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These people are generally not in a position where they can take the time to go to a Bible college. Our purpose is to bring quality instruction to them, where they are, to be applied to their families, churches, businesses, and schools—the communities in which they live. We believe that *All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.*

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)



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The Life of David

c. 1040 – c. 970 B.C.

Comments by Dr. David A. DeWitt

About This Study

It should be noted that this is a study of the life of David. Although they may be mentioned from time-to-time, this is not a study of the teachings of David, as in the Psalms, or the New Testament comments about David. The text for this study will be 1 and 2 Samuel, the first two chapters of 1 Kings, with occasional references to 1 Chronicles, as it parallels the life of David in 2 Samuel. But this is not a study of those books. We will only consider the verses in those books that refer to David.

In 1 Samuel, David's life is lived in contrast to that of Saul, the first king of Israel. In many ways, it was Saul's jealousy and repeated attempts to kill David that revealed David's goodness. As is often the case, evil gives the opportunity for virtue to be revealed. We get to show forgiveness when someone wrongs us. We get to show kindness and compassion when someone needs it. We get to show patience when there is an occasion for impatience. We can't turn the other cheek, unless someone hits our cheek first.

In 2 Samuel, David's life is contrasted with himself. He became king at age 30 and committed his most grievous sins after age 50. Even with all the hardship he went through, continually fleeing for his life, David found that establishing himself as king was morally easier than being king. David established order in the united kingdom of Israel and was able to write the Psalms and teach Solomon what he later developed into the Proverbs (Proverbs 4:3). David's Bible was the Pentateuch—Genesis through Deuteronomy (1 Kings 2:3; Psalm 119:97-105). What is phenomenal about David is that he was able to read the Pentateuch and not just see the Law of God but the God of the Law. Through the Law of God, David fell in love with the character of God Himself.

In 1 Chronicles, the chronicler gives us some additional information, mostly about statistics surrounding the life of David. The statistics of the Chronicles are in chronological order and parallel the second part of David's life, when he was king. We shall insert these from time-to-time when they add to the information in Samuel. First Chronicles [the books of Chronicles, Samuel, and Kings were not divided into a 1 and 2 until they were translated into Greek in the Septuagint ~250 B.C.] also tells us about the original authors of the information about the life of David. It seems that the information we have in these Biblical books comes from the three prophets who were involved with David.

1 Chronicles 29:29 *Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer. [I know of no clear distinction between a prophet and a seer except that a prophet was possibly more in communication with God.]*

David slipped back into chaos on a few significant occasions. But, as we study the life of David, if you don't like him, remember, **God did!**

- 300 years after David died, God said He would save Jerusalem *for My own sake and for My servant David's sake*. Then God killed 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. Apparently, one David, who died 300 years before, was worth more than 185,000 living Assyrians.

- 500 years after David’s death, God said, through the prophet Ezekiel, that His *servant David* would reign in his resurrected body *as king over* Israel in the future Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 34:23-24; 37:24).
- 1000 years after David’s death, God inspired the Apostle Paul to conclude something we should all want on our tombstones: “*For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep*” (Acts 13:36).

Indeed, **more is written about David than anyone else in the Bible**. The narrative begins in 1 Samuel 16, goes through the entire book of 2 Samuel, and concludes in 1 Kings 2:11. The life of David can be outlined in two parts:

I. David the Man, from a Boy to Age 30 – 1 Samuel 16–31

II. David the King, from Age 30-70 – 2 Samuel

Postscript: David’s Death – 1 Kings 1:1–2:11

In the end, our goal here will not just be to learn the life of David. Our primary purpose will be to do what David did when he studied the Scripture—to learn about God through the Word of God.

David’s Life in 20 Events

[The events listed here are distinguishable occasions in David’s life. They are distinguished by the incidents going on in David’s life, not by a certain volume of text, so some are much longer than others. The dates listed have a “c.” for “circa” (approximately). The underlines indicate the primary locations of David from his birth and anointing at Bethlehem to becoming king in Jerusalem.]

1. Anointed at Bethlehem (c. 1025, age 15 [David born c. 1040]) – 1 Samuel 16
2. Killed Goliath in the Elah Valley (c. 1025+, age 15+) – 1 Samuel 17
3. Had Early Philistine Victories (c. 1025-1020, ages 15-20) – 1 Samuel 18
 - Friendship with Jonathan
 - Marriage to Saul’s daughter Michal
4. Protected from Saul (c. 1018, age 22) – 1 Samuel 19–21
 - By Jonathan and Michal in Gibeah
 - By Samuel in Rama
 - By Jonathan (again) in Gibeah
 - By Ahimelech in Nob
 - By himself in Gath
5. Fled from Saul (c. 1018-1015, ages 22-25) – 1 Samuel 22–24
 - Gathering the army and the mighty men at the cave of Adullam – 1 Samuel 22:1-2
 - Moving his parents to Moab – 1 Samuel 22:3-4
 - At “the stronghold” in Moab – 1 Samuel 22:4-5
 - In the Judean Wilderness – 1 Samuel 22:5–23:28
 - In the cave at En-gedi – 1 Samuel 23:29–24:21
 - At Masada (the “stronghold”) – 1 Samuel 24:22
6. Married Abigail from the Wilderness of Paran/Maon (c. 1015, age 25) – 1 Samuel 25
7. Ruled Ziklag of the Philistines until Saul Died (c. 1010, age 30)– 1 Samuel 27–31
 - David with 600 men went to Achish king of Gath and lived in Ziklag four months

- Saul consulted the witch of Endor
 - David was dismissed by the Philistines
 - David destroyed the Amalekites
 - Saul died on Mount Gilboa
- 8. Became King of Judah at Hebron (c. 1011, age 30) – 2 Samuel 1–2**
- David’s response to Saul’s death
 - The rivalry of Ish-bosheth and the murder of Abner and Ish-bosheth
 - *The days that David reigned over Israel were forty years, seven years he reigned in Hebron and thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem (1 Kings 2:11).*
- [Ryrie and MacArthur both say the *forty years* of David’s reign are 1011-971.]
- 9. Became King of the United Kingdom of Israel at Jerusalem (c. 1007, age 34) – 2 Samuel 3–5**
- 10. Moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (c. 1002, age 38) – 2 Samuel 6**
- 11. Given the Davidic Covenant (c. 1002, age 38) – 2 Samuel 7**
- 12. Established His Kingdom (1002-992, ages 38-48) – 2 Samuel 8–10**
- Defeats Philistia, Moab, Zobah, Aram, Edom
 - Shows Kindness to Mephibosheth
 - Defeats Ammon
- 13. Committed Adultery and Murder (990, age 50) – 2 Samuel 11–12**
- Adultery and murder
 - Rebuke from Nathan
 - The baby with Bathsheba dies
- 14. Suffered the Incest and Murder of Amnon, the Flight and Return of Absalom (c. 990-986, ages 50-54) – 2 Samuel 13–14**
- The incest of Amnon with Tamar
 - Absalom rebels, flees, returns, and revolts
- 15. The Rebellion of Absalom (c. 980, age 60) – 2 Samuel 15–18**
- Absalom rules in Jerusalem, is defeated, and is killed by Joab
- 16. Returned to Jerusalem (c. 976, age 64) – 2 Samuel 19–20**
- Disorder and revolution in the kingdom
- 17. Killed Saul’s Sons (c. 976, age 64) – 2 Samuel 21**
- 18. Wrote a Song and Gave His Concluding Words (late 60s) – 2 Samuel 22–23**
- 19. Numbered the People and a Plague (c. 974, ages 66 or 67) – 2 Samuel 24**
- 20. Died and Solomon Became King (c. 970, age 70) – 1 Kings 1–2:11**

I. David the Man, from a Boy to Age 30 — 1 Samuel 16–31

Event #1

David Was Anointed at Bethlehem (c. 1025, Age 15 [David Was Born c. 1040]) – 1 Samuel 16

The first reference to David in the Bible occurs in the book of Ruth.

Ruth 4:17 “*A son has been born to Naomi!*” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

This is followed in Ruth 4:18-22 by the genealogy that traces the family line of Judah from Perez, son of Judah and Tamar, through Boaz to David. It seems that the whole point of the book of Ruth, possibly written by Samuel during the early life of David, is to tell us the genealogical heritage of David.

The first eight chapters of 1 Samuel are about Samuel. Chapters 9 through 15 are about the rise and rejection of King Saul. Beginning with chapter 16, the focus is on David.

Focus on 1 Samuel 16:1

Three observations are significant as we look at this introductory verse:

- Saul was king (for 40 years), even though God had *rejected him from being king over Israel*.
Theological Note: even though God *removes kings and establishes kings* (Daniel 2:21), we may have leaders still in power whom God has rejected.
- God selected David when (or before) he was a boy, about 15 years old or younger, which was at least 15 years before he became king at age 30.
Theological Note: God predetermines events that are then worked out as real free will acts in the lives of His people (Romans 8:28).
- God did not just choose a king for Israel, He chose a king for Himself.
Theological Note: All things are done by God, for His own glory (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Focus on 1 Samuel 16:7 and 13

In verses 2-13, we have the selection process that eliminated the older sons of Jesse, until David came, and God told Samuel, “*Arise, anoint him; for this is he.*” The lesson for Samuel (and all of us) in this selection process is that *God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*

Application: Don’t make God’s choices for Him.

The ethical question in this process is about God saying Samuel could tell Saul, “*I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.*” God told Samuel to deceive Saul, if necessary.

Theological Note: All ethical conflicts have one common solution. The right thing to do is whatever God is doing.

Another interesting question is, why anoint David at all? David was anointed king two more times over Judah in Hebron and over the united kingdom of Israel in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3). Why was he anointed as a boy? Some possible answers are:

- To indicate he was God’s predetermined choice, not just the people’s choice.
- To let Samuel (and all of us) know that *the LORD looks at the heart*.
- To give a resolve to David. Trusting God meant knowing he would be king, which meant enemies like Goliath, the Philistines, and Saul could not kill him.

Focus on 1 Samuel 16:13-14

Verses 13 and 14 govern the remainder of chapter 16. There were two significant acts of God:

- *The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward*. That means the Holy Spirit was with David, even when he sinned, which may have aided in David’s conviction and repentance but did not prevent him from sinning.

Theological Note: The indwelling of the Holy Spirit before the church age was selective and temporary. Today, the Holy Spirit indwells all believers universally and permanently (1 Corinthians 12:13).

Application: The Holy Spirit convicts us *concerning sin and righteousness and judgment* (John 16:8). But He does not stop us from sinning. We are the ones who must decide to be *blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil* (Job 1:1).

- *An evil spirit from the Lord terrorized Saul*. This was even recognized by Saul’s servants. An evil spirit from God came upon Saul on two other occasions (18:10; 19:9). God may use evil angels or evil people to do His work (Judges 9:23; 2 Chronicles 18:22).

Application: Just because God uses you does not mean He is pleased with you.

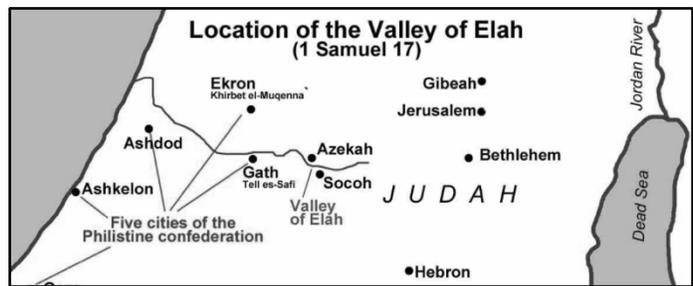
In 16:15-23, we read that David was recruited to play the harp for Saul when the demon from God terrorized him. The most significant information here is we learn that David was a musician. Music followed David through his life and, as far as we know, he was the first one to bring music to worship in Israel.

Event #2

David Killed Goliath in the Elah Valley (c. 1025, age 15+) – 1 Samuel 17

Focus on 1 Samuel 17:1-3

The Philistines gathered their army on the south side of the Elah Valley (a valley west of Bethlehem) at a place called Ephes-dammim, between Socoh, on the east end of the valley, and Azekah on the west end. The Israelite army came (probably from Saul’s home in Gibeah just north of Jerusalem) through Bethlehem to the Elah Valley and camped on the north side.



In chapter 17:4-11, a giant named Goliath challenged the Israelites to an individual battle, claiming the loser’s people would become the slaves of the winner’s people. Stats on Goliath: his height – 9.75 feet (3 meters), his armor’s weight – 125 pounds (57 kg), and his spear’s weight – 17 pounds (7.7 kg).

Focus on 1 Samuel 17:26

In chapter 17:12-30, we are told about the events that led up to the battle between David and Goliath. David’s question in verse 26, “*What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine?*” implied he

was willing to do something about Goliath and that the soldiers were allowing *this Philistine* to taunt the armies of the living God. David's brothers said he was full of pride and evil (verse 28), thus taking it upon themselves to judge David's motives. But remember, God said he was *a man after His own heart* (1 Samuel 13:14).

Application: Judge actions, not motives.

Focus on 1 Samuel 17:36-37, 40, and 47

In chapter 17:30-54, we have the fight between David and Goliath. When David made his case to Saul for taking on Goliath, he told Saul about his ability to defeat a bear and a lion, but coupled that with an acknowledgment that it was *The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear*, [concluding] *He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine*. David also told Goliath, "*the LORD does not deliver by sword or by spear for the battle is the LORD'S.*" David's faith in God to deliver him was tied to God's anointing him to be king. So, David knew *the battle is the Lord's* (verse 47). Once again, we see that David coupled together two concepts: (1) victory came from God when it was God's battle, and (2) God's victory was accomplished through David's own ability. It is interesting that David *chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook* (verse 40). Since he believed God would deliver him, why not just take one stone? Apparently, David thought he might need more than one stone. His trust in God did not discard his own involvement in the battle.

Application: Faith in God's deliverance should be consistent with the promises of God, and not inconsistent with a reasonable assessment of our own participation.

The events of verse 54, where David *took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem but he put his weapons in his tent*, happen much later than the events of verses 55-58. We know this because in verse 57 David stood before Saul with Goliath's head. Eventually, Goliath's sword was taken to Nob (northern Jerusalem today) and then given back to David.

Focus on 1 Samuel 17:58

In verse 55, Saul asked Abner, "*Whose son is this young man?*" In verse 58, speaking to David, *Saul said to him, "Whose son are you, young man?" And David answered, "I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.*" But (probably earlier), when David was playing the harp for a demon possessed Saul in 16:22, we read, *Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Let David now stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight."* Why does Saul not seem to know David when he killed Goliath, yet David played the harp for him on several previous occasions? There are three common answers:

- **It was an attempt to harmonize two contradictory accounts.** There is no problem with the accounts having different authors, since we know this history of David's life had three authors (1 Chronicles 29:29). But we cannot say one of them was incorrect, since this is inspired Scripture and the three authors were prophets of God (Matthew 5:18). Also, if it is an attempt to harmonize two contradictory accounts, why aren't they harmonized? It is clear that whoever wrote or included these two events made no attempt to harmonize them, or they did not consider them inconsistent.
- **David was maybe 12 years old when he played the harp and is now about 17 or 18, and his appearance was different enough that Saul didn't recognize him.** This is possible, but we would like to see some comment by Saul recognizing the Goliath killer as the youth who played the harp, after being told they are both David.
- **Saul was inquiring about David's parents, not the identity of David.** This is the most likely of the common explanations. First Samuel 17:15 says that *David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's flock at Bethlehem*, which could indicate that he continued to play the harp

for Saul. But that does not mean Saul would remember the name of David's father. Suppose I hired a 12-year-old boy to work in my yard. Even if he worked for me off-and-on for five years, it is likely that when he was 17, I would not remember the name of his parents.

We also need to understand that Saul was mentally disturbed by a demon and tried to kill David on two later occasions while David was playing the harp (1 Samuel 18:10; 19:9).

Event #3

David's Early Philistine Victories (c. 1025-1020, ages 15-20) – 1 Samuel 18

Focus on 1 Samuel 18:3

The context of the next part of David's life is framed by his relationship with Saul's son Jonathan. It was a friendship of affection [*love* here is the Hebrew word אָהָב (*ahab*) for "affection"], but the initial covenant was unilateral from Jonathan, apparently recognizing that David was God's anointed to be king.

