

First and Second Samuel

Nazarene Theological Seminary - Summer, 2004

Dennis R. Bratcher, Professor

bratcher@cresourcei.org - <http://www.cresourcei.org/> - <http://www.crivoice.org/>

I. Position in the Curriculum

“First and Second Samuel” is an advanced course in Biblical Studies that assumes completion of BIB 520, “Introduction to Biblical Studies” and BIB 550 “Biblical Hermeneutics” or equivalent courses. This course also assumes a basic background in the theological study of the Old Testament. Hebrew is not a prerequisite, although some knowledge of Hebrew would facilitate study and discussion.

II. Purpose of the Course

The purpose of the course is to examine the canonical traditions of First and Second Samuel in order to understand the various theological confessions preserved in this collection. The books will be examined using literary methods against the historical background of the tenth century BC as the setting for the narratives, as well as how those traditions were reshaped and reapplied in the exilic and post-exilic communities. The emphasis will be on understanding the theological communication of these traditions as Scripture of the church, in order to apply those insights to contemporary issues in Christian thought and life.

III. Objectives of the Course

This course aims to equip students to be able to:

General Objectives:

- become aware of the richness and diversity of the material preserved in the Samuel traditions.
- become aware of the various scholarly opinions relating to the composition and purpose of this material.
- gain expertise in using the proper exegetical tools in analyzing the historical, literary, and theological levels of a biblical passage, specifically as applied to these books.
- gain insights into the theological communication and affirmations made by the Books of Samuel in order to allow these books to speak to the community of faith today.
- develop skill in moving through the cycle from biblical text, to theological formulation, to application to Christian living.

Specific Objectives:

- know the basic historical data relating to the Hebrew Commonwealth and Israelite Monarchy between 1300 BC and 1050 BC
- gain a working knowledge of the historical circumstances of the exilic era (600-500 BC), and the theological issues that they raised.
- become familiar with the content of 1 and 2 Samuel in outline form.
- identify *by chapter* the key events recounted in the books and the key theological passages.
- identify and trace key theological themes as well as articulate in some detail the most important theological ideas in the books.

IV. Texts

Required Texts:

Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel* (Interpretation Commentary).

Eugene Peterson, *First and Second Samuel* (Westminster Bible Companion)

Recommended Supplemental Material:

John Bright, *A History of Israel*, 4th ed.

D. Stuart, *Old Testament Exegesis*, 3rd ed.

T. E. Fretheim, *The Deuteronomistic History*

H. T. Frank, ed. *Hammond's Atlas of the Bible Lands*

V. Plan of the Course

I. History, Theology, and Traditions

- A. Purpose in biblical study
 - 1. asking the right questions
 - 2. learning to think theologically
- B. Distinguishing events and history
 - 1. event as revelation
 - 2. ancient and modern historiography

II. A Theology of History

- A. Historical setting
 - 1. the crisis of movement into the land
 - 2. the Israelite monarchy in world history
- B. Literary setting
 - 1. the Deuteronomistic "School"
 - 2. dynamic traditioning: the crisis of exile
 - 3. the macro-structure of the Former Prophets

III. The Former Prophets: 1 and 2 Samuel

- A. Canonical shaping
 - 1. the relationship of Samuel and Kings
 - 2. the canonical function of 1 and 2 Samuel
- B. First Samuel
 - 2. the tension of competing voices
 - 3. elements of structure
 - 4. a theology of God's purpose (1-12)
 - 5. a theology of power (13-21)
- C. Second Samuel
 - 1. God's providence and the ideal king (1-8)
 - 2. a theology of consequences (9-20)
 - 3. God's providence and emerging future hope (21-24)

IV. Theological Reflection

- A. Theological themes of First and Second Samuel
- B. First and Second Samuel in the Church

VI. Requirements of the Course

1) Because of the accelerated format of the course attendance in 100% of every session is imperative. *Lack of participation and/or absence will affect borderline grades.* The professor reserves the right to deduct up to 10% of the course grade for unnecessary (not emergency) absence. **Do not plan other activities of any kind that conflict with attendance in class.**

