

The Parallel Structure of 1–2 Samuel

David Gooding

Myrtlefield House Study Notes



MYRTLEFIELD
HOUSE

www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

David Gooding has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

Copyright © The Myrtlefield Trust, 2019

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the English Revised Version (1885) or from the *King James Version*. Sometimes Dr Gooding gives his own translations or paraphrases.

All rights reserved. Permission is granted to reproduce this document in its entirety, or in unaltered excerpts, for personal and church use only as long as you do not charge a fee. You must not reproduce it on any Internet site. Permission must be obtained if you wish to reproduce it in any other context, translate it, or publish it in any format.

Published by The Myrtlefield Trust

PO Box 2216

Belfast

BT1 9YR

w: www.myrtlefieldhouse.com

e: info@myrtlefieldhouse.com

Myrtlefield catalogue no: sam.032

Preface

The biblical authors used the literary conventions of their day to convey their message. These included structures and patterns that are less obvious to us in an age of typesetting and digital display.

David Gooding has brought his considerable experience of reading and teaching ancient literature to bear on the biblical text, and these study notes represent his thinking about the structure, patterns and thought–flow of First and Second Samuel. He has often said to groups of Bible students, ‘When it comes to Bible study, there is structure, pattern and thought–flow, and the greatest of these is thought–flow. Here are the thoughts of God expressed. Our job is to follow the thought–flow’. The most important thing to grasp is the way the author develops his argument or message and discovering the structure and patterns that the text exhibits should always be to that end.

The study notes have been developed over a number of years and were distributed at talks he gave in various places publicly and privately. Audio recordings and transcripts of some of these talks are available for free download from myrtlefieldhouse.com.

The charts are not meant to be the last word on First and Second Samuel and may not cover the entire books. They are offered publicly to help Bible students, preachers and teachers to stimulate further thinking about First and Second Samuel, so that their message may be understood.

The Myrtlefield Trust
2019

Parallel Overview (1)

Note: Viewing the following pages side by side will make the continuous structure of 1–2 Samuel evident.

I.

1. Birth of Samuel

- a. Eli's sons. The two rivals and their sons: Hannah's vow
- b. Birth and dedication of Samuel
- c. Hannah's psalm of praise

THE LORD WILL EXALT THE HORN OF HIS ANOINTED

II.

3. People Reject God: Demand King

- a. God consents but under protest
- b. Samuel warns them what a king will be like: 'He will take your sons' (1 Sam 8:11)
- c. Erring donkeys lead Saul to Samuel: Saul's selection and training in God's guidance

SAMUEL SECRETLY ANOINTS SAUL AS PRINCE AND KING

Samuel Recognized as Prophet

- d. Eli attempts to reprimand his sons: they refuse to listen
- e. Man of God denounces Eli and his house. A faithful priest is to take his place
- f. God calls Samuel and announces judgment on Eli's house

VOICES IN THE NIGHT. SAMUEL RECOGNIZES GOD'S VOICE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Samuel's Acclamation and Vindication Before the People

- d. Saul presented and acclaimed: but some disapprove
- e. Saul's victory over king of Ammon saves the eyes of Jabesh-Gileadites
- f. Re-affirmation of kingship

THUNDER BY DAY CONVICTS ISRAEL OF WICKEDNESS IN DEMANDING KING

2. Israel Loses Ark of Covenant

- a. Battle with Philistines
- b. Ark brought into battle is taken by Philistines. Eli and sons die: Ichabod, the glory has departed
- c. Ark brought into Dagon's temple

DAGON FALLS FLAT ON GROUND BEFORE ARK. ITS HANDS AND HEAD CUT OFF

4. Saul's Sin and First Rejection

- a. Jonathan's successful initial skirmish. Saul provokes the Philistines
- b. Philistines gather for attack: Israelites panic and begin to melt away
- c. Saul foolishly sacrifices without waiting for Samuel

SAMUEL TELLS SAUL HIS KINGDOM WILL NOT CONTINUE: SAUL RENDS SAMUEL'S ROBE

Return of Ark: Restoration of Israel

- d. Lords of Philistines in distress: debate: send back ark
- e. Israel judged for looking into ark
- f. Israel's self-judgment. Samuel's intercession and sacrifice

LORD THUNDERS: PHILISTINES DEFEATED: EBENEZER

Saul's Sin and Second Rejection

- d. Jonathan's initial success through God's guidance
- e. Jonathan's eyes enlightened: but Saul's absurd interpretation of God's guidance would have executed Jonathan. The people overrule Saul
- f. Saul, under pretext of sacrifice, rejects God's word and does not destroy God's enemy, the king of Amalek, when in his power

VOICES IN THE NIGHT (1 SAM 15:10–11). GOD REJECTS SAUL FROM BEING KING

Parallel Overview (2)

III.