Focus on 1 Samuel 18:7-8

In chapter 18:7-16, we read about the pivotal point in the relationship between David and Saul. It was the occasion when *The women sang as they played, and said, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."* [Note that the Philistines knew of this saying and remembered it fifteen years later (1 Samuel 21:11).]

We are told that, from that day on, Saul became angry and suspicious (literally inquired with the eye) about David. Saul thought his problem was with David, when, in reality, his problem was with God (verse 12). The author then tells us two things that happened when *an evil spirit from God came mightily upon Saul*.

- (1) He *prophesied*, probably meaning he spoke uncontrollably.
- (2) He tried to kill David with a spear, twice.

Saul then sent David out to war, but *David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him* (verse 14).

Application: Even though people can be evil, the source of our problems is not evil people (Ephesians 6:12).

Application: Not all prophecy is good. Evil spirits can also inspire prophecy.

Focus on 1 Samuel 18:21

In chapter 18:17-27, we learn that Saul wanted David to marry one of his daughters. His oldest, Merab, wanted somebody else, but his daughter Michal *loved David*. Saul thought that a marriage to his daughter would make it so *the hand of the Philistines may be against him* [David]. So, he asked David for a dowry of *a hundred foreskins of the Philistines*. David and his men killed 200 and delivered their foreskins to Saul. So, David married Saul's daughter Michal, the first of his eight wives.

Focus on 1 Samuel 18:30

In chapter 18:28-30, we learn two things about Saul and one about David. Saul understood: (1) *the Lord was with David* and (2) his daughter Michal loved David. Meanwhile, we learn that David *behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed*.

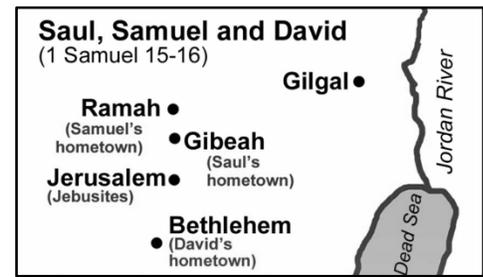
Application: One evidence of the involvement of God in a person's life is that he or she will demonstrate a wisdom that is observable by others.

Event #4

David Is Protected from Saul (c. 1018, age 22) – 1 Samuel 19-21

David in Gibeah

In chapter 19:1-17, we learn that *Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death*. But Jonathan talked Saul out of it, so David rejoined Saul, *and he was in his presence as formerly*. Then, after David had another victorious battle with the Philistines, Saul's *evil spirit from the Lord* inspired him to try and kill David again, while he was playing (probably the harp). David fled to his own house where his wife Michal, aware Saul was planning to kill him the next day, *let David down through a window, and he went out and fled*. She put a household idol (interesting she has such things) in David's bed, giving him time to escape.



David in Rama

In chapter 19:18-24, we learn that David *fled and escaped and came to Samuel* [about 3 miles (5 km) north] *at Rama*. Samuel and David went to a place in Rama called Naioth, probably a group of dwellings that housed *the company of prophets*. During the times of the kings, we often hear of these schools or companies of prophets (1 Samuel 10:5, 10; 1 Kings 20:35; 2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 5:22; 6:1; 9:1). They seem to be a group of men associated with a major prophet, who receive prophetic revelation from God. In this case, they apparently spoke in what Eugene H. Merrill calls “a divinely induced possession trance” [EBC Commentary]. When Saul sent three different groups of messengers to get David, they also were overtaken by this ‘trance’ and *prophesied*. Finally, Saul went himself, and also *prophesied*, and lay on the ground naked (without outward garments) all day.

Focus on 1 Samuel 20:6

David back in Gibeah

In chapter 20, David went back to Gibeah, to meet with Jonathan. As they discussed his situation, David decided to hide in the field, and if Saul asked where he was, Jonathan was to lie to Saul, saying David went to the new moon festival in Bethlehem. Whether David was right or wrong here, we can be sure, as discussed in chapter 16, the solution to every ethical conflict is always that the right thing to do is whatever God is doing.

Focus on 1 Samuel 20:15-17

David and Jonathan renewed their covenant with one another in even stronger terms. Jonathan said:

- *You shall not cut off your lovingkindness...* This time, he used the strong “love” word **חֶסֶד** (*chesed*), often translated “loyal love.”
- *...from my house forever...* David fulfilled this when he took in Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 4:4).
- *...not even when the LORD cuts off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.* This also was a recognition by Jonathan that David would one day be the king.

In 1 Samuel 20:18-22, Jonathan created a plan for telling David Saul's attitude toward him by shooting three arrows into a field. If Jonathan told his servant the arrows were this side of him, it meant it was safe for David to return. If he said the arrows were beyond him, David was to flee. The later was the case. Before they parted, Jonathan sent his servant away, and they renewed their covenant again, weeping together.

Focus on 1 Samuel 21:1-6
David in Nob



In 1 Samuel 21:1-9, we learn that David then went about 3 miles (5 km) south to Ahimelech the priest at Nob, today’s Mount Scopus, on the northern edge of Jerusalem. It is not clear why the priests had their quarters at Nob, but it was not far from Gibeon. We know *the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were in the high place at Gibeon at that time* (1 Chronicles 21:29). The Ark of the Covenant was taken from the Tabernacle at Shiloh, lost to the Philistines, returned to Beth-shemesh and rested at Kiriath-Jearim about 100 years. Sometime after that, the Tabernacle was moved from Shiloh to Gibeon, the place where the sun stood still in the sky for Joshua to finish his battle. At any rate, the priest Ahimelech was living nearby at Nob, and he had the consecrated bread from the Tabernacle.

David’s lie to Ahimelech about being on a mission for King Saul was completely unjustified. It had nothing to do with what God was doing. What was justified was the priest giving David the bread. David wanted the bread because he was hungry, and either he had some companions at the time or he gave some of the bread to those who gathered to him at Adullam, or possibly the other *young men* were already at Adullam. We know there were *companions* somewhere, because when the Pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples picked grain on the Sabbath, Jesus referred to this occasion and said it was “*when he became hungry, he and his companions...*” (Matthew 12:3). The priest giving the consecrated bread to David as food for him *and his companions* was clearly illegal. Jesus said the bread was *not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone* (see Leviticus 24:5-9). The reason it was right to give David the bread anyway was because it was part of what God was doing, preserving David to become king.

In 1 Samuel 21:10-15, David, looking for a safe haven from Saul, went to Achish, King of Gath. But when he was recognized, he acted like a *madman* and was ignored.

Event #5

David Fled from Saul (c. 1018-1015, ages 22-25) – 1 Samuel 22-24

Focus on 1 Samuel 22:1-2

The Cave of Adullam

In 1 Samuel 22:1-2, we see the first gathering of men that looked like an opposition army. There were about 400 who gathered at Adullam, off the southeast end of the Elah Valley. They came from three situations: *distress, debt, and discontent*. David’s brothers *and all his father’s household* also came to him at Adullam.

Moving David’s Parents to Moab

In 1 Samuel 22:3-5, we learn David traveled to Moab, where he asked the King of Moab, “*Please let my father and my*



mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me.” Remember, David’s great-grandmother (his father Jesse’s grandmother) was Ruth, a Moabitess. David stayed there until the prophet Gad came to him and told him to return to Judah.

Focus on 1 Samuel 22:19

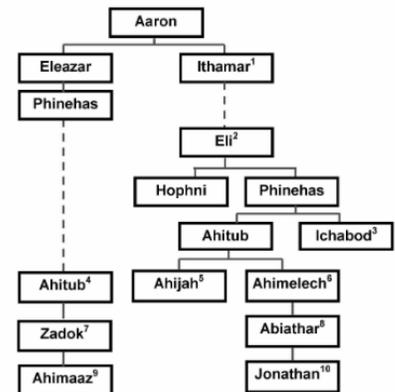
Mass Murder at Nob

In 1 Samuel 22:6-19, Saul complained that his own men did not inform him about David’s activities. So Doeg the Edomite, who had been in Nob while David was there, informed Saul about Ahimelech the priest giving bread and the sword of Goliath to David. Saul then summoned Ahimelech with all his household and accused them of conspiring against him. When Saul’s servants refused to put the priest’s family to death, Saul told Doeg the Edomite to do it. Doeg killed 85 priests, then went back to Nob and killed the men, women, children, and animals of the city.

In 1 Samuel 22:20-23, we learn that Abiathar, one of Ahimelech’s sons, escaped and came to David, informing him about the slaughter at Nob. Abiathar remained with David all his life. Abiathar and Zadok were the two legitimate Levitical priestly lines that endured from Aaron (1 Chronicles 18:16). After David’s death, Abiathar supported Solomon’s brother Adonijah to be king. When Solomon became king, he dismissed Abiathar but did not put him to death (1 Kings 2:26).

Of Aaron’s four sons: Nadab and Abihu died in the wilderness, offering *strange fire* (Numbers 3:4). Of the two remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, at David’s time, Zadok was the descendant of Eleazar, and Abiathar was the descendant of Ithamar. But when Solomon set aside Abiathar, the Zadok line continued. And Ezekiel tells us that God selected the Zadok line to be the priests in the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 44:15; 48:11).

Genealogy of the Priests in David's Time



Focus on 1 Samuel 23:10-12

David in Keilah

In 1 Samuel 23:1-13, David was told *the Philistines are fighting against Keilah*, a Jewish city just a few miles (kms) south of the cave at Adullam. *So David inquired of the Lord*, probably through the prophet Gad, if he should go to Keilah. God told him to go, so he went, defeated the Philistines, and *delivered the inhabitants of Keilah*. Saul, thinking David was walled in at Keilah, decided to go after him there. When David knew Saul was coming, he asked Abiathar to bring the *ephod* he had taken with him from Nob. David then asked two questions: Will Saul come after him



there? and “*will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?*” Apparently, David got his answers from the Urim and Thummim, some sort of deciding dice attached to the ephod (Exodus 28:30). God answered “yes” to both questions, so David and his (now 600) men left the city. So, God knew what could have happened, even though it didn’t happen.

Theological Note: The foreknowledge of God includes His knowing, not only all the things that will happen, but all the things that could possibly happen, even though they don’t happen.



In 1 Samuel 23:14-29, David fled to the wilderness of Ziph, where Jonathan came to see him and they renewed their covenant together. But the Ziphites told Saul where David was, so Saul went after

him. But when Saul was just about to surround and capture him, the Philistines invaded the land, and Saul had to leave, allowing David to escape to the cave at En-gedi.

Focus on 1 Samuel 24:1-6

David at En-gedi

In 1 Samuel 24, we learn the story of David cutting off the edge of Saul's robe in the cave at En-gedi. When Saul heard David was at En-gedi, he went after him with 3,000 men. En-gedi was an oasis, fed by a fresh water stream which came from a waterfall at the back of a large cave. The cave has all fallen in today, but the waterfalls are still there and create enough noise to cover the conversations of David's men, as Saul came in the cave to *relieve himself* (literally "cover his feet").

The interesting thing about this passage is the circumstances and the encouragement of David's own men would indicate that God was leading David to kill Saul. David's men said, "*Behold, this is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold; I am about to give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'*" But David just cut off the edge of Saul's robe, and his *conscience* [literally, *his heart*] *bothered him* for even doing that. David said he would not *stretch out his hand against him* [Saul] *since he is the Lord's anointed*.

Application: Look to the Word of God, not circumstances or the advice of other believers, to determine the leading of God.

When David confronted Saul with the edge of his robe in his hand, he said, "*Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD had given you today into my hand in the cave.*" Even though David described the situation as something the Lord had given him, he still refused to kill Saul. Just because God had led Saul into his hand did not mean David was to use the situation to eliminate Saul.

Theological Note: In the sense of God's sovereign plan, He leads us into all the situations we find ourselves in. That does not mean He is leading us to do anything we want.

Application: God's character, not our circumstances, should govern our moral decisions.

David at Masada

After the En-gedi incident, Saul went back to Gibeah, *but David and his men went up to the stronghold Masada*. The Hebrew word usually translated "stronghold" is מְצוּדָה (*metsodah*), which in English becomes "Masada." By the Dead Sea, Masada is about 20 miles (30 km) south of En-gedi. While David was there, Samuel died.



Event #6

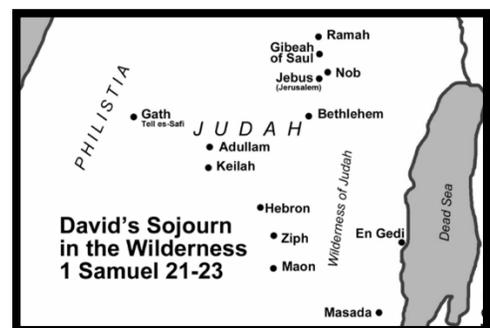
David Married Abigail from the Wilderness of Maon (c. 1015, age 25)

- 1 Samuel 25

Focus on 1 Samuel 25:1-3

In 1 Samuel 25:1-22, we learn how David met his third wife, Abigail. [Abigail should not to be confused with David's sister named Abigail, the only other Abigail in the Bible (1 Chronicles 2:15-16).]

Verse 1 tells us Samuel died, and there was a big funeral for him at his home in Rama. David could not attend the funeral.



Instead, he *went to the wilderness of Paran* [the LXX says Maon]. Paran is a desert area far to the south in the Sinai Peninsula. But this is probably more of a general reference to the southern desert area because the story is about Abigail and Nabal, who lived in Maon, eight miles (13 km) south of Hebron. Also, Nabal did business in Carmel [not to be confused with Mt Carmel of Galilee]. Carmel means “Vineyard Land” or “Garden Spot,” unusual in this desert area. This Carmel is one mile (1.6 km) north of Maon. So, they lived west of where David had been staying in En-gedi and Masada.

We are told that Nabal was very wealthy (having 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats). We are also told some interesting facts about their appearance and character. Abigail *was intelligent and beautiful in appearance* [the same expression is used to describe Rachel in Genesis 29:17 and Esther in Esther 2:7], *but the man was harsh and evil in his dealings*. Nabal was also probably considerably older than Abigail, liked to drink a lot, and he had some kind of heart disease (25:36-37). David had been protecting Nabal’s shepherds, so when his men needed supplies, David sent ten men to request food from Nabal. It seems that Nabal was a supporter of Saul (v. 10) and refused David’s men in an insulting manner (v. 14).

So David left 200 men in camp and took 400 to go and destroy Nabal. But one of the *young men* who worked for Nabal told Abigail about all this and reported that David’s men *were very good to us* (v. 15). Abigail immediately put together a generous amount of food and, accompanied by her men, brought it to David.

The basic difference between Nabal and his wife Abigail was not just their character or appearance but that Nabal supported the wrong guy and Abigail supported the right guy.

Application: Support the people who are doing what God is doing, according to the Scripture.

Focus on 1 Samuel 25:23-31

We know more about Abigail than any of David’s eight wives. Other than Bathsheba’s appeal for Solomon to be king, Abigail is the only one of David’s wives we hear from in the Scripture. Her appeal reveals a lot about her character. Here are **seven observations** about Abigail:

1. Abigail took the initiative to enter a high-risk situation with a possible solution. She rode alone (i.e., without military support) into a troop of 400 armed men bent on violence. She was willing to give herself, as well as her material goods, to solve an impending disaster. In this situation, David saw himself as a getter, she functioned as a giver.
Application: The real leader in any situation is always the greatest giver.
2. Before she arrived, Abigail sent the food, which she had gathered, ahead of her with *her young men* (v. 19).
Application: Sometimes, actions speak louder than words. *A man’s gift makes room for him and brings him before great men* (Proverbs 18:16). A gift is not necessarily a bribe, it may also be a sign of good intentions.
3. She placed herself in a position of submission and humility before David. She *fell on her face before David and bowed herself to the ground* (v. 23). Nabal saw David as a servant (v. 10), but Abigail saw herself as the servant.
Application: Always assume a position of humility. Never be proud of anything.
4. She framed her request to speak in a context of taking the blame for something that was not her fault. *She fell at his feet and said, “On me alone, my lord, be the blame”* (v. 24).

