's jealousy and his growing paranoia (1 Sam 18:8). Saul's fear and recognition that Yahweh was with David but had departed from him (1 Sam 18:12–16) reaffirm the author's point in previous chapters that Saul had been abandoned by Yahweh, but strengthened David for more and more military success. Contrary to Samuel's exhortation (1 Sam 12:14–24), Saul failed to fear Yahweh and instead feared the Philistines and feared David (1 Sam 13:7; 17:11, 24; 18:12, 29; 28:5, 20). By contrast, David repeatedly demonstrated courage and trust in Yahweh. Additionally, Saul made numerous attempts to murder David:

- by his own hand with a spear (1 Sam 18:11; 19:10, 15)
- through the snare of his daughter Michal (1 Sam 18:21)
- via the Philistines (1 Sam 18:25)
- through Jonathan and the servants (1 Sam 19:1)
- through his messengers (1 Sam 19:11; 20:31)
- Saul's attempted murder of Jonathan over Jonathan's alliance with David (1 Sam 20:33)
- In a potential siege at Keilah (1 Sam 23:8)
- In the desert of Ziph (1 Sam 23:14–15)
- In the desert of Maon (1 Sam 23:24–26)

Such attempts to murder David (Yahweh's anointed) form a contrast with David's multiple acts of mercy to Saul (1 Sam 24:3–7; 26:9–12). David's stricken conscience at the thought of harming Yahweh's anointed (1 Sam 24:5–6), contrasted sharply with Saul's unrestrained attempts to murder David who was also Yahweh's anointed. This would speak to the audience as well, particularly the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Since the Davidic king was anointed, how could they justly consider him an enemy worthy of death?

Third, David's rise and Saul's tragedy are explained through the numerous testimonies affirming the kingship of David:

- From the servants of Achish, king of Gath (1 Sam 21:11)
- From Jonathan, who also noted that his father Saul knew of David's kingship as well (1 Sam 23:17)
- From Saul himself (1 Sam 24:20). Saul also recognized that Yahweh was with David (1 Sam 18:28)
- From Abigail (1 Sam 25:28, 30)
- From the conjured Samuel (1 Sam 28:17)

All these testimonies affirm the rise of David as the legitimate king of Israel chosen by Yahweh.

Fourth, David's rise and Saul's tragedy are explained through various proclamations of David's innocence in not subverting Saul:

- Jonathan's defense of David before Saul (1 Sam 19:4–5; 20:32)
- David's own claims of innocence (1 Sam 20:1, 8)
- Jonathan's agreement with David's innocence (1 Sam 20:2, 9)
- Ahimelech's proclamation of David's loyalty to Saul (1 Sam 22:14)
- David's proclamation of innocence after not killing Saul when he had the chance in a cave in En Gedi (1 Sam 24:11). David's appeal for Yahweh's vengeance against Saul—though not coming through David's own hand (1 Sam 24:12)—would also cause the audience to reflect on this and so prosecute Saul as guilty and defend David as innocent
- David's second proclamation of innocence after sparing Saul at Ziph (1 Sam 26:7–24)

Included are various statements of Saul himself regarding David:

- David being more righteous than Saul (1 Sam 24:16)
- Acknowledgement of his own sin for trying to kill David (1 Sam 26:21)
- That David be blessed (1 Sam 26:25)
- That David would do great things and surely triumph (1 Sam 26:25)

All of these proclamations function to juxtapose by contrast the innocence of David and the guilt of Saul. On account of Saul's blameworthy actions, Yahweh legitimately deposed him as king. But by contrast, David maintained his innocence.

Fifth, David's rise and Saul's tragedy are explained through the contrast of their violent actions. Both men killed, but the author contrasted David's sparing of Nabal and his men who had rightly offended David (1 Sam 25:32–34) with Saul's slaughter of the blameless priests and the innocent citizens of Nob (1 Sam 22:17–19).