5. David Secretly Anointed King

- a. Samuel anoints David. 'Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart' (1 Sam 16:7)
- b. David taken into Saul's house to play before him
- c. David defeats Goliath with a sling and stone and cuts off his head with his own sword

JONATHAN LOVES DAVID: STRIPS HIMSELF: GIVES ROBE AND WEAPONS TO DAVID: MAKES COVENANT WITH HIM

Saul Grows Jealous of David

- d. On return from fight, women praise David more than Saul
- e. Saul tries twice to spear David: but the people love David
- f. Saul tries to use his daughters to get David killed. But Michal loves David; David kills two hundred Philistines

DAVID BEHAVED HIMSELF MORE WISELY THAN ALL SAUL'S SERVANTS

6. Saul's Overt Attempts to Kill David

- a. Frustrated by: Jonathan's logic
- b. Michal's love
- c. Samuel and the Holy Spirit

SAUL STRIPS HIMSELF NAKED AND LIES DOWN BEFORE SAMUEL ALL THAT DAY AND NIGHT

David, the Messiah, Must Go

- d. Jonathan's arrow point out the distance. The oath between them
- e. David comes to the priest Ahimelech; eats the showbread; is given Goliath's sword
- f. David falls into hands of the Philistines . . . Madness!? Escapes to the caves of Adullam

CONQUEROR OF THE PHILISTINES IN THE POWER OF THE PHILISTINES

IV.

7. David Reappears in Israel

- a. David comes up out of cave. Saul has Doeg slay God's priests
- b. David saves Keilah from Philistines. Enquires of Lord and escapes Saul
- c. David at Ziph: saved from Saul by coming of Philistines

JONATHAN COMES SECRETLY TO DAVID: RECOGNIZES DAVID AS FUTURE KING: MAKES COVENANT WITH HIM

David's 'Justification'

- d. David spared Saul's life in the cave, but shames him. Saul recognizes David will be king
- e. David restrained by Abigail's wisdom from vengeance of the fool, Nabal
- f. David spares Saul's life in the stockade, but removes his security

VOICES IN THE NIGHT, SAUL KNEW DAVID'S VOICE. SAUL SAYS 'I HAVE PLAYED THE FOOL' (1 SAM 26:21)

8. Israel Lose their Messiah

- a. David departs to Philistines: given Ziklag to live in
- b. David's behaviour in Ziklag: spoils . . . Amalekites. Keeper of Achish's head
- c. Saul gets witch to bring up Samuel who announces his doom

SAUL FALLS FULL LENGTH ON EARTH: EATS AT WITCH'S TABLE

God's Judgment on Saul

- d. Lords of Philistines sent David home. David does not fight against Israel
- e. David recovers woman and spoil of Ziklag from Amalekites
- f. Philistines defeat Israelites; slay Saul's sons; Saul's suicide

SAUL'S ARMOUR IN IDOL'S TEMPLE: HIS HEAD CUT OFF: BODY NAILED TO WALL: RESCUED AND BURIED BY JABESH-GILEADITES

Parallel Overview (3)

V.

9. Relations Between David and the House of Saul

- a. David executes Amalekite who brings him Saul's crown. He teaches Israel the song of the bow
- b. David, anointed in Hebron; blesses those who buried Saul
- c. War games between Abner and Joab

VI.