Application: In every situation, always assume less authority and more responsibility than you have been given.

5. Abigail called her husband some very harsh names: בֵּלִיַּעַל (*beliyyaal*) means “worthless,” “wicked,” or “man of destruction” and נֶבֶלָה (*nebalah*) means “foolish” or “disgraceful.”
Application: At times, harsh language is appropriate, when it is not slanderous but it is critical and descriptive (Matthew 23:15; Acts 13:10).
6. The heart of Abigail’s message was a reminder to David that vengeance belongs to God alone (Deuteronomy 32:35). Her point was, David had thus far not taken revenge on Nabal nor killed innocent people. Some day he would be king, and if he refrained from revenge now, he would not have *grief* or a *troubled heart* about it when he was king (v. 31).
Application: Help people think through the long-term consequences of their actions, especially concerning revenge, and especially when they are angry. For God, judgment is justice. For us, judgment should be criticism not justice (see #5 above).
7. Rather than making demands or attempting to negotiate a deal, Abigail came in submission and humility and asked, “*When the Lord deals well with my lord, then remember your maid-servant.*”
Application: Requests are better than demands or deals in developing a relationship—for example, with your spouse, children, parents, brothers, and sisters in Christ.

In 1 Samuel 25:32-35, we have David’s statement of gratitude and recognition of Abigail’s *discernment*. He concluded by saying, “*I have listened to you and granted your request*” (v. 35). Although she stated it several ways, basically, she had made two requests:

1. Accept the food and her apology, instead of destroying Nabal and all his workers.
2. Remember her *when the Lord deals well with David*.

David would grant both requests.

In 1 Samuel 25:36-38, we learn that although David did not disturb Nabal, Abigail did. She waited until he was sober, apparently so he would realize the full impact of what she had done. The information apparently gave him some sort of stroke or heart attack, and he died *about ten days later*. But whatever his physical condition, the text says, *the Lord struck Nabal and he died*.

Focus on 1 Samuel 25:37-44

When David heard about Nabal’s death, he understood it as vengeance from God and *sent a proposal to Abigail to take her as a wife*. Undoubtedly, Abigail already knew David’s marital situation. His first wife Michal had been given to someone else, and David had taken a second wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel. Although we have no information how he met Ahinoam, the Hebrew verb (קָסַל *perfect*) for *had taken* would indicate she was already his wife before his proposal to Abigail. Clearly, David proposed to Abigail because she was *intelligent and beautiful in appearance* (v. 3). Abigail apparently responded because she saw the same in David. At the time, Abigail was wealthier than David. This was not a move up for her economically. But she also believed David would someday be king. At any rate, she responded quickly, and in humble acceptance (v. 41).

Abigail was most likely with David when he embarrassed Saul in the wilderness of Ziph. Then she moved with him to Gath and then Ziklag. David rescued her with the others when she was kidnapped by the Amalekites. She was with him when he became king in Hebron, where she had their son

Chileab (2 Samuel 3:3), also called Daniel (1 Chronicles 3:1). Nothing else is reported about Abigail or her children.

Event #7

David Lived with the Philistines until Saul Died (c. 1010, age c. 30) – 1 Samuel 26–31

Focus on 1 Samuel 26:8-11

David's Last Encounter with Saul

In 1 Samuel 26, we learn about the incident that led David to go and live with the Philistines. The Ziphites told Saul in Gibeah that David was in the Wilderness of Ziph. So Saul took 3,000 men to search for David. But David sent out spies who reported Saul's location. David and Abishai, Joab's brother, entered the camp while they were all sleeping and took Saul's spear and a jug of water that was near Saul's head. The advice David got from Abishai was:

"Today God has delivered your enemy into your hand; now therefore, please let me strike him with the spear to the ground with one stroke, and I will not strike him the second time." But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him, for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD'S anointed and be without guilt?" (vv. 8-9).

The lesson here is the same as at En-gedi. Abishai made the common mistake (the one Job, his friends, and the men at En-gedi had made), that he could determine God's will through circumstances. What David did, both here and in En-gedi, was to trump circumstances with the Word of God. Killing Saul would be against the Mosaic Law for David, but not for God. Even if God did deliver Saul into David's hand, as David himself affirms in verse 23, it was wrong for David to kill him.

Application: Don't ever think you know what God is doing (apart from His revealed Word).

Application: Don't violate the Word of God, even if you believe God gave you the opportunity.

Focus on 1 Samuel 26:17-19

David then embarrassed Saul's commander (Abner) for not protecting Saul, by calling to him and Saul from a nearby mountain, while holding Saul's spear and water jug. Then David spoke to Saul, telling him two things:

1. If the Lord has stirred up (incited) Saul against David, then David will offer (literally, "let God smell") an atoning sacrifice.
2. If evil men had incited Saul against David, then they should be cursed, i.e., judged by Saul before the Lord. David added, *they have driven me out* and he equates that with them *saying, "Go serve other gods"* (v. 19). In other words, being driven out of the land of Israel was equivalent to being forced to abandon the worship of God.

Theological Note: David understood God was omnipresent (Psalm 139). But under the Law, once the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant were taken into the Land, there was no designated place for the worship of God outside the Land. That's what made the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles so devastating. Thus David paralleled being driven out of Israel with a command to serve other gods.

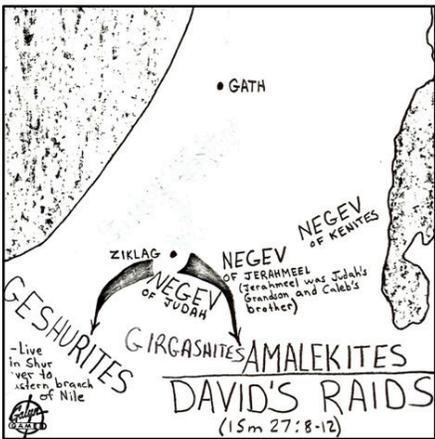
Application: Today, David's comments would be like sending a "tweet" to defend himself. It is appropriate to make a logical, factually accurate case to defend yourself.

Focus on 1 Samuel 27:1-7

David Moved to Ziklag

In 1 Samuel 27, David realized, if he stayed in the land controlled by Saul, he would one day be killed by Saul. As at En-ge-di, Saul apologized and David went his way. But now, David knew Saul would never accept him. So David appealed to Achish, King of Gath, who gave David the city of Ziklag, a small Philistine settlement between Beersheba and Gaza, as a place to live and protect. Apparently, Saul stopped pursuing David because David was no longer a threat to Saul's reign. Even though David knew he was the future anointed king, he also asked himself what was the most reasonable thing to do, based on his situation and Saul's mental condition.

Application: The sovereignty of God and the promises of God are not to be taken as something that relieves our responsibility for good choices.



While living in Ziklag, *David and his men went up [south] and raided the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites.*

These were some of the people who lived in today's Gaza Strip and south to the east side of the Suez Canal. These were not Philistines but Canaanites Joshua had not driven out of the Land (Joshua 13:1-4). *David attacked the land and did not leave a man or a woman alive, and he took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing.* These raids did three things:

1. They protected Ziklag from attacks from the south.
2. They eliminated some of the Canaanites God commanded Joshua to drive out.
3. They provided supplies for David's people in Ziklag.

When Achish asked David where he was raiding, David lied about it, just saying his raids included *the Negev of Judah*. And since he left no one alive to bring as slaves to Achish, there was no one to tell the truth. *So Achish believed David*, thinking him to be a loyal subject.

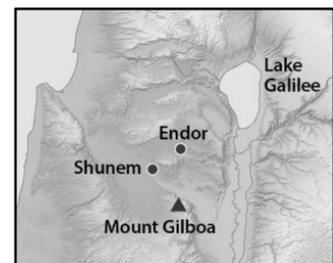
Application: Withholding information is not lying when it is irrelevant, but it is lying when the information makes a difference in the understanding of the point at hand.

Focus on 1 Samuel 28:1-4

Saul Consulted the Witch of Endor

After verse 2, 1 Samuel 28 is not about David. All we learn about David is that he agreed to go to battle with Achish against Saul. In this chapter, we learn about the staging of Saul's final battle. He moved the army of Israel to Mount Gilboa, while the Philistine army gathered at Shunem on the southern side of the Hill of Moreh. In between was the Jezreel Valley, where Gideon had defeated the Moabites about 180 years earlier. On the northeast end of the Hill of Moreh was Endor, where there was *a woman who is a medium* who conjured up Samuel from the dead. God wouldn't talk to Saul *by dreams or by Urim, or by prophets*, so he crossed the valley at night and God allowed this woman to bring up Samuel from the dead, apparently, the good part of Sheol (Luke 16:19-31). Samuel explained the reason for God's rejection of Saul and told him, *"tomorrow you and your sons will be with me,"* that is, dead and in Sheol. After eating a meal, Saul returned to Mount Gilboa.

No Applications are made here because the chapter is about Saul, not David.



Focus on 1 Samuel 29:1-5

David Dismissed by the Philistines

In 1 Samuel 29, we see the Philistines preparing for their final battle against Saul. The Philistines gathered their army together at Aphek, where they had defeated the Israelites and taken the Ark of the Covenant 90 years earlier. Meanwhile, Saul gathered his army by *the spring which is in Jezreel*. The city of Jezreel (the home of Ahab and Jezebel about 150 years later) is about 40 miles (65 km) north-east of Aphek. The *spring* may be a reference to Harod Springs, just a few miles/ kilometers southeast of the city of Jezreel, but facing the Jezreel Valley. The emphasis of chapter 29 is on the dismissal of David and his men from the ranks of the Philistines. David and Achish discussed David's loyalty. But the Philistine lords, of whom Achish was just one among several of equal authority, feared that David would turn on them in the battle. It is interesting that the women's song from over 20 years earlier was still known, not just in Israel but also in Philistia. The lords said, "*Is this not David, of whom they sing in the dances, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?*" But David was in a difficult place. He would be fighting with Israel's enemies against his own fellow Hebrews. It was very fortunate, and in God's sovereign plan, for David to be dismissed and sent back to Ziklag.

Theological Note: God is sovereign over our lives, even when we make the wrong choices. David's life, from his being anointed by Samuel until Saul's death, was filled, not just with conflict, but with conflicting moral situations. David did not always make the right choice, but he always put God's will first in the sense of being unwilling to remove God's anointed.

Application: We should understand that God is sovereign over our choices, even though our choices are real and we will live with the real consequences of our choices.



Focus on 1 Samuel 30:1-8

David Rescued Those Kidnapped From Ziklag

The Amalekites are hard to identify because they seem to be nomadic tribes without a central location, leader, or government. The Amalekites were first mentioned at the time of Abraham (Genesis 14:7), but these tribes, the ones that continue to be a problem for Israel, are probably the descendants of Amalek the grandson of Easu via a concubine (Genesis 36:12, 16). So, the Amalekites are related to Easu but distinct from the Edomites. The Old Testament records Israel's continual problems with the Amalekites, plus God's commitment to *wipe out* and *utterly destroy* them (Exodus 17:8-13; 1 Samuel 15:2-3; Deuteronomy 25:17).

In 1 Samuel 30:1-25, we read about the Amalekites kidnapping David's people in Ziklag and David's rescue. While David was away with Achish king of Gath, planning to fight with the Philistines against Saul, the Amalekites raided Ziklag, burned it with fire, and *took captive the women* [including David's two wives Ahinoam and Abigail] *and all who were in it both small and great*. They did it *without killing anyone*, apparently planning to keep the people as slaves. Everybody was upset and angry over the situation, but David was also *greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him*. They were *embittered* [literally *bitter of soul*] because they blamed David for going off with the Philistines instead of staying in Ziklag to defend the people.

It is not clear if David had a choice in going with Achish, but he did not seem to be eager to leave and return to Ziklag. Whatever the situation was, the choice resulted in the people of Ziklag being

left vulnerable to attack. David's guilt or innocence was unclear, probably even to David. But his response was not to defend himself with the people, but to turn to God for his strength. And the Hebrew [ו (vav) connective] indicates the way David strengthened himself was to call for Abiathar the priest to bring the ephod. The ephod was an apron-like breast plate that contained the Urim and Thummim. They were some sort of stones used for determining the will of God (Exodus 28:30), and they were only to be used by the priest. The Urim and Thummim could indicate a "yes" or "no" answer, but they could also indicate God gave no answer at all, since that's what happened when Saul tried to use them (1 Samuel 28:6). David, on the other hand, received three answers from God (v. 8):

1. *Pursue, [the Amalekites]*
2. *You will surely overtake them*
3. *You will surely rescue all*

Theological Note: Before there was a Bible, personal revelation from God was available to a very thin line of people throughout history, those mentioned in the Bible. Everyone else lived *in darkness* (John 12:46; Romans 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 5:4). This *darkness* lasted until in this age, beginning in Acts 2 (A.D. 33), when *the times of ignorance* is replaced by the spread of the gospel *that all people everywhere should repent* (Acts 17:30). Today, people can receive Christ and understand the written revelation of God, through the indwelling Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Application: When it is not clear whether or not you are responsible for a problem situation, don't make a defense for your action. Don't blame others or yourself. Rather, look to the Word of God for direction and move forward to rectify the situation.

Next, we learn that David left 200 of his 600 men at the brook Besor to stay with the baggage (v. 24) because they were too *exhausted* to cross the brook. David's men found an Egyptian, who was a servant of an Amalekite left behind sick. This man led David to the Amalekites and those who were kidnapped. David and his men killed all the Amalekites, except for 200 who fled on camels, and brought back all the people and many supplies.

Application: Don't leave a job half done. Finish the job.

Application: If you make a mistake, fix it.

David had to make another decision when they returned to the brook Besor, where the 200 tired men were left with the baggage. Some of David's men, who went into the battle, did not want to give those who stayed any of the spoil from battle. The text uses two common words to describe the unwilling warriors: רע (ra), the most common word for *evil*, and בְּלִיַּעַל (beliyyaal), the word for *wicked*, which Abigail used to describe Nabal (1 Samuel 25:25). So not all of David's men were of upstanding character. Nonetheless, David called them *my brothers* (fellow Jews and fellow soldiers) and described the spoils of the battle as *what the Lord has given us*.

Theological Note: Being a believer, even in a true sense, does not mean you will always do the right thing.

Application: Many people we work with, even many believers we know, will make bad decisions which are רע (ra) *evil* or בְּלִיַּעַל (beliyyaal) *wicked*, but as long as they are willing to receive instruction, they need correction, not rejection (Galatians 6:1).

Since the victory was of God, the spoil belonged to God. It was not theirs to decide who was to receive it. David then established *a statute and an ordinance for Israel*:

For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike (v. 24).

The principle was not "From each according to his ability, to each according to his need" (Karl Marx) but, what God has provided should be given to everyone. All those who went to battle did so

to get back their families and their goods. And they received that. So, they got what they went into battle for. Jesus said a similar thing in His parable of the landowner, who hired people at different times of the day but gave them all the same wages (Matthew 20:1-13).

Application: Everything we have is a gift from God, and we are not to be critical about what God has given others, even if we worked harder for what we have than they have for what they have.

In 1 Samuel 30:26-31, we learn that David also sent some of the spoils as gifts to various Jewish cities. All the cities mentioned are in Judah and Simeon. These are those who would soon anoint David king over Judah at Hebron. Apparently, David wanted to make sure they saw him as with Israel not with the Philistines. The gifts established David as a giver not a taker. He was a leader who saw himself as one who should give to his people not a tyrant who would take from them.

Application: Always look for ways to give. [Once again, a leader is a giver and, in every situation, the greatest giver is always the leader.]

Application: Give some portion of everything you get (Luke 16:38).

1 Samuel 31 has no information about David per se, but it is relevant to David's future. Here, we learn Saul was wounded and committed suicide after his armor bearer refused to kill him. [Other suicides recorded in the Bible are those of Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23), Abimelech (Judges 9:54), Samson (Judges 16:30), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), and Judas (Matthew 27:5).] In a sense, the Philistines killed Saul. He was wounded badly enough that he could not escape, and he feared they would *make sport of* him, such as they did with Samson after putting out his eyes. Three of Saul's sons were also killed (31:6). That included Jonathan, but not Ish-bosheth, who was later made king over Israel by Abner (2 Samuel 2:8-9). Saul's head was removed and sent around to the cities of the Philistines, while his body and those of his sons were fastened to the wall at Beth-shan. But the men of Jabesh-gilead, whom Saul rescued in his first campaign, took the bodies and buried them in Jabesh.