Other literary features of 1 Samuel 16–31 are noted here. Saul's confession of sin after failing to wipe out the Amalekites (1 Sam 15:24; 30) echoed the confession of Achan (Josh 7:20–21). Both Saul and Achan committed their sins in relation to things placed under the Yahweh's ban (חֵרֶם) (Josh 6:17–18; 1 Sam 15:3) following military campaigns, and both of their corpses were burned (Josh 7:25; 1 Sam 31:12).[44]

Abigail's speech to David (1 Sam 26:28–31) not only contributes to supporting David's kingship as being well-known in Israel, and especially by a wisdom figure, but also her words about David's conscience not carrying the burden of needless bloodshed and vengeance contrast sharply with Saul who had murdered the priests and the innocent residents of Nob. Thus, while the narrator portrayed Saul as murderous and vengeful, David was merciful and allowed Yahweh to avenge. David could therefore offer praise because Yahweh had stopped him from evil yet also avenged Nabal's evil against David (1 Sam 25:39). The author intended his audience to realize that those who treat Yahweh's anointed with contempt align themselves against Yahweh, who will deal with them. Particularly to readers in the Northern Kingdom, this would impel them to align themselves with the Davidic king.

David's time in Ziklag with Achish the king of Gath and his deceptive raids (1 Sam 27) established David's reputation among the Philistines as a turncoat against Israel, while still being free of Israelite blood. As a result of this reputation, Achish's advisors did not want David fighting alongside the Philistines, rightly surmising that he could turn the tide of battle against them (1 Sam 29). However, this resulted in David's absence from the battle on Mount Gilboa, thus allowing for the death of Saul, the protection of David and his men, and David's hands being innocent of Israelite blood.

Saul's expelling of mediums from Israel (1 Sam 28:3) was good, but according to the Law he should have executed them (Lev 20:27). Yet, the ever-fearful Saul (1 Sam 28:5, 15) sought a medium in order to reach Samuel in the absence of hearing from Yahweh (1 Sam 28:6, 15). Samuel confirmed not only Yahweh's departure from Saul, but also Saul's becoming an enemy of God and the giving of the Israelite kingdom to David (1 Sam 28:17).

Saul's failure to wipe out the Amalekites (1 Sam 15) directly resulted in the Amalekite raid on Ziklag, but actually resulted in a great spoil of plunder which David used to ingratiate the elders of Judah in preparation for his coming kinship (1 Sam 30). Saul's tragic and suicidal end portrayed him like Samson, another leading Israelite with outstanding potential who squandered it due to disobedience. His death along with his sons on the same day at the hands of the Philistines (1 Sam 31) also likened him to Eli and his sons perishing in battle against the Philistines (1 Sam 4).[45]

Thus, the narrator's account of **Saul's tragedy and David's rise (1 Sam 16–31)** introduced David to the story and portrayed the divergent trajectories of David and Saul. On the one hand, Saul repeatedly feared, violated the Law, slaughtered innocents, sought the death of

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[44] Chisholm, Jr., "Characterization in 1–2 Samuel," *BSac* 174, 53.

[45] See Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Ramat-Gan, Israel: Revivim, 1985) for a thorough treatment of literary connections in 1 Samuel.

David (Yahweh's anointed), consulted a medium, and died by suicide after losing a battle to the Philistines. He started off as a man a head taller than everyone else, but ultimately his head was cut off. By contrast, David repeatedly consulted Yahweh and trusted him, grew in political and military power, refused to strike Saul (Yahweh's anointed), spared innocent life, and was protected from the battle which wiped out Saul's household. Yet, the narrator did not paint David as the picture of perfection. Like Saul, David also committed his share of covenant violations—more fully developed in 2 Samuel. Nevertheless, while Yahweh had completely rejected Saul and deposed him as king, David's sins did not nullify Yahweh's establishment of his eternal dynasty. The author therefore employed judicial rhetoric in this section. On the one hand, he wanted his Israelite audience to condemn the guilty Saul and agree that his deposition was just. On the other, he wanted them to absolve the innocent David and accept him as the rightful king of Israel in the place of Saul. In this way, the author contributed to his overall deliberative purpose that his Israelite audience pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

In 1 Samuel, the author had demonstrated the rise of Samuel as Yahweh's authorized priest-prophet-judge in Israel (1 Sam 1–7). This Samuel had installed Saul as king (1 Sam 8–12), but on account of Saul's disobedience, Samuel deposed him (1 Sam 13–15). While Saul fell to a tragic end, David rose in power as the anointed king of Israel (1 Sam 16–31), but did not yet have an established throne in Israel.

