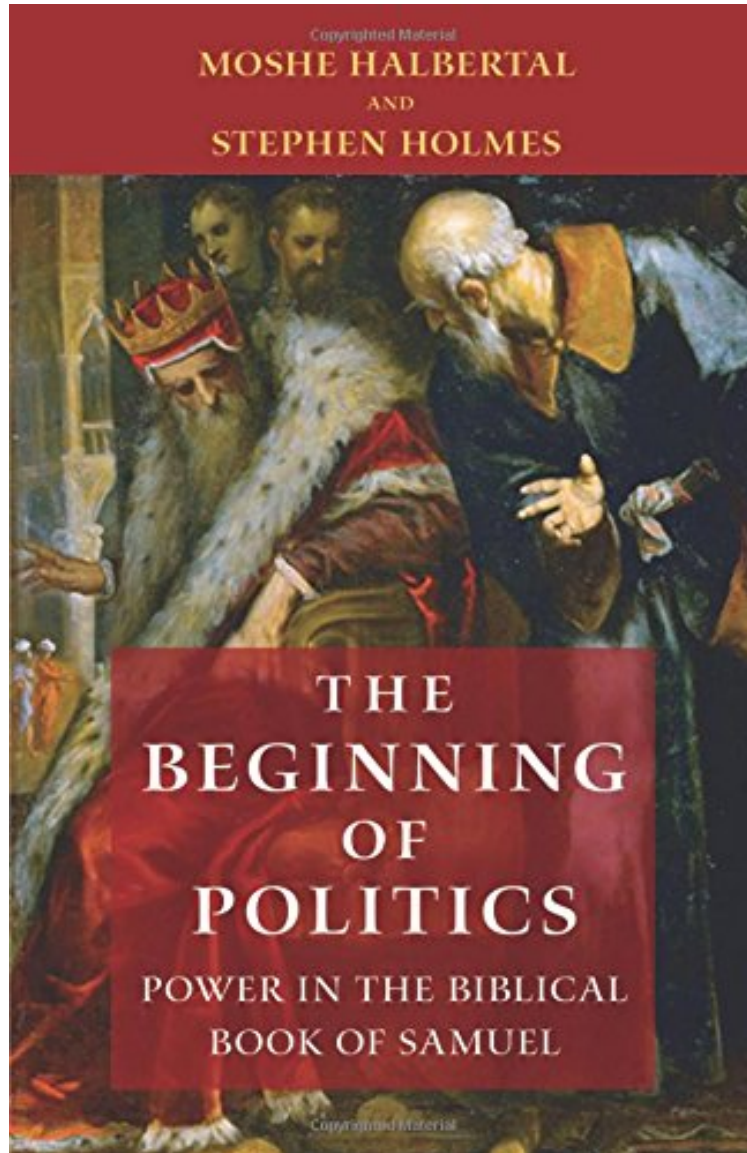


(Free) The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel

## The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel

*Moshe Halbertal, Stephen Holmes*  
audiobook / \*ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



READ ONLINE

#215345 in Books Halbertal Moshe 2017-05-02 Original language: English 8.60 x 1.00 x 5.50l, #File Name: 0691174628232 pages The Beginning of Politics Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel | File size: 28.Mb

**Moshe Halbertal, Stephen Holmes : The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Beginning of Politics: Power in the Biblical Book of Samuel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Challenging Analysis of the Book of Samuel By generally satisfied customer Excellent, well-thought out analysis of one of the Bible's most tantalizing books. All characters, Samuel, Saul

and David have serious flaws, yet contribute importantly to our understanding of this period in ancient history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. For me, this was a new way of looking ...By Jim Culbertson For me, this was a new way of looking at the ascension and reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. A thoughtful and well researched book. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is an engaging and brilliant work on the political lessons gleaned from the Book of Samuel By Michael The Beginning of Politics by authors and NYU law school professors, Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes, is a brilliant analysis of the biblical Book of Samuel, and how the political lessons gleaned from the book are timeless and applicable to different forms of government. Halbertal and Holmes argue that there is a singular author to the Book of Samuel, who was familiar about court politics, although he was likely an outsider. The Book of Samuel is not intended to be an eyewitness account, rather it is based on what Halbertal and Holmes call a faithful skeletal account of historical events supplemented by fictional material, written from the vantage point of an "all knowing" narrator (this was the tradition at the time). What makes the Book of Samuel unique for its time is its unflattering description of its characters. Rather than show a monarch as a god/king as was common in ancient near east/ neighboring accounts of tribal monarchs, the author of the Book of Samuel portrays its kings, Saul and David, as men who are subject to the influences and corruptions of power. Halbertal and Holmes argue that the author is trying to convey the following themes when it comes to the influence that political power has on its wielders: 1. The instrumentalization of members of one's community: using people as a means-to-an-end to obtain political goals. People become pawns within the power wielder's schemes. 2. Politics as a means to maintain power for its own sake: once "in office" the power wielder will strive by any means to hold onto power, including morally unacceptable actions. 3. The ruler's obsessive fear of betrayal: due to the ambitious nature of those who surround the ruler - and their ability to control information flow to the ruler - the ruler will constantly question the motives of those closest to him. 4. Morally unjustifiable acts of violence that can be taken because they can be plausibly denied, being performed through a anonymous chain of emissaries: the responsibility of heinous acts is defused through the use of others in a government. The excuse is, "I was only following orders." Halbertal and Holmes dissect relevant passages of the Book of Samuel to convey the above themes through analyzing the reigns of Saul and David, and their interactions with subordinates. After reading this book, it's not hard to deduce that the themes/lessons are timeless. One doesn't have to step too far back into history (or step back at all - example, North Korea) to see the corrupting effects of political power on the human condition. Even in less extreme forms of government, power wielders are prone to be influenced/corrupted by the power they hold. The Beginning of Politics is not a long book (roughly 173 pages or so), but it's highly engaging and well-written. Highly recommended!