11. Kindness—True and False

- a. Kindness to Mephibosheth of house of Saul for Jonathan's sake
- b. Kindness to King of Ammon's son leads to rebuff and war
- c. David's self-indulgence leads to abuse of power, adultery and murder

The Long War between House of Saul and House of David

- d. Abner, king-maker in Israel, opens negotiations to transfer kingdom of house of Saul to David. A question of wives!
- e. Joab murders Abner; David disapproves
- f. Two captains assassinate Ish-bosheth. David executes them

ISH-BOSHETH'S HEAD CUT OFF; DAVID BURIES IT

Forgiveness but Discipline

- d. Nathan denounces David's sin. David repents and is forgiven. But consequences and discipline
- e. God refuses David's plea. Bathsheba's child dies. But Solomon is born and the Lord loves him
- f. David's final victory over Ammon

CROWN TAKEN OFF AMMON'S KING'S HEAD AND SET ON DAVID'S HEAD

10. Establishment of David's Kingdom

- a. All Israel anoint David as king. David takes Jerusalem. Is recognized by Hiram. Takes more wives and sons
- b. Two attempts by Philistines to destroy him are defeated by God's guidance
- c. David brings up ark to Jerusalem

12. Questions of Love and Punishment

- a. Amnon loves, rapes and dismisses Tamar. Absalom hates him
- b. Absalom murders Amnon and flees to Geshur
- c. Persuaded by Joab and wise woman of Tekoa not to punish, David allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem but not to see the king's face

God Builds David a House

- d. God promises to build David a house and maintain his seed and throne. David's response
- e. David's two sets of victories over enemies
- f. DAVID EXECUTES JUDGMENT AND JUSTICE FOR ALL HIS PEOPLE

Justice, True and False

- d. Absalom's beauty, head of hair, and vanity
- e. Absalom defies the king's justice and demands to see the king's face: 'let him kill me, if iniquity is in me' (2 Sam 14:32). David kisses Absalom
- f. ABSALOM CHAMPIONS 'JUSTICE' AND KISSES EVERYONE IN ORDER TO STEAL PEOPLE'S HEARTS FROM DAVID

Parallel Overview (4)

VII.

13. Questions of Loyalty

- a.* Under guise of honouring a vow to God, Absalom starts a rebellion against God's anointed
- b.* David flees, but allows Ittai free choice
- c.* Zadok brings ark, but David sends it back

VIII.

15. Israel and Judah Bring Back the King

- a.* Israel's discussions and David's appeal to Judah to bring him back. Amasa C-in-C!
- b.* Shimei comes to Jordan to plead for mercy
- c.* Mephibosheth comes to Jerusalem to explain his behaviour

On the Use of Deception, Reward and Violence to Gain Support and Suppress Critics

- d.* Commissioning Hushai's double-talk
- e.* Believing and rewarding Ziba's slander of Mephibosheth
- f.* Refusing to suppress Shimei's abuse of criticism

TAKE OFF SHIMEI'S HEAD? NO.

Division Over David's Return

- d.* The foreigner Barzillai declines the reward of accompanying David to Jerusalem. His son goes
- e.* Dispute between Israel and Judah over protocol of return, leads to secession
- f.* David returns to his house. Puts end to secession

SHEBA'S HEAD CUT OFF AND THROWN TO JOAB

14. Wisdom – True and False

- a.* Absalom, Hushai and Ahithophel. Ahithophel's advice to concentrate on killing David at once
- b.* Hushai's counter-advice appeals to Absalom's vanity
- c.* Secret informers get word to David, who escapes. Ahithophel hangs himself

16. Attitude to Power (1)

- a.* Saul's blood-stained house. Tries to annihilate the Gibeonites. Seven of his sons executed
- b.* David's two sets of deliverances from Philistines and from sons of giants
- c.* David's long psalm of deliverances

Compassion – True and False

- d.* David and Absalom take up positions. David helped by non-Israelites
- e.* The battle: Absalom killed. David laments: 'would God I had died for thee' (2 Sam 18:33)
- f.* DAVID'S MOURNING FOR ABSALOM RISKS LOSING THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED FOR DAVID

Attitude to Power (2)

- d.* David's house right with God
- e.* Rank and reward of two sets of David's mighty men
- f.* DAVID'S PRIDE CAUSES DEATH OF SEVENTY THOUSAND PEOPLE. DAVID OFFERS TO SUFFER HIMSELF TO SAVE THE PEOPLE AND PAYS THE COST OF SACRIFICE

About the Author

DAVID W. GOODING is Professor Emeritus of Old Testament Greek at Queen's University, Belfast and a member of the Royal Irish Academy. He has taught the Bible internationally and lectured on both its authenticity and its relevance to philosophy, world religions and daily life. He has published scholarly articles on the Septuagint and Old Testament narratives, as well as expositions of Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, the New Testament's Use of the Old Testament, and several books addressing arguments against the Bible and the Christian faith. His analysis of the Bible and our world continues to shape the thinking of scholars, teachers and students alike