Therefore, the narrator would next explain **Yahweh's establishment of David (2 Sam 1–10)** through the central consolidation of David's power in Jerusalem, the arrival of the ark in Jerusalem, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David, and David's military victories on all sides. In contrast to Saul's weak rule, unfaithfulness, and military losses, the author portrayed David as faithful, successful, and the first of an everlasting dynasty in his family line.

The execution of the Amalekite who killed Saul (2 Sam 1:1–16) demonstrated the necessary punishment for those who would dare to strike Yahweh's anointed. David had twice kept himself blameless of striking Saul (1 Sam 24; 26). The Amalekite thus served literarily as a foil for David to promote his blamelessness. Similarly, David's lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:17–27) demonstrated the honor due to Yahweh's anointed. Even though Saul made David (and Yahweh) his enemy and even though he failed in many ways, because of his anointed status, the anointed one deserved honor in death. These accounts would speak particularly to a Northern Kingdom audience at civil war against the Davidic king. If they acted contrary to the Davidic king, not only did they oppose Yahweh, but their warfare against Judah and the Judahite king was worthy of death. Likewise, they should follow David's example and honor Yahweh's anointed (in their case, the Davidic king) even though they considered him an enemy. In these ways, the author contributed to his overall deliberative purpose that the audience pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

The narrator's account of David's consolidation of power over all Israel (2 Sam 2:1–5:5) demonstrated the end of the Saulide dynasty's rebellion against David. To a Northern Kingdom audience especially, this would speak to their status as rebels against the Judahite king. In particular, a few key points establish the guilt of those who, like Saul's house, would rebel against David's dynasty:

- David's anointing as king over Judah (2 Sam 2:4) and the comment that the tribe of Judah remained loyal to David (2 Sam 2:10) was still true at the time of writing. This would

affirm any Southern Kingdom readers in their choice of loyalty, and confront Northern Kingdom readers about their own rebellion.

- That the "Israelites" (in context, the house of Saul) faced defeat at the hands of David (2 Sam 2:17, 31) portrayed David as the victor. The northern tribes would need to recognize the ultimate victory of the Davidic king.
- Abner's question to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their fellow Israelites?" (2 Sam 2:26) would prick at the consciences of Northern Kingdom readers in rebellion against Judah and the Davidic King.
- Mention of long war between the houses of Saul and David (2 Sam 3:1) would resonate with both Northern and Southern readers in the divided kingdom era. Indeed, the war between the two had (or would) lasted for centuries. Yet ultimately David is shown as the victor who grows strong over the weakening house of Saul (2 Sam 3:1).
- Abner's defection to David (2 Sam 3:6–21) presented a leader abandoning Saul's house and aiding in the establishment of David's kingdom from Beersheba to Dan (2 Sam 3:9–10). His appeal (1) to Israel to make David king over all on the basis of Yahweh's word (2 Sam 3:17–18), and (2) to Benjamin in particular (2 Sam 3:19), served as the model of what the author wanted the Northern Kingdom leaders to do: make peace with Judah and align themselves under the Judahite king according to Yahweh's word.
- On account of the murders of Abner (2 Sam 3:22–39) and Ish-Bosheth (2 Sam 4:1–12), the northern tribes could easily have accused the house of David of ruthlessness and treachery in establishing his throne. Yet these accounts demonstrate David's innocence and place the blame where it correctly lay (2 Sam 3:29; 4:11–12). Because David relied on Yahweh and not the sword to establish his throne, the Northern Kingdom audience should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king.
- That all the tribes came together to anoint David king over all Israel (2 Sam 5:1–3) shows the legitimacy of the Davidic throne according to Yahweh's word.