New insights into how the Book of Samuel offers a timeless meditation on the dilemmas of statecraft The Book of Samuel is universally acknowledged as one of the supreme achievements of biblical literature. Yet the book's anonymous author was more than an inspired storyteller. The author was also an uncannily astute observer of political life and the moral compromises and contradictions that the struggle for power inevitably entails. The Beginning of Politics mines the story of Israel's first two kings to unearth a natural history of power, providing a forceful new reading of what is arguably the first and greatest work of Western political thought. Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes show how the beautifully crafted narratives of Saul and David cut to the core of politics, exploring themes that resonate wherever political power is at stake. Through stories such as Saul's madness, David's murder of Uriah, the rape of Tamar, and the rebellion of Absalom, the book's author deepens our understanding not only of the necessity of sovereign rule but also of its cost to the people it is intended to protect and to those who wield it. What emerges from the meticulous analysis of these narratives includes such themes as the corrosive grip of power on those who hold and compete for power; the ways in which political violence unleashed by the sovereign on his own subjects is rooted in the paranoia of the isolated ruler and the deniability fostered by hierarchical action through proxies; and the intensity with which the tragic conflict between political loyalty and family loyalty explodes when the ruler's bloodline is made into the guarantor of the all-important continuity of sovereign power. The Beginning of Politics is a timely meditation on the dark side of sovereign power and the enduring dilemmas of statecraft.

"A brilliant analysis."--Marvin Olasky, World Magazine "Although an investigation of political power in Old Testament writings might be useful in squaring certain passages, the real value here is exploring these books as a first look into the dynamics of early politics."--Library Journal "The real value here is exploring these books as a first look into the dynamics of early politics."--Library Journal "In their brilliant book, The Beginning of Politics, Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes look at Saul, sitting on the heights of power, holding the spear which he has twice used to try and kill David (see I Sam 18:10-12 and 19:9-10)."--Brent Chaim Spodek, The Times of Israel From the Back Cover "Though the biblical narrative of Saul and David has been the subject of much literary analysis, Moshe Halbertal and Stephen Holmes illuminate it in a fresh way through their focus on politics. They make a persuasive case that the biblical writer evinces probing insight into the consequences of the pursuit of power, insight that is still relevant to the political constellations of our own era."--Robert Alter, author of Strong as Death Is Love: The Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Jonah, and Daniel, a Translation with Commentary "The Beginning of Politics is an unprecedented feat that

contributes to biblical scholarship as well as our understanding of politics in general. In particular, in their brilliant unraveling of the relations among David, Uriah, and Joab, Halbertal and Holmes show how the calculations of political rulers may be thwarted by their attempts to hide their intentions and by chains of obedience and violence that escape the control of their initiators."--Jon Elster, Columbia University"Truly remarkable. The greatness of the Book of Samuel is due in part to its matchless account of politics and political psychology, and there is no better book to bring this account to light than this one."--Avishai Margalit, Hebrew University of Jerusalem"By treating the author of Samuel as an ancient Machiavelli, Halbertal and Holmes enable readers to approach the biblical story in a new way while enhancing their understanding of the workings of political survival and the dynamics of power."--Steven Weitzman, author of Solomon: The Lure of Wisdom"For Halbertal and Holmes, the author of Samuel is a writer of singular political insight, a brilliant student of politics, and indeed, a political theorist *avant la lettre*. This is a wonderful discovery. *The Beginning of Politics* is a work of deep and original scholarship."--Michael Walzer, author of *In God's Shadow: Politics in the Hebrew Bible*About the AuthorMoshe Halbertal is the Gruss Professor of Law at New York University, the John and Golda Cohen Professor of Jewish Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and professor of law at IDC Herzliya in Israel. His books include *Maimonides: Life and Thought* (Princeton), which won the National Jewish Book Award. Stephen Holmes is the Walter E. Meyer Professor of Law at New York University. His books include *The Matador's Cape: America's Reckless Response to Terror*.