

facts about Samuel

1. Contrary to what you might expect only about 20 of the 139 references to Samuel in the O.T. connect Samuel with David. (They are listed together in Hebrews 11:32, as well.)
2. In contrast to this Samuel is mentioned by name about 73 times in connection to Saul and the people asking for a king. In addition Samuel is named 35 times in the first seven chapters of First Samuel as the son of Hannah, Eli's assistant, and a judge over the nation.
3. Samuel was already an old man (1 Sam. 8:1) when Saul was chosen to be king and was even more so a few years later when David was anointed to replace him in ch. 16.
4. Since the majority of references to Samuel are connected with Saul whose good start in ch. 11 quickly turned bad in chs. 13 and 15, the prophet didn't have an easy ministry. This is especially clear in ch. 15, where he is named the most. The anointing of David, then, in ch. 16 was a welcome change for Samuel and a blessing from the Lord.
5. Samuel and David are only actually seen together in First Samuel ch. 16 when David was "discovered" and the second half of ch. 19 when he first fled from King Saul. They perhaps never met again before Samuel's death (mentioned in 25:1). Note that the prophet Gad began to advise David in 22:5.
6. Since David and Samuel are most seen together in First Samuel ch. 16, that chapter is the focus of this study.

questions

1. What was the emotional state of Samuel at the beginning of First Samuel ch. 16? Note that is also mentioned at the end of the previous disastrous chapter.
2. Since Samuel knew that God would replace Saul with someone much better (1 Sam. 13:14) why was he still in mourning? Do you think he was expecting to be personally involved in the replacement process? (Compare ch. 16 with 1 Kings 19:10-18.)
3. By offering sacrifices Samuel acted as a priest (16:2-5), but it doesn't say anywhere in First Samuel that he really was one. Was he a Levite? See 1 Sam. 1:1 and 1 Chr. 6:27-27.
4. Were the elders of Bethlehem fearful of Samuel (16:4)? If so, why were they fearful, if he only came to offer a sacrifice (16:5)? Was he primarily known by the people as a priest? What other offices did Samuel hold (3:19-20, 7:15-17, 9:9)? Who was more powerful King Saul or Samuel? (Compare Jeremiah and Zedekiah in Jer. 38:14-28, as well.)
5. What negative things, if any, could be said about Samuel as seen in this chapter? Was he more discouraged than he should have been at first? Was he dishonest about his purpose in going to Bethlehem (16:2-3, 5)? Was he wrong about Jesse's oldest son? Was he a poor judge of character?
6. Overall, what do you think is the most important thing that should be said about Samuel as seen in this chapter?

Samuel was...

Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and describe Samuel relative to Saul, David, and others.

discouraged (16:1)?

- mourning for Saul (15:35, 16:1)?
 - staying at home in Ramah (7:15-17, 15:34, 16:1, 13)?
 - expecting God to lead him to Saul's replacement (13:14)?
 - encouraged by God through David (16:13)?
 - like Elijah in 1 Kings 19:10-18)?
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a priest (16:2, 5)?

- a Levite (1:1, 1 Chr. 6:27-28)?
 - feared by the people because he was a priest (16:4-5)?
 - known mainly as a priest (3:19-20, 7:15-16, 15:33, Acts 13:20)?
 - more powerful than Saul (16:1-2, Heb. 11:32)?
 - protected from Saul (16:2-5, 13, 22:9-19)?
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directed by the Lord?

- told to go to Jesse (16:1, 3, 5)?
 - willing to go despite being fearful (16:2-4)?
 - dishonest about his purpose (16:2-3, 5)?
 - corrected by God, wrong (16:6-7)?
 - ignorant of David (16:1, 11)?
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conclusions and applications

Mark the descriptive terms and phrases above as correct (*), incorrect (X), or partly correct (▲).

Samuel and David

The six observations on the left below are some of the main things that are said in the Bible about Samuel in his interaction with David. The six points on the right explain these observations and begin to apply them to the lives of believers today.

Samuel <i>What is said about him?</i>	<i>What does this mean for us today?</i>
<i>1.) He was deeply disappointed in Saul's performance as king. (16:1)</i>	His disappointment reflected his love for God's people and his desire for God's will to be done, much like the sadness of godly people today when a church leader fails to serve properly.
<i>2.) He was afraid of Saul but still went to Bethlehem to anoint David. (16:2-4)</i>	It was natural for Samuel to fear the wrath of Saul. However, like others today, as well, he overcame his fear through a combination of trust in the Lord and discrete behavior.
<i>3.) He was feared as God's prophet (16:4), but he also served as a godly priest.</i>	The elders feared Samuel (16:4) because he spoke <i>and acted</i> forcefully like earlier judges. (See 15:33.) Yet, as a godly worship leader, his command was to be sanctified (16:5).
<i>4.) He was unable to recognize the right son of Jesse at first. (16:6-12)</i>	David was chosen by the Lord, rather than by Samuel, just as God, himself, calls individuals to serve as church leaders today. Samuel was not like a Pope appointing cardinals and bishops.
<i>5.) After anointing David, Samuel simply went home to Ramah. (16:13)</i>	It was not Samuel's task to promote David's career or fight to help establish him as king. Ultimately only God could prosper David's ways. So Samuel trusted the Lord to do so.
<i>6.) Samuel didn't live long enough to see David actually become king. (25:1)</i>	Samuel lived a long and useful life. Moreover, he knew that God's Spirit was with David in contrast to Saul (16:13-14). So he died knowing that God's plan would come to fruition.