This section effectively functioned to rebuke the northern tribes for their rebellion against Yahweh and the Davidic dynasty he established. In Abner's actions, it also showed the proper response for the audience: defecting to the Judahite king. In these ways, the author contributed to his overall deliberative purpose that the audience pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

David's conquering of Jerusalem with Yahweh's strength (2 Sam 5:6–10), the gift from Hiram of Tyre (2 Sam 5:11–12), his taking of more concubines and wives who gave birth to children (2 Sam 5:13–16), his defeat of the Philistines (2 Sam 5:17–25), and his bringing the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:1–23) all point to the increasing kingly power of David and function as a literary crescendo leading to a climax[46] with the Davidic Covenant in ch. 7. Michal's despising of David (2 Sam 6:16) and her resulting barrenness (2 Sam 6:23) demonstrated the curse of Yahweh on those who curse Yahweh's anointed. Both the positive aspects (David's growing dynastic power) and the negative (Michal's cursing) function to persuade the readers to pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king.

Now with a united Israel, David settled in his palace, and peace on all sides from the surrounding enemies (2 Sam 7:1), the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:1–29) forms the climax of Yahweh's establishment of David (1 Sam 1–10) because of its sweeping and eternal provisions.

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[46] Not in the narrative sense, but by the covenant functioning as the capstone of David's greatness.

Specifically, Yahweh included the following provisions in the Davidic Covenant: (1) Yahweh would make David's name great (2 Sam 7:9),[47] (2) Yahweh would provide a place for Israel (2 Sam 7:10), (3) in that place, the people of Israel would be free of oppression and undisturbed (2 Sam 7:10), (4) Yahweh would give Israel rest from all her enemies (2 Sam 7:11), (5) Yahweh would build a house / dynasty for David (2 Sam 7:11), (6) after David's death, Yahweh would raise up David's seed and establish his kingdom (2 Sam 7:12), (7) this son of David would build a house for Yahweh's name (2 Sam 7:13), (8) Yahweh would establish David's son's throne forever (2 Sam 7:13), (9) Yahweh would be a Father to this son of David (2 Sam 7:14), (10) Yahweh would punish the son of David through human instruments if he went astray (2 Sam 7:14), yet (11) Yahweh's חֶסֶד (loyal love) would never depart from David's son as it did from Saul (2 Sam 7:15), and (12) David's dynasty, kingdom, and throne will endure forever (2 Sam 7:16).

The Davidic Covenant is of great importance in the entire biblical metanarrative. It relates to the Abrahamic Covenant in that it amplifies its provision of seed.[48] Together with the Land Covenant and New Covenant, the Davidic Covenant amplifies the Abrahamic Covenant and establishes the provisions fulfilled when the promised seed of Genesis 3:15 strikes the serpent's head and restores rule of the earth back to humanity. The provisions describe conditions of the kingdom age.

Particularly to the audience of the book of Samuel, the Davidic Covenant established the fundamental difference between David and Saul. While Yahweh abandoned Saul and removed his חֶסֶד (loyal love) from him, this would never occur with David and David's heirs (2 Sam 7:15). Saul had his kingship removed due to disobedience, but if a king in the line of David went astray, their punishment (2 Sam 7:14) would not annul the eternal dynasty (2 Sam 7:15). Therefore, the Northern Kingdom had no warrant to claim that a Judahite king's disobedience to the Law—aside from the hypocrisy of such slander—would remove their claim to the throne just as Saul's disobedience had resulted in the end of his dynasty. Since the covenant therefore described the eternal nature of the Davidic kingship, this section contributes to the author's overall deliberative purpose that the audience pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant. David's prayer (2 Sam 7:18–29) established his correct understanding of Yahweh's choice of Israel and of himself and his dynasty to rule forever. The prayer bound Yahweh to the Davidic dynasty. As the eternal nature of the Davidic dynasty was affirmed no fewer than five times (2 Sam 7:13, 16 [twice], 25, 29), the readers would be forced to recognize that rebellion against the Davidic king meant rebellion against Yahweh.

Yahweh's provision of military victory to David over the surrounding nations (2 Sam 8:1–14; also 10:1–19),[49] the accounting of David's court (2 Sam 8:15–18), David's seeking of a survivor from Saul's family to whom he could show חֶסֶד (loyal love) (2 Sam 9:1–13), and likewise his seeking to show חֶסֶד to Hanun son of Nahash (2 Sam 10:1–19) all function to characterize David as noble: he was both victorious and kind. While David had his excellent

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[47] Yahweh had also promised to make Abraham's name great (Gen 12:2). This provision therefore connects David to Abraham.