II. David the King, from Ages 30-70 — 2 Samuel

Event #8

David Became King of Judah at Hebron (c. 1010, age 30) – 2 Samuel 1-2

Focus on 2 Samuel 1:12-16

David's Response to Saul's Death

From 2 Samuel 1:1-16, we can discern that an Amalekite came across Saul's dead body, took Saul's crown and bracelet, and brought them to David, making up a lie that he was the one who killed Saul. Apparently, he thought David would reward him. Instead, David took him at his word, and, after mourning all day for the slain Israelites, ordered the Amalekite killed for destroying God's anointed king. This leaves us with some questions:

- Did David do the right thing?
- Did David kill the Amalekite for committing an act of euthanasia?
- Would David consider it right if the Amalekite had allowed Saul to suffer agony until he died naturally?
- Why didn't David just see killing a mortally wounded Saul as an act of God?

Earlier David said, "*As the LORD lives, surely the LORD will strike him, or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish*" (1 Samuel 26:10-11).

So why would David not consider this one of the ways *the LORD will strike him*?

Although David certainly believed in the sovereignty of God and, therefore, that Saul's death was of God and in God's timing (Psalm 139), that did not in any way reduce the free-will responsibility of the Amalekite who (said he had) killed Saul. Whether or not David believed his euthanasia was wrong, David certainly believed it was wrong to kill God's anointed, even though he was dying.

Theological Note: As long as a person is alive, their spirit is in their body. Human life should be honored as significant, even if it is terminal (Genesis 9:6; 35:18).

Application: Although it is usually right to use the means we have available to prolong life and wrong to use it to prolong death, it is not right to expedite death.

Focus on 2 Samuel 1:22-27

In 2 Samuel 1:17-27, we have a *lament* which David *chanted* over Saul and Jonathan, after which he put it into a song which was recorded in the book of Jashar. Ryrie tells us the book of Jashar (a writing we do not have) is "a history of Israel's wars in which some important events and great men were commemorated poetically." The book is also mentioned in Joshua 10:13.

Theological Note: There were other writings and records kept throughout Jewish history which were probably accurate, but not inspired by God to be preserved as Scripture. The difference is, those recorded in the Bible are inerrant and placed there to bring glory to God.

Application: It may be good to refer to and read sources other than the Bible, but remember:

1. They are not an inspired inerrant Word from God.
2. They are not written with the primary purpose of glorifying God.

David began (v. 19) and ended (v. 27) his lament over Saul by exclaiming, "*How have the mighty fallen.*" A few other lines should be noted. In verse 20, David said, "*Tell it not in Gath [or] Ashkelon [because] the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.*" Instead, he called for *the daughters of Israel [to] weep over Saul.*

Application: No one should be encouraged to rejoice over the difficulties, failures, and tragedies of others. The people of God should respectfully mourn (not "celebrate") the death of other people of God, even if they clearly have had sin in their life, because as believers they are God's anointed.

Youngblood (EBC Commentary) says, "In no uncertain terms, verses 22-23 summarize the bravery, the determination, the comradeship, and the ability of King Saul and his son Jonathan."

In 2 Samuel 1:26, David said, "*I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women.*" The question is, in what sense was Jonathan's love *more wonderful than the love of women*? Ryrie says Jonathan's love is "likened to the loyalty and devotion of marital love" (Study Bible). But David spoke of *the love of women*, not the love of marriage, and it seems the two are contrasted, with Jonathan's love being superior. Here the word אָהָב (*ahab*), for affection, is translated *love*. The basic difference between the affection of Jonathan and the women David is likely referring to, is connected to romance. Jonathan's affection was not romantic or based on reciprocity. Romance always is.

Application: Romance is always a two-way thing. It's swapping, which includes the thought of reciprocity. Romance helps us get married. But it will have to give way to love defined as giving without reciprocity if marriage is to be good (beneficial).

Application: All relationships begin with some sort of reciprocity, but long-term friendships focus on giving without expectation of a return.

Focus on 2 Samuel 2:1-4a

David Anointed King over Judah in Hebron

Second Samuel 2 begins telling us about David's first public anointing as king, which came about 15 years after his private (family) anointing by Samuel in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:13). With Saul's death, David could move more freely, and there was a power vacuum in Israel. Nonetheless, David did not move without consulting God, possibly by the prophet Gad or with the priest and the Urim and Thummim. This is not the first time David had inquired of God in this manner (1 Samuel 23:1-4, 9-12; 30:7-8), nor would it be his last (2 Samuel 5:19, 23-24).

Application: This does not mean we can pray and get specific leading from God. David received the Word of God through the prophets and ephod of God.

God's answer was that David should go up to Hebron. So, David and his two wives along with his men *each with his household* went to Hebron, where David was anointed king over Judah. This move was significant in three ways:

1. It set David apart from the Philistines, indicating his complete identification with the Hebrews.
2. It indicated a separation between Judah and the northern tribes, which came to fruition after Solomon's reign.
3. It began a rivalry with Saul's son Ish-bosheth.

David reigned in Hebron for 7½ years (1 Chronicles 29:27). While he was there, six sons were born to him (1 Chronicles 3:1-4).

In 2 Samuel 2:4b-7, we learn that David sent word to the men of Jabesh-gilead, thanking them for burying Saul, plus David informed them that he had been anointed king over Judah.

Focus on 2 Samuel 2:8-11

2 Samuel 2:8 marks the beginning the *long war between the house of Saul and the house of David* (2 Samuel 3:1). Saul's general Abner made Saul's surviving son Ish-bosheth king over Samaria, Benjamin, and the Transjordan at the east-central Transjordan city of Mahanaim (at or near Jabesh-gilead, by Jabbok, where Jacob wrestled with the angel of God nearly a thousand years earlier). Ish-bosheth, who was then 40 years old, only reigned two years and was a weak king whom Abner used for his own struggle for power (3:11; 4:1). Ish-bosheth was not listed as one of Saul's sons when Saul's reign began but was included in 1 Chronicles 8:33 as Eshbaal (fire of Baal). Apparently, his birth-name was changed to avoid the connection to the god Baal. The change to Ish-bosheth (man of shame) many indicate something of his character as a young man. Since Ish-bosheth was 40, it confirms that Saul's reign was about 40 years (the same as David's and Solomon's).

Focus on 2 Samuel 2:12-17

In 2 Samuel 2:12-32, we have a strange *contest*, the significance of which is unclear. Abner and his men came from Mahanaim and Joab with his men came from Hebron and they gathered at Gibeon (where the sun stood still in the sky for Joshua 400 years earlier and where the Tabernacle of Moses currently stood). It was suggested by Abner that 12 of the men of Ish-bosheth fight 12 of the men of David, probably with daggers, since the place was named Helkath-hazzurim ("field of daggers").



The result was a victory for David's men, but it did not settle anything. David's men pursued Abner's men, who were then defeated. David's men were continually led by Joab. Even though the two often did not get along, Joab became a loyal leader of David's army. Joab and his two brothers Abishai and Asahel were David's nephews, sons of David's sister Zeruah (1 Chronicles 2:16). Asahel pursued Abner, who killed Asahel, resulting in a vow of revenge from Asahel's brothers. But when Abner suggested Joab stop pursuing their Israelite *brothers*, Joab returned to Hebron and Abner to Mahanaim. David had lost 20 men and Ish-bosheth had lost 360. The battle was over, but the war had just begun.

Application: When you do something hurtful to someone, or seek revenge for someone hurting you or your family, you create a vicious cycle of hatred. Only when you leave vengeance up to God can the hate-cycle end. You can forgive someone, when you understand God won't.

Event #9

David Became King of the United Kingdom of Israel at Jerusalem (c. 1007, age 33) – 2 Samuel 3-5

Focus on 2 Samuel 3:6-12

2 Samuel 3 is the account of the death of Abner, Saul's general. The first verse reports the *long war* without detail. In verses 2-5, we are told the names and mothers of six sons born to David at Hebron. Three of them (Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah) are significant in David's future.

- *his firstborn was Amnon, by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess* – Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar
- *his second, Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite* – no future significance
- *the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur* – Absalom killed his brother Amnon for raping his sister Tamar, then fled to Geshur, his mother's home, the area of New Testament Bethsaida, the hometown of Peter and Andrew
- *the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith* – Adonijah tried to become king instead of Solomon
- *the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital* – no future significance
- *the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah* – no future significance

In verse 6, we are told that *Abner was making himself strong in the house of Saul*, but then he pushed it to the limit by going in to Saul's concubine. Ryrie reports, "Having intercourse with a king's concubine was a treasonous act, for it was in essence making a claim to the throne" (see 16:20-21).

When Ish-bosheth complained, Abner was angry and said he would turn Israel over to David. This was apparently what Abner truly planned to do because he met with David and they made a peaceful arrangement.

David only required the return of Michal, David's first wife and Saul's daughter. This was certainly not for romantic reasons. It was probably done for the same reason Abner took Saul's concubine. Someone else having the king's wife indicated a claim to the throne, and a weakness of the king. Michal's husband seems to have loved her and Michal hated David, at least we know she did when David moved the Ark to Jerusalem.

In 2 Samuel 3:17-39, we have the events leading to the death of Abner, and the funeral that followed. Abner attempted to make a truce with David, and David sent him, and his men, away from the feast they had together in peace. When Joab returned and heard about it, he was angry and told David Abner only came to spy on them. Then Joab called Abner back to Hebron, without David's knowledge, and murdered Abner for killing his younger brother Asahel. When David found out, he

was furious, condemned Joab, and honored Abner with a funeral and a respectful eulogy. After verbally condemning Joab, David said, “*May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil*” (v. 39).

Application: Criticize evil, but do not *repay the evildoer according to his evil*. Once again, the judgment we are called to make concerning evil is criticism.

Focus on 2 Samuel 4:5-12

In 2 Samuel 4, we have a short chapter describing the incidents surrounding the death of Ish-bosheth, with a parenthetical statement about Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth, who will be discussed later.

The news of Abner’s death did not encourage Ish-bosheth, rather he *lost courage, and all Israel was disturbed* (v. 1). Seeing this, two Benjamite leaders took it upon themselves to assassinate Ish-bosheth and bring his head to David. David responded the same as he did with the death of Saul. He had both of them killed and their bodies disgraced. When you are a man of bloodshed, it’s hard to know whose blood to shed. David did not have Joab killed for killing Abner, but he did have the Benjamites killed for killing Ish-bosheth.

- It could be because Abner had killed Joab’s brother, but that was in a battle format.
- It could be because David needed Joab to head up the army.
- It could be because Joab did it to protect David. But both killings were premeditated murder.
- It could be David also saw Ish-bosheth as God’s anointed. That’s closest to the reason David gave. He said, they *killed a righteous man in his own house* (v. 11).
- It could be because David had been anointed king in Hebron, therefore, he was the government and had the duty of capital punishment (Genesis 9:6).

Theological Note: After the Flood, God told Noah, “*Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man.*” This requires some sort of government to decide on guilt. That government has not just the right but responsibility for capital punishment.

Theological Note: Capital punishment was mandated after Noah’s Flood, not just because it is justice—an eye for an eye. For example, this is not required for killing animals. The reason it is mandated is because *in the image of God He made man* (Genesis 9:6). It’s all about the glory of God.

Focus on 2 Samuel 5:1-11

In 2 Samuel 5, the establishment of David as king in Jerusalem is in four paragraphs:

1. Anointing David king over the united kingdom of Israel and Judah in Hebron
2. The move of David to, and capture of, Jerusalem
3. The sons born to David in Jerusalem via additional concubines
4. The defeat of the Philistines

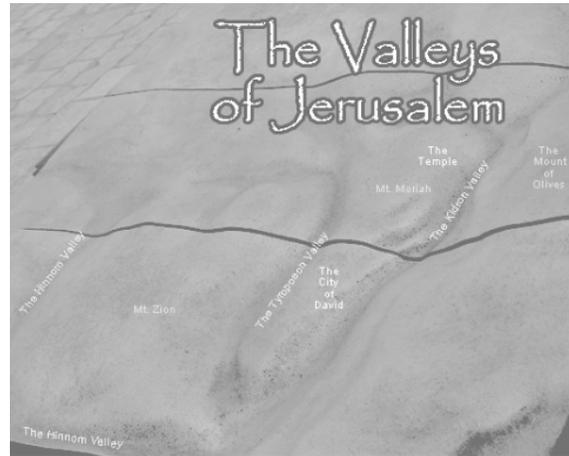
In 2 Samuel 5:1-5, we learn of a delegation of elders representing the northern and Transjordan tribes of Israel who came to Hebron to anoint David king over a united kingdom. The elders made three statements:

1. “*Behold, we are your bone and your flesh,*” we are all Hebrews, descendants of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.
2. “*Previously, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and in,*” even in Saul’s reign, David was the real leader of Israel.
3. *And the LORD said to you, “You will shepherd My people Israel, and you will be a ruler over Israel.”* David was God’s choice to be the leader of His people.

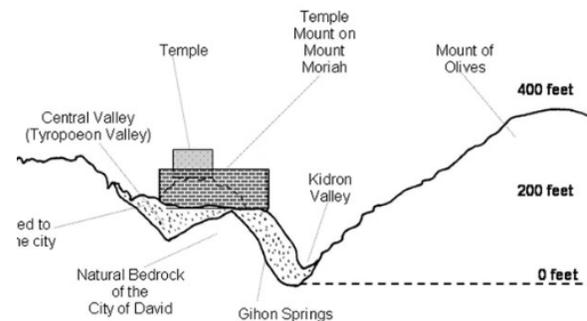
In 2 Samuel 5:6-10, the second paragraph of the chapter, we learn about David's conquest of Jerusalem, and establishing himself in the area known as Zion, the finger of land below the current Old City. Jerusalem (then called Jebus – 1 Chronicles 11:4) had remained in Jebusite control since the time of Joshua (Joshua 15:63), probably because it was an easily defended stronghold with the deep Kidron Valley to the east, the Hinnom Valley to the south, the Tyropoeon Valley to the west, and the hill to the north, which became the Temple Mount.

The Jebusites felt confident David could not capture the city, so they said, "the blind and the lame will turn you away." Putting together the accounts in 2 Samuel 5:7-9 and 1 Chronicles 11:5-8, it seems that David said, "Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander." So, Joab [David's nephew] the son of [David's sister] Zeruiah went up first. By taking direction from David, Joab entered the water tunnel at the Gihon Spring. [The Hebrew word צִנּוֹר (*tzinnor*) can be a water shaft.] Joab seems to have climbed up this shaft, entered the city leading a band of David's warriors, and

was the first to kill a Jebusite, thus becoming the permanent commander of David's army. After the Jebusites were defeated, the high area, which later supported Solomon's Temple, and Mount Zion were united into the City of David (2 Samuel 5:7, 9; 6:12; 1 Kings 2:10). Using the leadership of Joab, David built the city south of the מִלּוֹ (Millo – literally *filling*), an uncertain area which may have been a gorge filled in later to assure access between Zion and the Temple Mount, or it may be a wall built to protect Zion from the north (1 Kings 9:15).



The third paragraph, 2 Samuel 5:11-12, tells us that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent cedar trees, carpenters, and stonemasons to build a palace for David. The same Hiram later supplied materials for Solomon's Temple (1 Kings 5:1).



The fourth paragraph, 2 Samuel 5:13-16, tells us about the other sons born to David in Jerusalem. The list includes the two sons of Bathsheba, Nathan the ancestor of Mary the mother of Jesus (Luke

3), and Solomon, who became the next king and the ancestor of Mary's husband Joseph (Matthew 1). These two genealogies gave Jesus both the genealogical right to reign (through Mary) and the legal right to reign (through Mary's marriage to Joseph).