2) There is no specific schedule for completing the textbook reading. Peterson should be used extensively to complete the first assignment. Breuggemann should be read *completely* during the two weeks of class to provide resources for class discussion. *Students will be asked at the end of class how much of the textbooks they have completed.*

3) A detailed outline with a narrative “story line” of the books of 1 and 2 Samuel. The outline should show each unit/pericope in the book. The smallest subunits given in the outline should also include a 1-3 sentence summary of the content of that unit, so that together they form a brief summary of the story line and “flow” of the book. These summaries should not be too detailed (do not rewrite the books!), but should include enough information to follow the course of the narrative quickly and easily. While there is no specific “correct” way to outline the book, care should be taken to understand the structure and flow of the books in terms of theological communication to present in the outline. The project will be graded on how well the outline presents this structure and flow, and how well the narrative story line summarizes the material. This project will count for 20% of the course grade. **DUE DATE: Thursday, June 10**

4) A bibliography of the resources a student, pastor, or teacher would need to use in a thorough historical and theological study of 1 and 2 Samuel. These should include five sections of resource material: 1) **Background Material**, which would include historical, cultural, and social setting; 2) **Commentaries**; 3) **Monographs and Collected Works**; 4) **Journal Articles**, from recent (last 20 years) scholarly journals; and 5) **Classic Resources**, significant commentaries, monographs, or other material that is over 20 years old. Total number of resources should be 40-50. While there is some good material on the web it is often time consuming to evaluate as to its usefulness so *this bibliography list should not include online resources.* This project will count for 20% of the course grade. **DUE DATE: Monday, June 14.**

5) A paper dealing with an issue relating to the interpretation of the books of Samuel. This can deal with historical background issues (for example, “Geography and the Story Line of Samuel” or “The Social and Political Background of the Development of the Israelite Monarchy”) critical problems or interpretative issues (for example, “The Tension of the Samuel and Saul Sources in 1 Samuel” or “The Literary Structure of Samuel”), or with theological issues (for example, “God’s Foreknowledge and the Failure of Saul” or “Why Was the Ark too Holy to Touch?”). The paper should be typed, double-spaced, about 6-8 pages in length, and should follow proper form. Given the short amount of time to prepare this paper, it should not be too detailed. However, it should deal adequately enough with the topic to allow a reader unfamiliar with the material to gain a working knowledge of the issue. Proper documentation (footnotes only) and a bibliography should also be included. This paper will account for 25% of the course grade. **DUE DATE: Friday, June 18.**

6) A final project dealing with the communication of theological perspectives from First and Second Samuel to the life of the church. This assignment can take two forms depending on the specific interests of the student. **DUE DATE: Friday, July 30.**

a) A series of sermons/homilies based on *The Revised Common Lectionary* readings from First and Second Samuel covering the Proper readings, Propers 4-14, and Propers 28 and 29 for Year B (see the attached sheet or the web site for the readings). The project should include six complete sermons (student's choice of Propers) based on the text for that week and seven sermon outlines for the remainder of the readings. The sermons should be in sermonic form, with about a fifteen to twenty minute presentation time. They should each reflect the content and theology of the passage, with an application appropriate to a general congregation.

OR b) A series of adult Bible studies suitable for a small group. These should be thirteen lessons (normally one three-month quarter) from 1 and 2 Samuel, including six complete Bible studies ready for presentation beginning with a first-session introduction to the books, and seven outlines of the remainder of the studies. The twelve passages for the studies should be chosen by the student to cover the basic information and theological communication of the two books. Each study should include a brief summary of the content of the passage along with any information necessary to understand it, the theological significance of the passage, and suggestions for application to Christian living. The application section can take the form of well thought-out discussion questions. For some examples of such Bible studies on 1 and 2 Kings, see <http://www.cresourcei.org/biblestudy/bbkings.html>.