[48] At a summary level, the Abrahamic Covenant promised land, seed, and blessing. The Land Covenant, Davidic Covenant, and New Covenant each represent an amplification of each of these provisions.

[49] Especially 2 Samuel 8:6, 14, which note Yahweh giving victory to David everywhere he went.

characteristics, his fall with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11) didn't arise out of nowhere. Subtle hints in this section indicate a disregard for Mosaic Law. For example, his accumulation of gold (2 Sam 8:7, 10, 11), silver (2 Sam 8:10, 11), bronze (2 Sam 8:8, 9), and horses and chariots (2 Sam 8:4) were covenant violations for kings (Deut 17:16–17). David's appointing of his sons as priests (2 Sam 8:18) also violated the Law where only Levites in the line of Aaron may serve as priests (Exod 28:1; Num 3:10). Any others who served as priests should be executed (Num 3:10; 18:1–7). Lastly, David's saving of one-third of the Moabites (2 Sam 8:2) violated Israel's laws of warfare against nations outside the Promised Land. Instead, Israel was to offer terms of peace and if accepted, subjugate the people. If not, they were to kill all the men and take the women, children, and livestock as plunder (Deut 20:10–15). Yahweh's giving of victory to David on all fronts despite these violations prepares the reader for David's fall with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11). In no way would his sins annul or otherwise change the Davidic Covenant. For that reason, the audience of Samuel could not point to David's sin—or any other sinful Davidic king—as justification for rebellion. Instead, they should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (the author's overall deliberative purpose).

The narrator's account of **David's non-disqualifying sins (2 Sam 11:1–21:14)** showed how David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, as well as other sins, while causing extensive family and kingdom problems for the rest of David's life, nevertheless did not disqualify him from the kingship nor the covenant. The narrator crafted an extended echo effect between Jacob and David, creating literary similarities between the two to show that just as Yahweh had used Jacob's sinful family, so too would he use David. Table 4 below presents this extended echo effect.

Table 4: Extended echo effect between Jacob's sons and David's sons[50]

Jacob	David
Reuben slept with his father's concubine (Gen 35:22)	Absalom slept with ten of his father's concubines (2 Sam 16:22)
Shechem took Dinah and lay with her and raped her (Gen 34:2) וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ וַיְעַנֶּהָ	[Amnon] raped her and lay with her (2 Sam 13:14) וַיְעַנֶּהָ וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ
The [brothers of Dinah] were distressed and very angry because he had done a disgraceful thing in Israel (Gen 34:7)	[Tamar said,] "Such a thing should not be done in Israel" (2 Sam 13:12)
The rape was a disgrace (חֶרְפָּה) (Gen 34:14)	Tamar was disgraced (חֶרְפָּתִי) (2 Sam 13:13)
Jacob kept silent (חרשׁ) (Gen 34:5)	David said nothing, and Absalom told Tamar to keep silent (חרשׁ) (2 Sam 13:20)
Shechem killed by avenging brothers of a raped sister (Gen 34:26)	Amnon killed by an avenging brother of a raped sister (2 Sam 13:28–29)
Jacob did nothing and was angry (Gen 34:30–31)	David did nothing and was angry (2 Sam 13:21)
This rape ultimately led to lack of peace in the land of Canaan (Gen 34:30–31)	This rape ultimately led to civil war in Israel (via Absalom's rebellion)

The extended echo effect between Jacob and David reveals that just as Yahweh had continued using Jacob and his family despite tragedy and sinful deeds, the same would be true of David.

[50] Table adapted from Schnittjer, *Torah Story*, 125–27.

David's adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:1–5), his attempted cover-up (2 Sam 11:6–11), and his subsequent murder of Uriah (2 Sam 11:12–27) were all evil to Yahweh (2 Sam 11:27). These acts represent a major turning point in David's life and make the reader wonder if the covenant (2 Sam 7) is truly eternal. Nathan's confrontation with David (2 Sam 12:1–12) mirrors Samuel's confrontation of Saul regarding the Amalekites (1 Sam 15), but David's penitent response (2 Sam 12:13) forms a juxtaposition by contrast with Saul's lame protests, "I have kept the word of Yahweh" (1 Sam 15:13), and, "I have listened to the voice of Yahweh, and I have gone on the way that Yahweh sent me!" (1 Sam 15:20). The contrast between the two kings shows, yet again, the superiority of David over Saul. Yet, while David's sin was forgiven (2 Sam 12:13), his actions did not go without consequence.