Second Samuel 5:17-25, the last paragraph of the chapter, tells us of David's victory over the Philistines. There were two separate battles. First, realizing David was no longer a friend, the Philistines came from their territory to the west on the Mediterranean coast and spread themselves out in the Valley of Rephaim, a valley to the southwest of Jerusalem which bends on up toward Gibeon. Rather than going immediately into battle, David inquired of the Lord and received

the answer, “Go up for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.” David defeated them so that they fled leaving behind their idols, which David *burned with fire* (1 Chronicles 14:12). But the Philistines were not done yet.

The Philistines made yet another raid in the valley. David inquired again of God, and God said to him, “You shall not go up after them; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees” (1 Chronicles 14:13-14).

This time God gave David a specific strategy for the battle, to set an ambush and attack *when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees* (v. 14). David *struck down the army of the Philistines from Gibeon* (the north end of the valley of Rephaim, where the Tabernacle still stood) to Gezer (about 15 miles [25 km] south in the heart of Philistia).

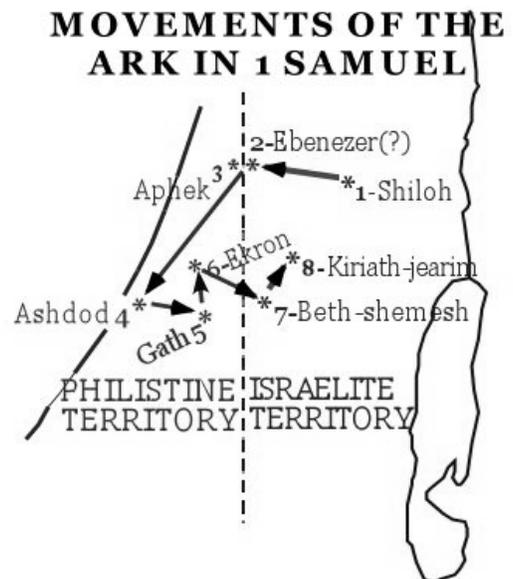
Event #10

David Moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem (c. 1002, age 38) – 2 Samuel 6

Focus on 2 Samuel 6:1-15

David Moved the Ark of the Covenant

Second Samuel 6 describes the two-stage movement of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Around 1400, Joshua brought the Ark into the Land and placed it at Gilgal near Jericho. Then after a ceremony at Shechem, he placed it in Moses’ Tabernacle set up at Shiloh. The Ark sat there for over 300 years. Then Eli’s two worthless sons took it into battle at Aphek/Ebenezer and lost it to the Philistines for 7 months. Then it was returned to the Israelite town of Beth-shemesh where it was opened and many (probably 70) men died. So, it was moved to Kiriath-jearim (modern Abu Ghosh, also called Baale-judah in Joshua 15:9). It was not returned to Shiloh, apparently because Shiloh was destroyed and the Tabernacle was moved to Gibeon (1 Chronicles 21:29), northwest of Jerusalem. [Some say the Tabernacle was first moved to Nob, but the Bible only says the priests lived at Nob (1 Samuel 21:1).] The Ark sat about 100 years at Kiriath-jearim, in the house of Abinadab, under the care of his son Eleazar (apparently, because they were Levites, possibly Kohath priests). But then, 400 years after it had come into the Land with Joshua, David decided to move it to Jerusalem. David put it on a new cart, as the Philistines had done (1 Samuel 6:8). But God had designated that the Ark was to only be carried by Levite priests, specifically the sons of Kohath (Exodus 25:14-15; Numbers 3:30-31; 4:15; 7:9). *They* [apparently some Kohath priests since they were not killed] *placed the ark of God on a new cart* instead of carrying it. David and 30,000 men accompanied the cart. But when the oxen who pulled the cart almost upset the Ark, a man named *Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it*. Immediately, *the anger* [literally, *anger of face*] *of the Lord burned against Uzzah and God struck him down there for his irreverence* [better, *error*, KJV] *and he died*.



Questions: The account leaves us with questions:

- Was it right for David to move the Ark?
- Why move the Ark to Jerusalem instead of returning it to Moses’ Tabernacle in Gibeon?
- Why did David not move the Ark with Kohath Levite priests as God prescribed?

- Was Uzzah wrong to reach out and take hold of the Ark? Would it be better to let it fall?
- Since we know God is good, why was it good to kill Uzzah?

Answer #1: We cannot know what the text does not tell us. What we do know is, God wanted the Ark in Jerusalem, to eventually put it in Solomon’s Temple. So, yes, it was right for David to move it to Jerusalem.

Application: It is right to do what God is doing—the ultimate answer to all ethical questions. Morality is never accomplished by setting up standards, however good they may be, separated from God.

Answer #2: David seems to have used a cart to move the Ark because it was an expedient method. The fact that the Philistines also did it shows it was a common way of moving things. But David was wrong, even though he did not know it, evidenced by the fact God’s anger surprised him and angered him.

Application: The commands of God are to be understood literally and kept precisely, not allegorized and paraphrased.

Answer #3: Uzzah’s motives seem genuine and sincere in that he was only trying to steady the Ark. But he was wrong to touch the Ark, because (apparently) he was not a Kohathite Levite.

Application: Genuine, sincere motives do not define what is good. Only the commands of God, as they reflect the character of God and plan of God, are good. God, not man, decides what is good.

David Moved the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem



When God killed Uzzah, David became angry with God [a different word than God’s anger, this word is like *burned with anger*], so he placed the Ark in the home of *Obed-edom the Gittite*, where it sat for *three months*. Apparently, Obed-edom was a Levite of the family of Kohath, those designated to carry the Ark. We get that from the fact that he was from Gittim, which is Gath-rimmon, one of the Kohath Levite cities (Joshua 21:24-25). When David learned that *the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household*, David prepared a second movement of the Ark. This time the Ark was carried (apparently by Kohath Levite priests)

to Jerusalem among great pomp. David was dancing *wearing a linen ephod*. The word *ephod* usually indicates a priest’s vest, but here it may only refer to a linen clothing covering. Every six paces he *sacrificed an ox and a fatling*.

Application: Do God’s will God’s way.

At the end of the chapter, we learned that David’s wife, Saul’s daughter Michal, objected to David’s dancing, *and she despised him in her heart*. David justified it by saying God made him king, *therefore I will celebrate before the Lord*. The chapter ends, saying, she *had no child to the day of her death*. That could mean they did not cohabit after this, or that God closed her womb.

Application: It is right to *celebrate before the Lord*.

Event #11

David is Given the Davidic Covenant (c. 1002, age 38) – 2 Samuel 7

Focus on 2 Samuel 7:1-7

In 2 Samuel 7, we have the very significant Davidic Covenant, which:

- Defines David's descendants
- Prescribes the line of Christ, the Messiah of Israel
- Guarantees a future for the people of Israel

In 2 Samuel 7:1-3, we learn that David wanted to build a house for the Ark of the Covenant which he moved into a *הַיְצִיָּה* (*yeriah* – literally a place of *curtains*). It was probably an elaborate tent, but nonetheless, not a house of cedar like King Hiram had built for David (2 Samuel 5:11). So, David asked the prophet Nathan about it. Interestingly, Nathan made a mistake. He told David it's okay, *for the Lord is with you*.

Question: Why is Nathan not stoned for being a false prophet?

Answer: Nathan was not creating a directive as if from God that would intentionally lead Israel away from God. He was simply mistaken. He thought he knew what God would want, without receiving a revelation from God. It is interesting to see that a true prophet from God can be wrong, even when he sincerely thinks he is right and honoring God with no evil motives. Prophets are only inerrant when they speak revelation from God.

Application: There is a difference between the truth of the Word of God as given in the Bible, and those who teach it. Even a good teacher needs to be held to the Word of God and corrected when he or she is inconsistent with it, no matter how sincere they are.

In 2 Samuel 7:4-17, we have God's response to Nathan. The first thing God said (vv. 4-7) made it clear that He had never dwelt in a house, and He had never asked anyone to build Him a house. Instead, He had *been moving about in a tent*. God is not house-oriented (Isaiah 66:1-2). The second thing God said was for Nathan to remind David:

1. He took him *from following the sheep to ruling over my people Israel*
2. He had been with him, and
3. He had cut off David's enemies

Then God talked about what He was going to do.

- *I will make you a great name, like the names of the great men who are on the earth.*
- *I will also appoint a place for My people Israel so they will not be disturbed again.*
- *I will give you rest from all your enemies.*
- *The LORD also declares to you that the LORD will make a house for you.*

Focus on 2 Samuel 7:12-16

The rest of Nathan's revelation was an elaboration on this fourth promise, the David Covenant (vv. 12-15). The Covenant included five basic promises:

1. David's descendants would establish a kingdom after his death. The future kings of Israel would always be of the bloodline of David, as Jesus was through David and Bathsheba's son Nathan (Luke 3).
2. David's son (Solomon) *shall build a house for My name*.
3. *I will establish the throne of his (Solomon's) kingdom forever*. So, all of the future kings of Israel would be connected to *the throne of Solomon* (as Jesus was through Joseph's marriage to Mary).
4. Whenever any of this line of kings *commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of the sons of men but My lovingkindness* [loyalty to the bloodline of David] *shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul*.



5. Unlike every other kingdom of the earth, David's *kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever*. This last promise is finally fulfilled by Jesus Christ (Luke 1:31-33), who will take the throne at His Second Coming (Matthew 1:11; 19:28; Acts 15:16-18) and reign on earth for a thousand years (Revelation 20). *Forever* here is in the sense of as long as the earth lasts, since it is destroyed after Christ's 1000-year reign (Revelation 21:1-3).

This was not a promise of uninterrupted rule. It has been interrupted since the Babylonian Captivity, because of the sins of the kings. Rather, this was a promise that the right to rule as king over Israel would always be with someone from David's genealogy, as Jesus' mother Mary was that direct genealogical descendant through David and Bathsheba's son Nathan (Luke 3).

Theological Note: The Davidic Covenant guarantees, not just a king but a kingdom, not just a future for David's line, but a future for the genealogical nation of Israel in their ancient homeland. It is fulfilled in Jesus, but not as Jesus walked the earth, nor as Jesus is building His church today. The church does not fulfill the Davidic Covenant, progressively or any other way. The throne of David will be established on earth during the 1000-year kingdom described in Revelation 20, after the church has been removed (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Romans 11:17-24).

In 2 Samuel 7:18-29, David responded with a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. A few things should be noted:

- David came in humility, *Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?* (v. 18).
- David understood this was *concerning the distant future* (v. 19).
- David understood that this was good because God did it for Himself, *for the sake of your word and according to your own heart* (v. 21).
- David's *courage* (literally *heart*) to pray was based on the fact that he was praying for what God planned to do (v. 27).

Something interesting should be noted here. David was established as king, and has been given an eternal covenant by God. Yet God knew, and David did not know nor would he ever imagine, that his greatest failures, sins, and suffering were yet to come.

Application: Great accomplishments, and great blessings, are no guarantee against future failure.

Event #12

David's Kingdom Is Established (1002-992, ages 38-48) – 2 Samuel 8-10

Focus on 2 Samuel 8:13-15

David Established the Kingdom

Second Samuel 8 has two parts. The first, in verses 1-14, tells us how David established the kingdom. The second, in verses 15-18, tells us how David administered the kingdom.

Second Samuel 8:1 records that David subdued the Philistines, specifically controlling (literally *bridling*) the city Metheg-ammah. We know of no such city by name, but the words mean *mother city*. Ryrie suggests it refers to Gath, the Philistines' main city.

Second Samuel 8:2 refers to David selecting two-thirds of the Moabites (probably the older soldiers) to be killed, by some unknown means, while keeping one-third alive. Moab became a vassal state to

Israel. But the harsh treatment of Moabites is surprising since they were distant relatives of David, his great-grandmother Ruth was a Moabitess, and the king of Moab protected David's parents from Saul.

Question: Was David wrong to kill two-thirds of the Moabite soldiers? This does not seem to be consistent with David's usual treatment of those who did him a good deed. Why did God not object to David's treatment of the Moabites?

Answer: The favor done to David (care for his parents) was done by the king of Moab (1 Samuel 22:4), not the army, and the king was not executed. Those executed were prisoners of war, who would normally all have been killed. The one-third kept alive were probably young enough to not be an immediate threat. The danger of allowing the enemy to retain an effective standing army is that they will be a constant threat to your country.

2 Samuel 8:3-8 tells us about David's defeat of the Arameans (Syrians) to the north of Israel. [The area known as Aram in the Old Testament became Syria during the Greek Empire (332–63 B.C.).] David's victory had two phases: first when he defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah, a city north of Damascus, and second when Damascus heard of it and came to help Zobah, and David defeated them also. The details of these battles are in chapter 10. [The statistics recorded in the Septuagint and 1 Chronicles 18:4 indicate that there may have been some copying errors in 2 Samuel regarding the numbers of chariots and horsemen recovered.] At any rate, David captured these two main Aramean (Syrian) cities and he ruled over them by leaving garrisons of soldiers there and collecting tribute from them.

Second Samuel 8:9-12 records David receiving a third Aramean city without a fight. Toi king of Hamath was an enemy of Hadadezer so when David defeated him Toi sent his son with a gift of peace.

Second Samuel 8:13-15 says David *made a name* by defeating the Edomites. [The word *Aram* or *Arameans* in verse 13 should be Edom. It is undoubtedly a copying error. Since Hebrew has no vowels, the only difference between Aram and Edom is the very similar letters ט (d – *dalet*) in Edom and ר (r – *reish*) in Aram.] David also placed garrisons of soldiers in Edom, making it another vassal state paying tribute to Israel. The last sentence of verse 14 and verse 15 give us the focus of the chapter:

And the LORD helped David wherever he went. So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.

Application: Wherever we have responsibility, in our homes, schools, churches, etc., we should protect our people by defeating their enemies. For David, that was the nations that surrounded Israel. For us, it is the godless teaching and practices of Satan's world system.

Application: Wherever we have responsibility, in our homes, schools, churches, etc., we should administer it with justice and righteousness.

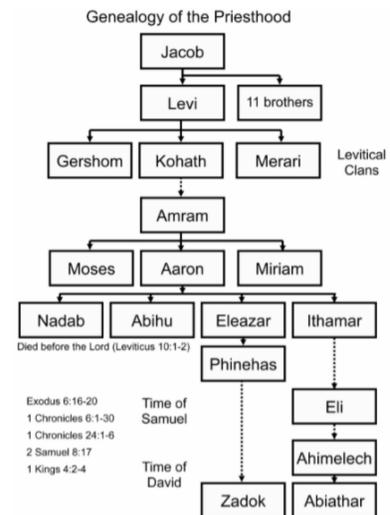
- Righteousness = applying the holiness of God
- Justice = treating everyone from the same righteous standard, not treating everyone the same

David Administrated the Kingdom

Second Samuel 8:16-18 tells us how *David administered justice and righteousness for all his people.*

- *Joab the son of Zeruiah* [David's nephew] *was over the army*
- *Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder* [the basic meaning of *recorder* is "one who remembers"]
- The priest *Zadok the son of Ahitub* [this is the priestly line through Eleazar (1 Chronicles 6:4-8) which is the priesthood of the Millennial Kingdom (Ezekiel 48:11)]

- The priest *Ahimelech the son of Abiathar*, from the priestly line of Ithamar, remained a priest for David, but was dismissed by Solomon. Samuel predicted this line would come to an end (1 Samuel 3:10-14).
- *Seraiah was secretary* [literally a scribe]
- *Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites*, were elite troops mentioned throughout the reigns David and Solomon (1 Samuel 30:14; 2 Samuel 15:18; 20:7, 23; 1 Kings 1:38, 44; 1 Chronicles 18:17). Benaiah (with Nathan the prophet and Zadok the priest) supported Solomon when Adonijah tried to usurp the throne away from Solomon.
- *David's sons were chief ministers* [the word is literally *priests*, but that is undoubtedly a metaphor for those who had authoritative positions by reason of their birth].



Application: Leadership is reflected in the ability to delegate responsibility.

