



1 Samuel as Christian Scripture: A Theological Commentary

Stephen B. Chapman

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Reveals the theological drama at the heart of this biblical book

In this theological commentary on 1 Samuel, Stephen Chapman probes the tension between religious conviction and political power through the characters of Saul and David. Saul, Chapman argues, embodies civil religion, a form of belief that is ultimately captive to the needs of the state. David, on the other hand, stands for a vital religious faith that can support the state while still maintaining a theocentric freedom.

Chapman offers a robustly theological and explicitly Christian reading of 1 Samuel, carefully studying the received Hebrew text to reveal its internal logic. He shows how the book's artful narrative explores the theological challenge presented by the emergence of the monarchy in ancient Israel. Chapman also illuminates the reception of the David tradition, both in the Bible and in later history: even while David as king becomes a potent symbol for state power, his biblical portrait continues to destabilize civil religion.

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