Nathan foretold of the sword not departing his house (2 Sam 12:10), and David's proclamation of the "man" in Nathan's allegory paying four-fold actually fell upon David himself. Just as he had taken a life, now four sons of David would lose their lives. The remainder of this section (2 Sam 11–20) portrays the loss of three of David's sons and the fulfillment of Nathan's proclamation of violence in David's house.

The first son to die was the unnamed infant of David and Bathsheba's adulterous relationship (2 Sam 12:15–23). The second son to die was Amnon. His rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13:1–22) led to Absalom's revenge on Amnon (2 Sam 13:23–38). The third son to die was Absalom. His rebellion (2 Sam 14:1–15:12) resulted in civil war in the house of David (2 Sam 15:13–21:14) and his own death as well (2 Sam 18:14–15). The fourth son to die was Adonijah, executed by Solomon for his attempted usurping of the throne (1 Kgs 2:24–25). With these four deaths of David's sons, David indeed paid according to his own proclamation of four-fold repayment for the "man" in the allegory.

The accounts of the deaths of David's sons also reveal in David other sins. For example:

- While David was angry at Amnon's rape of Tamar, he did nothing (2 Sam 13:21). According to the Law, rape deserved death (Deut 22:25). As leader of Israel, David was required to judge righteously (Deut 16:18–20; 17:19–20) but he failed to do so.
- When Absalom murdered Amnon, David again failed to act justly by executing Absalom as the Law required (Num 35:16). David showed partiality in judging (Deut 16:19) by exiling Absalom and then reconciling with him. Such acts had no basis in the Law.
- Absalom's rebellion against David showed contempt for a leader in Israel and deserved death (Deut 17:12). David's command to his officers to deal gently with Absalom violated the Torah because it shows David's partiality toward Absalom who deserved death. In this way, David was attempting to pervert justice.[51]
- Shimei's cursing of David (2 Sam 16:5–13) violated the law forbidding the cursing of Israel's rulers (Exod 22:28). Shimei deserved death—as Abishai had twice reminded David (2 Sam 16:9; 19:21)—yet David granted him clemency with an oath (2 Sam 19:23). While he should not have made such an oath, at least he kept the oath (Num 30:2).

[51] In Deuteronomy 13:6–11, anyone, including close relatives who attempted to lead Israelites astray to other gods was to be executed without mercy. While the context of rebellion against the king is slightly different than worshiping other gods, the principle of not showing favoritism or partiality to relatives in matters of justice still stands. David failed in that he showed favoritism and partiality to his rebellious son Absalom.

- David's delivering of Saul's descendants to the Gibeonites for execution (2 Sam 21:6–9) violated the law that children should not be put to death for the sins of their parents (Deut 24:16).

Thus, in his account of David's non-disqualifying sins (2 Sam 11:1–21:14), the author of Samuel made no attempt to hide David's numerous violations of the Law. The resulting consequences of David's sin represent the chastisement promised in the covenant (2 Sam 7:14). That the consequences resulted in similar acts to the days of the judges (violence, rape, civil war) characterizes David negatively like the judges, just as Saul had been. But, while Saul and David both sinned, David responded with penitence (2 Sam 12:13) whereas Saul did not (1 Sam 15:13, 20). Regarding the covenant, the audience could be certain that (1) the chastisement would come upon David's sons who sinned, but (2) the covenant would still endure. The punishment in fact served as evidence that Yahweh was acting according to the covenant provisions. The audience, particularly from the Northern Kingdom, could not claim that the covenant had been revoked because of any specific Judahite king's sins. Therefore, because of the irrevocability of the covenant and because of David's superiority over Saul, this section contributed to the author's overall deliberative purpose that his Israelite audience pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant.

With his **epilogue of David's reign (2 Sam 21:15–24:25)**, the narrator's description of (1) the exploits of David's mighty men, and (2) David's final words and deeds, all function to promote the legitimacy of the eternal Davidic dynasty and elicit allegiance to the Davidic king.