Focus on 2 Samuel 9:9-13

Second Samuel 9 is the account of David’s kindness to Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth. Although David had committed himself to care for Jonathan’s family, this commitment to Mephibosheth came by David asking Saul’s former servant Ziba, “*Is there yet anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?*” (v. 1). Ziba told David about the crippled Mephibosheth and that he was living with Machir, a man loyal to David (2 Samuel 17:27), in the city of Lo-debar. Lo-debar was east of the Jordan, 5 miles (8 km) south of the Yarmuk River. David brought Mephibosheth to Jerusalem and instructed Ziba and his 15 sons and 20 servants to farm *all that belonged to Saul and to all his house* (v. 9) and give the profits to Mephibosheth. *So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate at the king’s table regularly.*

Application: Take the initiative, go out of your way, to do deeds of generosity and kindness.

Focus on 2 Samuel 10:1-7

Second Samuel 10 [which has a parallel account in 1 Chronicles 19:1-19] has three paragraphs:

1. The Ammonites humiliated David’s delegation of peace (vv. 1-5)
2. David sent Joab, who defeated the Ammonites and their allies (vv. 6-14)
3. David defeated the Arameans, who were under Hadadezer in the Transjordan (vv. 15-19)

Most commentators agree with Ryrie: “Chapter 10 records the details of David’s conflict with the Ammonites and Arameans, incidentally mentioned in 8:12” (Ryrie Study Bible). If so, this is the detail of how chapter 8 came about.

David made the nations surrounding Israel into vassal states that paid tribute to Israel (8:12), including Ammon. Saul had defeated Nahash the Ammonite to free Jabesh-gilead, but Nahash had shown some unspecified kindness to David, so David wanted to return to the kindness after his death to Nahash’s son, Hanun. When Hanun’s advisors suggested David’s men were spies, he humiliated them by cutting off half their beards and half their garments. [It’s not wise to humiliate David’s men.] David told them to stay at Jericho until their beards grew back.

But the Ammonites recruited 33,000 mercenary troops from the Aramean territory, so David sent Joab, who defeated them by dividing his army between himself and his brother Abishai, saying,

whoever wins should help the other. Both won, and Joab returned to Jerusalem. But the Arameans regrouped under Hadadezer, and David led an army that defeated them east of the Sea of Galilee.

When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore (2 Samuel 10:19).

Application: The path to peace is strength, obtained through righteousness and justice. For example, you can't achieve peace for your family if you are too weak to oppose evolution, progressivism, abortion, cohabitation, lying, and homosexuality.

Event #13

David Committed Adultery and Murder (990, age 50) – 2 Samuel 11-12

Focus on 2 Samuel 11:1-5

Second Samuel 11 is the story of David's adultery and murder, as an attempt to cover it up. At the end of the chapter, we read for the first time, *but the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord* (v. 27).

Verse 1 tells us the spring [literally *at the turn of the year*] was the time *when kings went out*, presumably to make war with somebody. This constant state of creating war was deemed necessary in order to make preemptive strikes on adversaries, to keep them weak and the king's people from being attacked.

Application: If you want to protect your family, you will need to continually make preemptive strikes on the enemy, and the enemy is the influence of Satan's world system.

It was customary for a king to lead his army into battle, but for some reason, David stayed in Jerusalem and sent the army out with Joab.

Their assignment was to besiege (surround with a barrier line) the Ammonite capital city of Rabbah. The siege was something like modern sanctions. The purpose was to starve them into submission without getting close enough to the city wall to be hit with arrows.

Application: A good strategy for dealing with imbedded sin, like alcoholism, drug addictions, pornography addiction, or homosexuality, is to surround them with a wall that starves them out.

Verse 2 takes us into David's palace and his bedroom, where David could not sleep and got up to walk around on the roof in the evening. The roofs were flat, as most in Israel are yet today, and from David's higher elevation, he could see across the roofs of the houses south of his. Where exactly Bathsheba was bathing is not clear, except it was somewhere, located close enough and lighted well enough for David to see her and observe that *the woman was very beautiful in appearance*.

Some suggest that Bathsheba was complicit in this, or even that they had an affair, because of the location of her bathing and we do not read that she resisted the adultery. It does not seem like she was raped. We should also note that David's counselor, Ahithophel (2 Samuel 15:31), was the grandfather [the father of Eliam, who was the father] of Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:3; 23:34). Apparently, that's why Bathsheba lived nearby, probably with or near her grandparents. So, David had known her, or of her, for a long time. Also, David was somehow confident that she would not tell Uriah she was already pregnant when David tried to send him to her. And then there is the fact that



David and she were married after Uriah's death, had more children, and it was Bathsheba's son Solomon that became the next king. Eugene Merrill says, "Bathsheba, knowing the proximity of her courtyard to the palace, probably harbored ulterior designs toward the king" (Bible Knowledge Commentary). Even Ryrie says, "Bathsheba evidently was not an unwilling participant in this sin" (Ryrie Study Bible). But all this is speculating. What we do know is that God blamed David for what he did, and what he did *was evil in the sight of the Lord*.

Verse 3 tells us David inquired about her and learned she was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David knew this was not just fornication with a new concubine. This was clearly adultery.

Theological Note: Since Adam and Eve, women are more likely to be deceived, and men are more likely to sin knowing it's wrong.

Verse 4 tells us David *sent messengers and took her*, lay with her, and she purified herself according to the Mosaic Law before she returned to her house.

If a man lies with a woman so that there is a seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening (Leviticus 15:18).

Verse 5 says Bathsheba conceived and notified David she was pregnant.

Verses 6-13 tell us how David planned to cover up his sin. He sent for Uriah, and two times, once with Uriah sober and once when he was drunk, David tried to get Uriah to sleep with his wife. Uriah gave two reasons not to. One, the Ark is in a tent. It is unclear what that had to do with anything. Was he really not going to have relations with his wife until a Temple was built for the Ark? His second reason was basically he would not avail himself of the privilege of sleeping with his wife when his friends fighting in the army could not sleep with their wives.

Application: Lying accompanies most sins. If you find yourself thinking about how to lie effectively, you are probably covering up some other sin.

Focus on 2 Samuel 11:23-27

Verses 14- 27 tell us the sad story of David's murder of Uriah. David sent him back to the front with a note for Joab to place him where he would be killed. Joab immediately obeyed. When an Ammonite raiding party came out to make a breach in the siege wall, the Israelites chased them back, and Uriah was sent too close to the gate, where he would be shot and killed by the Ammonites on the wall. A report was brought to David, who basically said, "Don't worry about it, *the sword devours one as well as the other*" (v. 25). After Bathsheba *mourned for her husband*, she became David's wife, not just a concubine, and *bore him a son*. The first son died but later she had Solomon and Nathan. Because Solomon became king, Bathsheba lived her older years as the Queen Mother, the most significant woman in Israel.

Focus on 2 Samuel 12:1-14

Second Samuel 12:1-23 tells us about the initial fallout of David's adultery and murder. The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David, and Nathan came with an allegory. Technically, this is not a parable, because parables introduce themselves with a statement, like, *He spoke to them in parables saying...* A parable is a story the reader knows is a parable before hearing it. An allegory is a similar story but where the reader or listener does not necessarily know it is story created to make a point. In this allegory, Nathan pictured David as a rich man who stole a pet lamb from a poor man. Then David was angry and said, "*the man who has done this deserves to die*" (v. 5). Notice that, although David tried to cover up his own sin, he recognized it with the insensitive selfish rich man in the story. David's sense of right and wrong was still intact.

Nathan said, “*You are the man.*” Then, through Nathan, God reminded David that He was the one who delivered David from Saul, gave David the kingdom, and gave him all his wives. Then God made an interesting statement. He said, “*and if that would have been too little, I would have added many more things like these.*” Since the issue was David taking Uriah’s wife, we can only assume that God would have given David more wives if he wanted them. But since David took Uriah’s wife and had him killed, God announced a punishment for David. It’s important to notice, at no time does God tell David he sinned against Uriah or Bathsheba. Rather, He gave two aspects to David’s sin:

1. *You have despised the word of the Lord*
2. *by doing evil in His sight*

When David heard it, he said, “*I have sinned against the Lord.*” When he wrote about it, he said, “*Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so you are justified when you speak and blameless when you judge*” (Psalm 51:4).

Because of David’s repentance, Nathan told him, “*The Lord has taken away your sin; you shall not die*” (v. 13). The word translated *has taken away* [עָבַר] (*abar*) basically means *to pass over*. There was no atoning animal sacrifice David could do for his sin. It required the death penalty. But God did what He did when Israel left Egypt and what God does with our sin. Paul said, “*For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed*” (1 Corinthians 5:7). David’s sin was not atoned for, it was passed over. An atonement is a temporary covering of sin which must be repeated. The Passover was a once-for-all event that must only be remembered.

Although David’s sin could be passed over, resulting in his life rather than his death, it still had to be judged. God gave David four overlapping judgments:

1. *The sword shall never depart from your house* (v. 10)
2. *I will raise up evil against you from you own household* (v. 11)
3. *I will take your wives and give them to your companion* (v. 11)
4. *The child also that is born to you shall surely die* (v. 14)

Application: When we receive Jesus Christ as our Savior, by faith we become children of God (John 1:12). At the point of our faith, God passes over our sin because the blood of Christ is our Passover. When we sin as believers, we do not cease to be children of God (Romans 8:1). Our salvation is secure (John 5:24). But God still judges our sin in that we receive less rewards in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). And that’s a big deal (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Their child became sick. David prayed, fasted, and lay on the ground all night, but seven days later the child died. Then David went home, cleaned up, changed clothes, and ate some food. When asked why,

He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, ‘Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live’. But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Samuel 12:22-23).

Observation #1: While the child was alive, David prayed, wept, and fasted.

Application: It is always good to pray for life, even in seemingly desperate situations.

Observation #2: David prayed for the grace of God, but did not get it.

Application: God does not always grant His grace (selected favor) to all believers.

Observation #3: David stopped praying when the child died.

Application: There comes a time when prayer should end.

When David said, “*I will go to him, but he will not return to me,*” he may be referring to going to the child in some after-life situation. If so, it would be the place where Samuel was (1 Samuel 28:15), the good part of Hades (Luke 16:19-31). But David may also have been referring to the inevitability of death. At any rate, this does not mean that all babies everywhere who die go to heaven. At most, it may indicate that infants, of believing parents, who die go to heaven (1 Corinthians 7:14).

Focus on 2 Samuel 12:24

Whatever it meant that *David comforted his wife Bathsheba*, it included the idea that he was good to her and he continued to have relations with her, giving them a second son, Solomon. The statement that *the Lord loved him*, and sent word to that effect through Nathan the prophet, indicated Solomon was to be the successor to David’s throne.

Theological Note: Although their adultery and David’s murder of Uriah were clearly sinful, Bathsheba’s marriage to David was not sinful, since she was a widow. After confessing the sin which devastated his life, David did the best he could with the mess he had created.

Application: Whenever we sin, we reduce our ability to serve God and lose heavenly rewards. But we should not just wallow in that sin. What we need to do at that point is confess our sins (1 John 1:8-10) and move forward in a godly manner from that situation.

Theological Note: God does not punish the children for the parents’ sins (Ezekiel 18). The sins of David did not stop God from loving and blessing Solomon.

Application: *God visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations* (Exodus 34:7) probably involves our temptations, and those we pass along. But we make our own decisions about those temptations. God does not judge us for our parents’ sins. So when we sin, know that

“I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies,” declares the Lord GOD. “Therefore, repent and live” (Ezekiel 18:32).

Focus on 2 Samuel 12:29-31

Joab had apparently maintained a siege barricade around Rabbah, *the royal city* of the Ammonites, for at least a year and a half (Bathsheba delivered her baby who died and had Solomon). Then Joab captured Rabbah’s water supply. Knowing the fall of the city was imminent, he asked David to come and capture it, and take credit for it. So, David captured Rabbah, *and brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts*. After that, he set the people *under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brickkiln*. Some suggest this means David put them to hard labor as slaves. But it is possible that this is a description of David putting them to death by the same cruel means the Ammonites had used on their captives. There is also an interesting comment on the king’s crown, that it weighed a talent of gold, which is about 75 pounds (34 kg). That may mean the king was a big guy. When the Israelites under Moses killed *Og King of Bashan*, he was buried in Rabbah, and his bedstead (probably meaning his casket) was about 13.5 feet long by 6 feet wide (Deuteronomy 3:11).

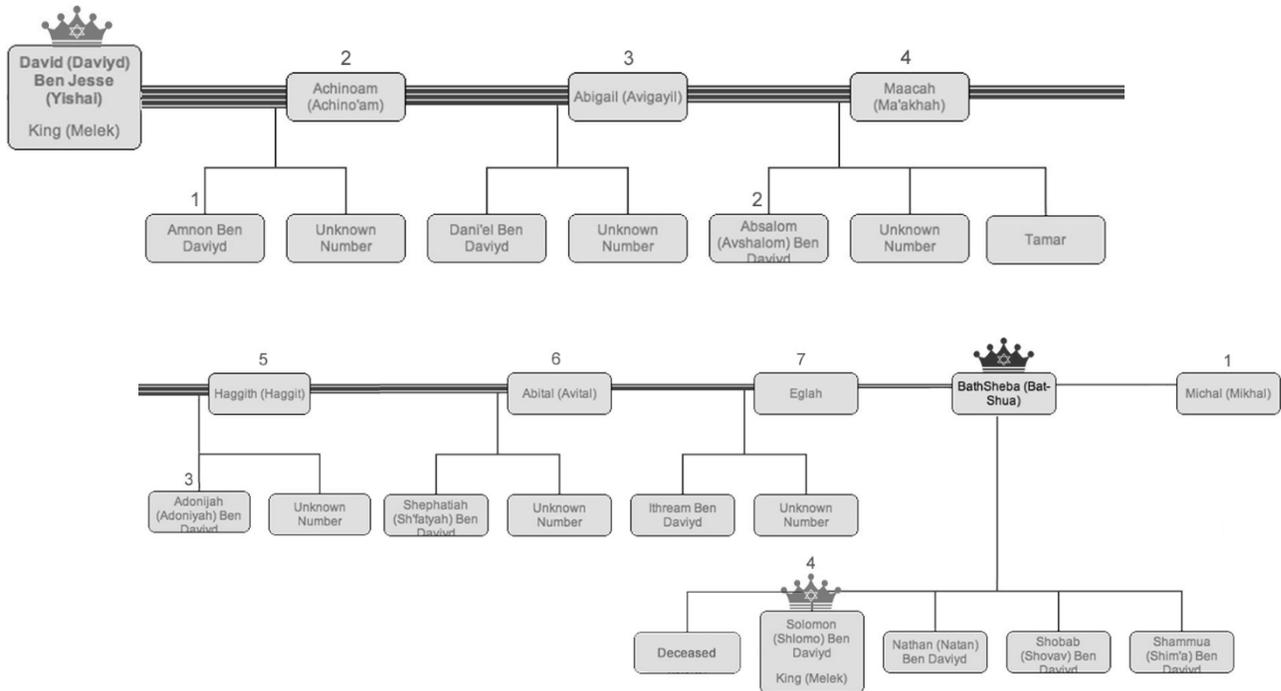
Event #14

**The Incest and Murder of Amnon, the Flight and Return of Absalom
(c.990-986, ages 50-54) – 2 Samuel 13-14**

Focus on 2 Samuel 13:1-4

Second Samuel 13 is the fulfillment of one of God’s promised judgments on David recorded in 12:11, *Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household.* It may also be an example of *visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children* (Exodus 34:7). Amnon *made himself ill* because he was so frustrated with his sexual attraction for his beautiful half-sister Tamar.

Let’s review the family tree a bit.



1. David’s first wife Michal had no children.
2. David’s second wife Ahinoam had **Amnon**, David’s firstborn son.
3. David’s third wife Abigail had at least one son, but her children are never mentioned as being involved.
4. David’s fourth wife Maccah had **Absalom and Tamar**. Absalom was the second born son, and the natural heir to the throne after he killed Amnon.
5. David’s fifth wife Haggith had **Adonijah**, who was the third son, and the next natural heir to the throne, since Amnon and Absalom were both killed. Near the end of David’s life, Adonijah tried to usurp the throne before Solomon was anointed.
6. David’s sixth wife Abital had no involved children.
7. David’s seventh wife Egliah had no involved children.
8. David’s eighth wife Bathsheba had a **deceased son**, then **Solomon**, then **Nathan**, then two others.

