

recognized by all scholars today that what happened was that the sons of Samuel were the first born, Joel, and the second Abia; and the ~~וְהָיָה~~ word Joel was dropped out in copying at a very, very early date through some scribe's error. So ~~וְהָיָה~~ it says ^{"were} ~~וְהָיָה~~ the firstborn, and the second" and in this way the name Joel was lost and that word vashini which means "and the second" you will find in many of your dictionarys given as the name of Samuel's oldest son! It's just the word "and the second." Well now that was perfectly obvious to everybody who copied a Hebrew MS, but so careful were they about copying what they found, that through six verses later showed that the man's name was Joel - the firstborn - they did not insert it where it was not in a MS they copied. They copied the error in what they had.

A similar case in Saul, where if you translate the Heb. in line with other similar passages it says, And Saul was a year old when he became king and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. What happened was that the MSS said, Sawul when he became king his age was (so and so), and he reigned in Jerusalem, years (so and so) and ~~that~~ last part of that page got broken off at a very early time. Nobody knows how old Saul was when he became king, or how many years he reigned in Jerusalem. And that break-off was perfectly obvious to the scribes but they copied it exactly as it was. They did not make guesses or try to make corrections even where things were obvious. So there are a few things like that in the OT, but the OT MSS were copied with marvelous accuracy and we can say that we have the text just about exactly as it came from the original writers of the OT.