The narrator's portrayal of the exploits of David's mighty men (2 Sam 21:15–22; 23:8–39) captures the strength and grandeur of David's power, especially against giants. Just as David had killed his giant (1 Sam 17), his mighty men likewise performed similar heroic feats. Since none of the kings of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) could lay claim to such achievements, the author implicitly established the superiority of Judah and the Judahite king.

David's song (2 Sam 22:1–23:7) contains many shared themes with the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10). See Table 5 below for details.

Table 5: Shared themes in the songs of Hannah and David[52]

Theme	Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10)	David (2 Sam 22:1–23:7)
Deliverance from enemies	2:1	22:3–4
God as a "Rock"	2:2	22:32
Sheol and death	2:6	22:6
Yahweh thundering from heaven	2:10	22:14
Yahweh's protection of those with חֶסֶד (loyal love)	2:9	22:26
Yahweh's חֶסֶד (loyal love) for his anointed	2:9	22:51

Early in the book of Samuel, Hannah's song (1 Sam 2:1–10) served as a prophetic view of what Yahweh would accomplish through her son Samuel and the king whom he would anoint (David). David lived to see the realization of Hannah's song in his lifetime, and his song (2 Sam 22:1–23:7) looked back to celebrate what Yahweh had done in his life—the same things Hannah had

[52] Data in this table adapted from Longman, III and Dillard, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 158.

hoped for. In this way, the two songs demonstrate to the audience that Yahweh truly worked through Hannah, Samuel, and David. Hannah hoped for a son whom she would dedicate to Yahweh. That son Samuel became the leader of Israel and anointed David as king. David celebrated the fall of his enemies (2 Sam 22:38–43) (specific examples of which are given in 2 Sam 21, 23), many of which were recorded in the narrative. Through the song, the narrator intended the audience to align themselves with the Davidic king for the following reasons:

- Because Yahweh had delivered David from his enemies (2 Sam 22:1–20).
- Because David's proclamations of his own righteousness, faithfulness, and obedience to the Law (2 Sam 22:20–28).
- Because just as David reflected on foreigners becoming obedient to him (2 Sam 22:45–46), the narrator intended any in his audience who were at odds with the Davidic king to have the same response as the foreigners.
- Because Yahweh gives great victories and unfailing חֶסֶד (loyal love) to David and his seed forever (2 Sam 22:51), the audience should align themselves with the Davidic king.
- Because David was exalted by the Most High (2 Sam 23:1).
- Because of the glories of the Davidic king (2 Sam 23:3–4).
- Because if David's house were not right with God, then God would not have made an everlasting covenant with him (2 Sam 23:5).
- Because evil men—including the rebellious kings of the Northern Kingdom and those aligned with them—would come to ruin (2 Sam 23:6–7).

Like the narrator's previous descriptions of David's sins, his numbering of Israel's fighting men (2 Sam 24:1–9) is justly portrayed as wrong, but it provided another opportunity to present David as the penitent king (2 Sam 24:10, 17) who trusted in Yahweh's compassion (2 Sam 24:14). It also established the plot-based purpose for why David bought the threshing floor of Araunah (2 Sam 24:16–25). This would become the site of the Jerusalem temple built by Solomon (1 Kgs 7–8). Thus, the author associated the legitimate place of Yahwistic worship (as opposed to the illegitimate altars the Northern Kingdom would build in Bethel and Dan) with David and his dynasty.

Thus, in the epilogue the narrator points to the legitimacy of Yahweh's choice of David and the eternal nature of his covenant with David. David's song, David's mighty men, David's sin, and David's buying the site of the future Jerusalem temple all point to David's legitimacy as affirmed by Yahweh. None of David's sins, even though they resulted in serious consequences, disqualified him or his descendants from the covenant (2 Sam 7). By the end of Samuel, the narrator made it clear that David was not the promised seed of Genesis 3:15. Yet according to the Davidic Covenant, one of David's descendants would fulfill this role. Therefore, the Israelite audience of the book of Samuel should pledge their allegiance to the Davidic king while awaiting the final Davidic king in fulfillment of the Davidic Covenant (the author's overall deliberative purpose).

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