Samuel and Kings

Transition and Growing Role of Prophet

Samuel and Kings 1

Samuel and Kings

- 1 & 2 Samuel was originally one book, as was 1 & 2 Kings
- Major Characters:
  - **Hannah**
  - **Samuel**
  - **Saul**
  - **David**

Samuel and Kings 2

Hannah

Faithful Woman

- One of two wives of Elkanah (other was Peninnah)
- Peninnah had children but Hannah was barren
- Prays at the tabernacle at Shiloh (where the ark of the covenant is kept)
- Eli, corrupt priest of tabernacle, sees her pray, but thinks she is drunk (first woman in Bible to pray?)
- Prays for a son – but promises to dedicate him as a nazirite (1:11)

Hannah 3

Hannah (cont)

- Hannah has a son and names him Samuel
- After he's weaned she brings him to Shiloh to be dedicated to YHWH's service as a Nazirite
- Song of Hannah – very old, focuses upon YHWH's favor on the poor and lowly (cf. Song of Mary in Luke)

Hannah (cont) 4

Samuel – Transition from Judge to Prophet

What is a Prophet?

- "Prophet" translates the Hebrew word *nabi* (plural *nevim*) which means
  - **To be called, or**
  - **To call/speak forth**
- Prophets function primarily as intermediaries – "ambassadors" between king and YHWH
- Samuel is first called as a judge, then after Israelites ask for a king, his role changes from being a military leader to being an intermediary (compare 1 Sam.7 with 1 Sam. 13: 8-15)

Samuel – Transition from Judge to Prophet 5

Stories of Samuel

- 1 Sam. 3:1-18 – note humor and corruption of priesthood
- 1 Sam. 8 – Ambivalence: the dawn of Israel's glory or a betrayal of the covenant?
  - A secondary covenant--10:24-25 that maintains Mosaic covenant
- 1 Sam. 13:8-15 and 15:9-26 – the failure of Saul (violation of covenant)
  - Note message of 22-23 that faithfulness to covenant is more important than sacrifices
- 1 Sam. 16:1-13 – anointing of David (motif of favoring the younger son)

Stories of Samuel 6

Ark as Protagonist

- Ark is in Shiloh (not yet Jerusalem)
- Ch. 4 – ark is captured in war by Philistines
  - **Abuse of ark as a sort of magic charm**
  - **Death of Eli's corrupt sons and Eli**
- Chs. 5-6 – ark on the move
  - **Taken to Ashdod where Dagon is "defeated" by the ark brings a plague of "tumors"; then on to Gath where plague of tumors emerges again; then to Ekron whose people send it back to Israel with offering of golden mice and tumors (bubonic plague)**
  - **Arrival of ark at Kiriath-Jearim (NW of Jerusalem)**
  - **II Sam. 6 – David moves the ark to Jerusalem**
  - **I Kings 8 – Solomon builds the Temple (covenant passed on from Moses to David's house)**

David and Bethsheba

Patriarchal vs. Feminist Reading

- 2 Sam. 11 – Bethsheba is a foreign woman married to Uriah, a Hittite mercenary
- King at home and Bethsheba bathing on the roof
- Uriah the only victim?
- The repentance of David – "reward" for Bethsheba?

Solomon, the Divided Kingdom, and Growth of Prophets

- Solomon abuses his wealth and power at the expense of northern tribes
- Solomon dies in 922, his son Rehoboam takes bad advice about the demands of the northern tribes
  - **North, called Israel (Joseph, Jacob, Ephraim) and the South called Judah (home of Jerusalem on Mt. Zion)**
- Rise of idolatry (starting with Solomon) and rise of prophets to call people back to covenant faithfulness, e.g., Elijah and Elisha