David’s oldest son Amnon was sexually infatuated with his beautiful half-sister Tamar, the full sister of David’s second son, Absalom. Not knowing how to have her, he got advice from his friend Jonadab, one of David’s nephews. Jonadab’s plan was for Amnon to fake being sick, and when David came to visit, request that he send Tamar to prepare him some food. The plan worked, and when Tamar came to his bed to give him food, Amnon *took hold of her and said to her, “Come, lie with me my sister”* (v. 11). Tamar said, it was *disgraceful* and declared, *“As for me, where could I get rid*

of my reproach? And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel” (v. 13). But Amnon would not listen to her and he violated her. After the rape, Tamar suggested they go to David, thinking *he will not withhold me from you*. But as soon as his sex drive was satisfied, he hated her and sent her away.

This was the notable difference between Amnon’s sexual encounter, and David’s affair with Bathsheba. David cared for Bathsheba and the baby, comforted her after the baby died, married her, and had four more children with her. After sex, Absalom hated Tamar and just wanted her to leave.

Theological Note: The human sex drive was perverted at the Fall of Adam and Eve. Before the Fall, they were naked and didn’t even know it. After the Fall, they hid themselves and made garments for themselves. The sex drive is one of the main sources (if not **the** main source) of trouble on the planet. It gets us married. But it also destroys families, spreads diseases, and causes unwanted pregnancies, adultery, fornication, divorce, affairs, and pornography, not to mention the greater abominations connected to prostitution, female slavery, homosexuality, LGBTQ lifestyles, child molestation, and a host of other twisted corruptions.

Application: Be very careful about, and extremely leery of, any decision based on your sex drive.

Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her long-sleeved garment, a sign of sorrow that accompanied death (see v. 31). After that, Tamar lived with her brother Absalom. David was angry but did nothing about it, and Absalom waited *two full years* before he sought revenge. Then Absalom invited his brothers to where he was sheering sheep in Ephraim, apparently because there would be a lot of partying and drinking (v. 28). When they were there, Absalom commanded his servants to kill Amnon while he was drunk. The servants obeyed and the king’s other sons escaped. David was first told all his sons had been killed, then Jonadab clarified that it was only Amnon. David wept for Amnon, and Absalom fled north to *Talmai the son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur*, because Absalom’s mother was his daughter (3:3). Geshur is the area northeast of the New Testament Sea of Galilee by Bethsaida (Peter’s home own). Absalom was there for three years.

Focus on 2 Samuel 14:1-3

In 2 Samuel 14:1-20, we read about a subtle plot to convince David he should invite Absalom to return to Jerusalem. *Joab sent to Tekoa* [a city 10 miles (16 km) south of Jerusalem, later the home of the prophet Amos (1:1)] *and brought a wise woman from there* to Jerusalem. Obviously, Joab knew of this woman, at least by reputation, and that he could talk her into lying to David. Apparently, what convinced her was the fear of Israel being without a king to follow David, hence Israel being vulnerable to attack, if Absalom died in Geshur (v. 15). Or, because David had other sons, perhaps she was simply a supporter of Absalom to be king. At any rate, she seemed to believe she was God’s instrument to make this appeal to David (v. 14). She said, “*God... does not take away life, but plans ways so that the banished one will not be cast out from Him.*”

Theological Note: God does things we would never predict, by bringing about events we would never expect, to carry out a plan we would never imagine (Habakkuk 1:5). Who would guess that Absalom’s return was to forge a rebellion that would drive David out of Jerusalem. *Thus says the LORD, “Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household”* (2 Samuel 12:11).

Application: Never try to figure out what God is doing, apart from what He has revealed in the Bible. This woman seemed to think that she was part of the *plans* of God to bring back Absalom because he was the heir to David’s throne. Clearly, it was God’s plan to bring back Absalom because it happened, but it was not to make him David’s successor.

Joab told the woman to *pretend to be a mourner* and go to David with a story that one of her sons killed the other and *the whole family* wanted to kill her other son. Her most significant comment

was, “*Thus they will extinguish my coal which is left, so as to leave my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth*” (v. 7). The point was, that’s what David was doing with Absalom, because he was the heir apparent for the throne. David told her to go home, and he would issue an order to resolve the matter. Seemingly unconvinced, she pushed the matter harder, and David continued to declare amnesty for her son. Then she pushed it even further, saying, “*Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God?*” (v. 13). David then realized Joab was behind all this, which the woman also admitted.

Notice the power of the king and that the people wanted a king with that kind of power. David could command the death or amnesty of anyone without calling for other witnesses or presenting the case to a judge or jury. He could make up laws and change laws without consulting anyone. He was an executive, judicial, and legislative government in one man. And that’s what the people wanted because it was a point of order, stability, and security. Law was not separated from the king until the Medo-Persian Empire about 500 years later (Daniel 6:12).

Focus on 2 Samuel 14:28-31

In 2 Samuel 14:21-33, we learn of Absalom’s return to Jerusalem. David told Joab, “*Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom*” (v. 21). *So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem* (v. 23). But for two years David would not see him. In the next verses, we learn that Absalom was very handsome and he had three sons and a beautiful daughter. Finally, after Absalom got Joab’s attention by burning one of his fields, Joab convinced David to see Absalom. *Thus he came to the king and prostrated himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.*

Application: Be decisive. When faced with a decision, it’s a good idea to take three days if possible. Things will look different after three days. Then decide one way or the other. A wrong decision is better than none at all. A wrong decision can usually be reversed, or redirected, when the truth, rather than our pride, casts the deciding vote. But to make no decision, when one is required, creates tension, and frustrates everybody. David could have declared Absalom guilty of murder and had him executed, or he could have pardoned him and treated him as forgiven. David’s indecision and half-way decisions cost him a rebellion.

Application: Parents are more likely to make the wrong moral decisions when it comes to the sins of their children.

Event #15

The Rebellion of Absalom (c. 980, age 60) – 2 Samuel 15-18

Focus on 2 Samuel 15:1-6

In 2 Samuel 15:1-18, we read about the rebellion of Absalom that *stole away the hearts of the men of Israel* (v. 6) and forced David to leave Jerusalem. During his separation from David in Geshur and in Jerusalem, Absalom grew more bitter toward his father. Absalom also realized that, since he was the next heir to the throne, he would have a hearing with many of the people of Israel. Also, many probably saw his murder of Amnon as legitimate justice for the rape of his sister, especially since David had done nothing about it. So, Absalom *provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him*, making himself look like a king, as he campaigned to be recognized as one who had time for and cared for the individual needs of the people.

When he had enough support, Absalom organized a coup where he would be proclaimed king at Hebron, the place David was first anointed over the Southern Kingdom. Absalom lied to David, telling him he wanted to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow he had made to God. Apparently, 200 men went with him, not knowing about the rebellion, but others scattered throughout the country were in on it. Also, Absalom recruited David's counselor Ahithophel. Ahithophel probably came willingly because he was the grandfather [the father of Eliam, who was the father] of Bathsheba (11:3; 23:34) and may have held a resentment toward David for the adultery with his granddaughter and murder of Uriah. [This would also explain why Bathsheba was living near David's palace.] *The conspiracy was strong, for the people increased continually with Absalom* (v. 12).

Theological Note: The will of the people is in God's plan, even when the will of the people is wrong.

Application: Doing what is right, or voting for what is right, might be doing and voting against the plan of God.

When David was told *the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom*, he advised [rather than commanded] *all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem* to flee the city (v. 14). This saved the lives of many people, especially civilians and the women, and averted a civil war. It also gave David time to plan a defense. It appears that David planned, or at least hoped, to return because he left ten concubines (v. 16) to keep the palace, knowing that Absalom might claim them as his own, but he would not kill them. But David also left the city, taking 600 mighty warriors with him, men who had been with him for years, plus the *Cherethites* and *all the Pelethites*, who were special forces soldiers (8:18; 20:7, 23).

Focus on 2 Samuel 15:24-29

In 2 Samuel 15:19-37, as David went out over the Kidron Valley and up the Mount of Olives, we are told about **four events of loyalty to David**:

1. Ittai the Gittite was a Philistine who chose to stay with David, even though David encouraged him to leave, since he was a foreigner who had only recently arrived. Apparently, Ittai the Gittite was a leader of some military contingency because David put him over one-third of the army in the final battle against Absalom.
2. The two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, heads of the two remaining priestly lines from Aaron, brought the Ark of the Covenant with them, but David told them to return it. Then David made a statement that gave a clue to his heart and why God loved him. He said, "*If I find favor in the sight of the LORD, then He will bring me back again and show me both it and His habitation. But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him*" (v. 25-26). Then he sent the priests back to be informants and their sons as runners that would bring word of what Absalom was planning.
3. David was told that Ahithophel was with Absalom, so David prayed that God would *make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness* (v. 31).
4. David told his loyal servant Hushai the Archite (this is the first time we hear of him) to return and pretend to be a volunteer servant of Absalom. But he would really be an undercover agent who could tell the priests Absalom's plans. Then their sons would bring the information to David when he camped in the wilderness, which was at Mahanaim, northeast of the Dead Sea (v. 32-37).

Application: Spiritual maturity is to say, "*Behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.*"

Application: It is a good prayer to ask that your enemies act foolishly, as long as you are praying, not taking revenge yourself.

Focus on 2 Samuel 16:5-14

In 2 Samuel 16:1-14, as David continued east over the wilderness toward Jericho, we are also told of **two events hostile to David** and favorable to the family of Saul. It seems that the rebellion of Absalom, that forced David out of Jerusalem, was also an encouragement to the old followers of Saul that his line might be reestablished.

1. As David entered the wilderness moving east, he was approached by Mephibosheth's servant Ziba with a gift of food, wine, and donkeys. But Ziba also (falsely – 19:24-28) told David that Mephibosheth was disloyal, so David gave Mephibosheth's pension to Ziba (vv. 1-4).
2. As David continued east, another man from the family of Saul, named Shimei, came up to him and, while throwing stones and dirt at David, said, "*The Lord has returned upon you all the bloodshed of the house of Saul.*" Rather than remove Shimei's head, as Joab's brother Abishi suggested, David said, "*Let him alone and let him curse, for the LORD has told him. Perhaps the LORD will look on my affliction and return good to me instead of his cursing this day*" (v. 12). Interestingly, David assumed the curses of Shimei were something God told him to do.

In 2 Samuel 16:15-19, we learn David's undercover man, Hushai the Archite, did as David commanded and faked loyalty to Absalom as being the legitimate heir to David's throne.

Theological Note: Notice that David and Hushai, along with the priests and their sons, all devised a lie, which was designed to preserve the lives of David and the people with him.

Focus on 2 Samuel 16:20-23

In 2 Samuel 16:20-23, we read that Ahithophel counseled Absalom to go in to David's concubines, which Absalom did. This did two things:

1. It demonstrated possession of David's throne (3:7).
2. It ended any possibility for reconciliation between David and Absalom.

Theological Note: This was a fulfillment of one of God's judgments on David, "*you did it secretly but I will do this thing before Israel and under the sun*" (12:12).

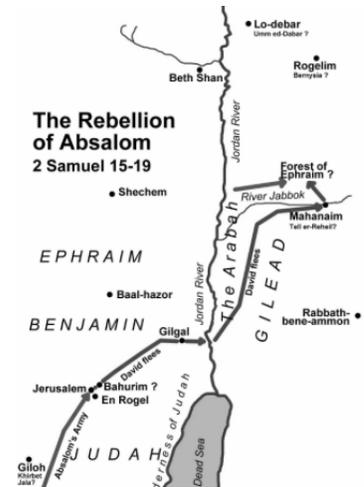
In 2 Samuel 17:1-14, we have the second piece of advice to Absalom from Ahithophel, namely, that he be allowed to take 12,000 men and pursue David immediately while he was exhausted, kill him, and return with the people, who would then have no choice but to serve Absalom. But Absalom wanted a second opinion, so he called David's undercover man, Hushai the Archite, who advised Absalom to do two things. First to wait, because David was a fierce warrior and waiting would allow Absalom to amass a huge army. Second, Hushai advised that Absalom himself lead the army, thus making him the hero, victor, and clear leader of Israel. Absalom took the advice of Hushai.

In 2 Samuel 17:15-23, we read that Hushai immediately told the priests both his advice and that of Ahithophel, so David could cross the Jordan in case they attacked right away. The priests sent word to David via a maidservant who went to where the priests' sons were staying just south of Jerusalem at En-rogel. But the young men were seen and fled to Bahurim, a town on the east side of the Mount of Olives (16:5). There a courageous woman hid them in a dry well. Apparently, the country was filled with people loyal to both Absalom and David. The young men escaped and made their way to David, who moved to a refuge at Mahanaim across the Jordan on the Jabbok River. This was apparently a well-fortified city, the same place Ish-Bosheth had used for his capital (2:8). Ahithophel, realizing that his days were numbered after his advice was rejected, went home and hanged himself.

Focus on 2 Samuel 17:24-26

In 2 Samuel 17:24-29, we learn that Absalom appointed over his army a cousin of Joab's named Amasa, and they crossed over into Gilead. The rest of the chapter tells about three men who brought supplies to David, one of whom is Barzillai, an old wealthy man loyal to David (19:32).

Theological Note: The rebellion of Absalom was clearly a work of God, because He said, “Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household” (12:11), but we also see David protected, preserved, and nourished by his friends. Because of the Davidic Covenant, and God's affection for David, *The Lord had ordained* [literally *commanded*] *to thwart the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the Lord might bring calamity* [literally *evil*] *on Absalom* (17:14).



Focus on 2 Samuel 18:1-16

In 2 Samuel 18:1-5, David organized the people with commanders over thousands and hundreds. The army was divided into three main units, 1/3 under Joab, 1/3 under Joab's brother Abishi, and 1/3 under Ittai the Gittite, the Philistine who refused to leave when David fled Jerusalem. David wanted to go into battle, but the people dissuaded him because he was too valuable to risk being killed. Reluctantly, David agreed but commanded that they *deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom*. In the midst of living out God's judgment, David still acted wisely and with sensitivity.

Theological Note: Believers are not punished for their sin because Christ paid for them on the cross. But sin has consequences, both in loss of heavenly rewards and repercussions here in this life. We must live out the results of our sins, but we can do it wisely, being sensitive to those around us.

In 2 Samuel 18:6-18, we have the defeat of Absalom and his army. *The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim*, which was in Gilead of the Transjordan (v. 6). The terrain was so rugged that *the forest devoured more people that day than the sword* (v. 8). During the battle, Absalom's head was caught in a tree. The tradition that Absalom was caught by his hair comes from Josephus (Antiq. 7.10.2, possibly from 2 Samuel 14:26). One of the soldiers saw it and told Joab, but he refused to kill the king's son. So, Joab killed Absalom with three spears through the heart. Joab then blew a trumpet ending the battle. They buried Absalom in a deep pit and put stones over it. Joab disobeyed David, but solved the problem, ended the revolution, and saved a number of lives by ending the civil war. Whatever Joab's personal motives, he did what God was doing, by preserving David as king, through his suffering.

Application: Loyalty and service to God always means obedience to His desires. Loyalty and service to our friends also means obedience to God's desires, not necessarily the desires of our friends.

In 2 Samuel 18:19-33, the news was brought to David. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, one of the runners, asked Joab if he could bring the news to David. First, Joab refused and sent an Ethiopian Cushite. But Ahimaaz persisted, so Joab let him go. Going *by way of the plain*, he reached David first and told him of the victory, but not about Absalom's death. Then the Cushite arrived, told David the whole truth and David mourned for Absalom.

Event #16

David Returned to Jerusalem (c. 976, age 64) – 2 Samuel 19-20

Focus on 2 Samuel 19:1-8b

In 2 Samuel 19:1-8b, we see Joab's response to David's mourning for Absalom. The context was *The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son"* (v. 2).