7) There will be **no** final exam for this course.

VII. Class Policies

1) Grading for the class will operate on the assumption that this is a graduate level course. The "base" grade for a well done paper or assignment is 85 (a mid B). Assignments that are not well done or have some deficiency will be scaled below that. An assignment that shows unusual thoroughness, insight, or effort will be scaled above that. It is only every exceptional papers that are graded above a 92. The scale for letter grades is: A, 90-100; B, 80-89, C, 70-79; D, 60-69; F, below 60.

2) Careful attention should be given to the proper use of English grammar, including spelling, in written work. If possible, papers should be typed on a good word processor to allow spelling and style checking. A percentage of the grade may be deducted for excessive violence done to the English language. Attention should also be given to proper form of the paper and bibliography, including the correction of typographical errors.

6) All papers should be typed, double spaced, formatted with 1" margins in a Roman font no smaller than 10 pts. and no larger than 12 pts, and should include a cover page. Don't forget to number pages.

VIII. Summary of Evaluation Methods and Due Dates

Outline and Story Line	20%	Thursday, June 10
Bibliography	20%	Tuesday, June 15
Interpretive Issue	25%	Friday, June 18
Sermon/Bible Study Paper (5% x 7)	35%	Monday, July 19
(6 sermons/Bible Studies x 5%; 1 set of outlines x 5%)		

The Revised Common Lectionary

Readings from 1 and 2 Samuel

Dennis Bratcher

Reading	Year	Day	Date
1 Sam 1:4-20 ¹	B	Proper 28	Sunday between Nov 13-19
1 Sam 2:1-10	ABC	Visitation	May 31
1 Sam 2:1-10 ²	B	Proper 28	Sunday between Nov 13-19
1 Sam 2:18-20, 26	C	Christmas 1	Sunday between Dec 26-Jan 1
1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20)	B	Epiphany 2	Sunday between Jan 14-20
1 Sam 3:1-10, (11-20) ¹	B	Proper 4	Sunday between May 29-Jun 4 (if after Trinity Sunday)
1 Sam 8:4-11 (12-15), 16-20 (11:14-15) ¹	B	Proper 5	Sunday between Jun 5-11 (if after Trinity Sunday)
1 Sam 15:34-16:3 ¹	B	Proper 6	Sunday between Jun 12-18 (if after Trinity Sunday)
1 Sam 16:1-13	A	Lent 4	4th Sunday in Lent
1 Sam 17:(1a, 4-11, 19-23), 32-49 ³	B	Proper 7	Sunday between Jun 19-25 (if after Trinity Sunday)
1 Sam 17:57-18:5, (10-16) ³	B	Proper 7	Sunday between Jun 19-25 (if after Trinity Sunday)
2 Sam 1:1, 17-27 ¹	B	Proper 8	Sunday between Jun 26-Jul 2
2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10 ¹	B	Proper 9	Sunday between Jul 3-9
2 Sam 6:1-5, 12b-19 ¹	B	Proper 10	Sunday between Jul 10-16
2 Sam 7:1-11	B	Advent 4	Sunday between Dec 18-24
2 Sam 7:1-14a ¹	B	Proper 11	Sunday between Jul 17-23
2 Sam 11:1-15 ¹	B	Proper 12	Sunday between Jul 24-30
2 Sam 11:26-12:13a ¹	B	Proper 13	Sunday between Jul 31-Aug 6
2 Sam 11:26-12:10, 13-15 ⁴	C	Proper 6	Sunday between Jun 12-18 (if after Trinity Sunday)
2 Sam 18:5-9, 15, 31-33 ¹	B	Proper 14	Sunday between Aug 7-13
2 Sam 23:1-7	B	Proper 29 Reign of Christ	Sunday between Nov 20-26 (Last Sunday after Pentecost)

1. Sequential or Semi-continuous Old Testament Readings
2. Non-Psalter Responsorial Readings
3. Alternate Readings
4. Old Testament Readings paired with a Gospel Reading