The people and the soldiers did not know what do about David's grieving. But Joab did. He was angry about it and told David three things:

1. David had shamed the soldiers who saved his life and the lives of his family.
2. By his mourning, David was loving those who hate him and hating those who love him. Joab said, *"for I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased."*
3. If David would not go out and speak kindly to the people (literally, *upon the heart of your servants*), they would leave him.

David took Joab's advice, sat in the gate of Mahanaim, and the people came to him.

Application: Before you talk, you need to win the right to be heard. Joab was able to confront David, specifically and severely, because of his history of loyal service to David.

Application: Even God's leaders make mistakes and need to be confronted when they are wrong, that is, by (Application #1) people who have won the right to be heard.

Application: Blood is thicker than almost anything. Joab was angry that David mourned for his son rather than rejoicing with his army. But that's the way it is. Even in the midst of severe conflict, and whether we like them or not, we will tend to favor the relationships with our blood relatives (especially parents and children). For example,

- Never think your friends, your relationships at church, or work associates are your "family."
- Never think adoption will be the same as parenting a biological child.
- Never think you can avoid being the #1 influence on your children.

In 2 Samuel 19:8b-13, the scene changes to the people who followed Absalom. After the battle, *Israel had fled each to his own tent*, and they were *quarreling* (with each other but also against the elders of Judah) *throughout all the tribes of Israel* because the elders had not invited the northern tribes to participate in the decision to return David to Jerusalem.

David sent *Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah,"* saying, (1) they were all Jewish brothers and (2) he would replace Joab with Amasa (Absalom's former commander and a cousin of Joab). Joab's replacement was primarily a political move to promote kingdom unity. These two statements let the elders of Judah who had backed Absalom, know that David was not seeing revenge.

Application: When a conflict is over, it's over. Press on. Don't keep looking back with resentment.

Focus on 2 Samuel 19:14-15

In 2 Samuel 19:14-39, we learn that the mission of the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, was successful, and David was invited to return and rule over the united kingdom. As David came to Gilgal, near Jericho, crossing the Jordan on his return to Jerusalem, he was met by four delegations of people welcoming him back and helping him cross the Jordan.

1. In verses 16-23, we read about Shimei the Benjamite who had cursed David as he fled from Jerusalem (16:5-8). Shimei said he had sinned, and David forgave him, even though Abishai (Joab's brother), suggested he be killed.
2. In verses 24-30, we learn that Mephibosheth came and had a discussion with David. When David asked him, *"why did you not go with me?"*, Mephibosheth said Ziba deceived him in several ways. This had resulted in David giving Mephibosheth's property to Ziba (16:3). It

seems that if he believed Mephibosheth, David should have reversed his previous decision. Possibly David didn't know who to believe, because he divided the property between them.

3. In verses 31-39, we read of a visit from Barzillai the Gileadite, the wealthy 80-year-old man who had given David supplies in the Transjordan (17:27-29). David urged Barzillai to move to Jerusalem and live out his life under government support. He declined but asked if Kimham (probably his son) could go in his place, and David agreed.
4. In verses 40-43, we find that David and his entourage arrive across the Jordan at Gilgal and they were met by a large group of people from both Judah and Israel. The northern Israelites complained that the southern Judeans were excluding them in the welcome of David, even though they were ten tribes compared to Judah's only two. And the Judeans claimed David was more closely related to them. The incident is significant in that it shows the animosity that already existed between the northern and southern kingdoms. In 20:1-2, we learn that the contentions between the Israelites and Judeans became so intense that a man named Sheba son of Bichri announced a rebellion against David.

Theological Note: One of the reasons David was a man after God's heart, is seen in his compassion and care for people, like Barzillai, and his forgiveness of people who repented, like Shimei. Where, as Abishi pointed out, justice required retribution, David chose forgiveness and compassion for those who repent, like Jesus did (Matthew 6:12-15; Luke 17:3-4; 23:34).

Focus on 2 Samuel 20:1-13

In 2 Samuel 20:1-3, we hear Sheba's statement of rebellion. Then we are told that David isolated the ten concubines he had left in Jerusalem, the ones Absalom had gone in to. He provided for their needs *but did not go in to them*, so they lived out their lives *as widows*.

In 2 Samuel 20:4-10, we read about Joab's return to power. David told his new commander Amasa (Absalom's former commander and Joab's cousin) to organize the army and present them to David in three days. When Amasa didn't get the job done on time, David told (Joab's brother) Abishai to pursue Sheba because, David said, he "*will do us more harm than Absalom.*" Joab went along with his brother, together with the mighty men, and when they met Amasa at Gibeon, Joab faked friendship to get close, then killed Amasa with his sword.

In 2 Samuel 20:11-22, Joab was given command of David's army while in the field, from the army itself, simply by a declaration from one of the soldiers. After removing Amasa's body from the road to a field and putting a garment over it, Joab pursued Sheba up north of the Sea of Galilee, near Dan, recruiting troops as he went. When Joab located Sheba at a city called Abel Beth-maacha (somewhere in the Hula Valley), he *cast up a siege ramp against the city* and began toppling the city wall. But then a wise woman called to Joab and asked why he would attack a loyal city of Israel. Joab said he just wanted Sheba. The woman said, "*Behold his head will be thrown to you over the wall,*" which is what she convinced the people of the city to do. So Joab and the army returned to Jerusalem.

Application: For any job that must be done, the only criteria is, who is best qualified for that job. Keep your pride and your personal issues out of it. If you were David, what would you do about Joab? He was at the same time both loyal and disobedient. Joab was a heartless, ruthless killer, who disobeyed David on several occasions. But he also always had David's best interest, and those of Israel, in mind. David could have thrown a fit about Joab's disobedience and murder of Amasa. Instead, he restored him to his previous position as head of the army.

Illustration: There is a story about President Abraham Lincoln when he went to the house of one of his officers to recruit him for a specific job during the American Civil War. The officer was not at home, so Lincoln waited for him in the man's living room. When the officer came home, he was told

Application: All sin has consequences. For Israel, that was during this life, in the Land. Today, we are not rewarded or punished for all our deeds in this life. But our sins do have eternal consequences, loss of rewards for believers, and the lake of fire for unbelievers.

David asked the Gibeonites (these were Amorites living in the city of Gibeon), “*how can I make atonement*” for Saul’s injustice? The Gibeonites asked a life-for-a-life, which was in keeping with Israel’s punishment for murder (Exodus 21:23-25; Numbers 35:31). Because of his oath to Saul’s son Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:15-16), David spared Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth, but singled out seven of Saul’s other sons. [Three of Saul’s sons had already been killed earlier by the Philistines on Mount Gilboa (1 Samuel 31:8).] Because Deuteronomy 24:16 says, ...*neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for their own sin*, it could be David selected these men because they were complicit in the death of the Gibeonites. The seven sons of Saul were hanged, a severe and dishonoring death (Deuteronomy 21:23). They were killed at the beginning of the barley harvest and their bodies remained exposed until the spring rain.

Theological Note: David asked the Gibeonites, “*how can I make atonement that you may bless the inheritance of the Lord?*” The killing of Saul’s descendants functioned like the animal sacrifices did for the nation of Israel on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur):

1. As an atonement, animal sacrifices were a covering for sin, not a payment for sin.
2. Their atonement was about a blessing for *the inheritance of the Lord*, satisfying God’s institutional covenant with the nation of Israel.

Christ’s death is never called an atonement because:

1. It didn’t cover sin, it was a redemption, reconciliation, and propitiation for sin. It was a Pass-over, not an atonement.
2. It allowed individual believers to have a relationship with God. It had nothing to do with any institutional commitment of God.

In 2 Samuel 21:10-14, we read that the mother of the first two sons kept the beasts from eating the bodies and spread sackcloth on a rock, for some unknown reason. It is also unknown why this inspired David to retrieve the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh-gilead. But he exhumed them and buried them in the grave of Saul’s father Kish, in Benjamin. He also buried the seven who were executed.

Focus on 2 Samuel 21:15-22

In 2 Samuel 21:15-22, we learn of David’s exploits against the Philistines. Specifically emphasized are the battles with four giants, descendants of the Goliath of Gath who David killed in his youth (vv. 21-11). But this time, David is in his mid-60s, and he is almost killed, until his nephew Abishai *struck the Philistine and killed him*. Then the men got together and told David, *you shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel*. This was probably not a reference to Davidic genealogy, since David had several sons. It was more likely a reference to the *lamp* of wisdom and spiritual leadership of David, such as what we still have in the Psalms. This time it was not David but *his servants* who killed the giants, including one *who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot*.

Application: Retirement is not a biblical option. But a change of jobs and activities might be in order. David continued to go out to war with his troops until he almost got killed, and they insisted he not do that anymore. At that point, David did not retire and live off a pension, he just changed his focus to accommodate his age and physical limitations. [It is often said that the priests retired at age fifty. It is true that they no longer butchered sacrifices and lifted them to the altar, but the passage goes on to say, *They may, however, assist their brothers in the tent of meeting* (Numbers 8:25-26).]

Event #18

David Wrote a Song and Gave His Concluding Words (c. late 60s) – 2 Samuel 22-23

The song has 3 parts:

- I. Introductory descriptions of God (vv. 2-4)
- II. The basis for praising God (vv. 5-46)
 1. David's salvation from his enemies (vv. 5-18)
 2. The reasons for God's salvation (vv. 19-28)
 3. The results of God's salvation (vv. 29-46)
- III. Concluding praise and thanksgiving (vv. 47-51)

Focus on 2 Samuel 22:1-4

Second Samuel 22 is a composition to be put to music. It is positioned between David's final Philistine wars (21:15-22) and the list of his mighty men, chiefs, and captains (23:8-39). *The words of this song* are a praise for the providence, protection, and deliverance of God. The song is almost identical to Psalm 18, where it is given *to the chief musician*.

There is a dominant and significant theme in chapter 22. It is embodied in the word for *salvation*, which is also the Hebrew root for the word *Jesus*. For example, in verses 3 and 4 David writes,

*My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my **salvation**, my stronghold and my refuge; my **savior**, You save me from violence. I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am **saved** from my enemies.*

Theological Note: The words *salvation*, *savior*, and *saved* all have the same root. It's the Hebrew word יְשָׁע (*yeshua*) which is the Greek word Ἰησοῦς (*Iesous*) [English *Jesus*]. When the angel addressed Joseph in Greek concerning his pregnant wife Mary, he said, *she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus [Ἰησοῦς (Iesous)], for He will save His people from their sins*. The angel was saying that His name will be *salvation*. And that's the theme of David's song in 2 Samuel 22, אֱלֹהִים (Elohim) יְשָׁע (*yeshua*), **God is my salvation**.

In 2 Samuel 22:2-3, David called God his *rock*, his *fortress* (root word for stronghold or Masada), his *deliverer* (or escape), his *refuge*, his *shield*, his *horn of Salvation* (as in an animal's horn of power and protection), and his *stronghold*.

In 2 Samuel 22:5-18, David discussed God delivering him from his enemies. He said that when he was about to die and go to sheol (vv. 5-6), he called upon the Lord who answered him from *His Temple* in heaven (v. 7). God's answer was so clear and dynamic that it was as if it shook the earth and heaven, with his anger against David's enemies. God's anger is pictured as smoke from His nose, fire from His mouth, and storms, all of which kindled coals of fire on the earth (vv. 8-18).

Theological Note: Sheol, the temporary place of the dead (Luke 16:19ff), and God's Temple in heaven (Revelation 7:15), are real places.

Theological Note: God's anger is a good emotion. It (literally) burned against those who opposed His servant David. The burning anger of God was an answer to David's prayer of distress caused by his enemies.

In 2 Samuel 22:19-28, David gave two basic reasons for God's salvation:

1. David's own *cleanness* because he kept *the ways of the Lord* as well as His *ordinances* and *statutes* (vv. 19-25).
2. God's justice whereby He holds up the pure and destroys the haughty (vv. 26-28).

Theological Note: It may seem odd that with all his sin, David could say, *According to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not acted wickedly against my God.* But when God forgives us, we are clean. David knew he was forgiven, even though he did not know it was because Christ would pay for his sins 1,000 years in the future. Because of Christ's later sacrifice, God counted David's faith to him for righteousness, as He did Abraham's (Genesis 15:6; Romans 8:1). This allowed David to be clean positionally and go on to *keep the ways of the Lord* experientially.

Application: When we come to God through faith in Christ, we are forgiven and cleansed through the blood of Christ (John 1:12; Romans 5:12-17). So, even though we continue to be sinners, we can confess our sins and stand before God as cleansed from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8-10). That allows us to continue to continue to grow and keep *the ways of the Lord*.

In 2 Samuel 22:29-46, David gave the results, or benefits, he received, from God's salvation:

- God gave him illumination over the world's darkness (v. 29).
- God gave him special abilities (v. 30).
- God gave him a confidence that His Word is reliable (v. 31).
- God proved that He is the only God (v. 32).
- He gave David strength (vv. 33-37).
- He gave David victory over his enemies and those who hated him (vv. 38-46).

Theological Note: For David, the results, or benefits, of his salvation, were all physical and earthly. They were related to his physical battles against Saul and the preservation of his monarchy over the united kingdom of Israel and Judah. For the church age, the results, or benefits, of our salvation are spiritual and heavenly.

In 2 Samuel 22:47-51, David recorded his concluding praise and thanksgiving to God. The Lord is to be blessed, exalted, and thanked because He *shows lovingkindness to His anointed, to David and his descendants forever* (vv. 47, 50-51).

Focus on 2 Samuel 23:1-7

In 2 Samuel 23:1-7, we have a short poem entitled *The Last Words of David*. This is probably a reference to David's last formal or public declaration. Since this was probably made during the last year of his life, we can assume that David was in poor health at the time.

The poem has three parts:

1. The divine inspiration of the Davidic Psalms (vv. 1-2)
2. The divine covenant with the house of David (vv. 3-5)
3. The divine curse on the wicked and the worthless (vv. 6-7)

In verse 2, we have a good statement of the inspiration of Scripture, "*The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His word was on my tongue.*"

Theological Note: Paul said, *All Scripture is inspired by God* (2 Timothy 3:16). But how does that happen? Peter tells us *...no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God* (2 Peter 1:21). This confirms what David said about his Psalms.

Here is Charles Ryrie's definition of Inspiration:

"God superintended the human authors of the Bible so that they composed and recorded without error His message to mankind in the words of their original writings."

In verses 3-5, David referred to God, as אֱלֹהִים (*elohim*), the Sovereign of the universe and *The Rock*, but both are only in connection to Israel. The rest of the paragraph is a reference to David himself, with implications for anyone who rules over others. *He who rules over men righteously...in the fear of God...is as the light of the morning when the sun rises.*

Application: Any position of responsibility, say, parenting, when carried out *righteously...in the fear of God...is as the light of the morning when the sun rises.*

In verses 6-7, we have the contrast with the evil/worthless man, *every one of them will be thrust away like thorns.* This concept is also used by Jesus and the author of Hebrews.

- **John 15:6** *"If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.*
- **Hebrews 6:8** *but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.*

Theological Note: David is referring to what we would call unbelievers, whereas John 15 and Hebrews 6 are referring to wayward believers. Unbelievers don't have the eternal salvation they could have by faith, whereas wayward believers don't have the eternal rewards they could have by obedience. But both have something *thrust away like thorns.*

Focus on 2 Samuel 23:8-17

In 2 Samuel 23:8-39, we have a gallery of David's 37 mighty men. They were elite troops, distinguished here as notable heroes. There are three categories of men:

1. *The three mighty men* (vv. 8-17)
2. Two who did mighty deeds but *did not attain to the three* (vv. 18-23)
3. Thirty-two distinguished warriors (vv. 24-39)

This list is repeated with others, probably of lower rank, in 1 Chronicles 11:11-47. Some of the spellings differ, but they are clearly the same people. Some of the numbers also differ. The most likely reason for the differences is that the 2 Samuel list was given at (or after) the end of David's life. The context of the 1 Chronicles list was David being anointed as king over all of Israel at Hebron 30 years earlier (1 Chronicles 11:1-3), just before the conquest of and David's move to Jerusalem. It's interesting that, although his two brothers Abishai and Asahel are listed, Joab, the commander of the whole army, is not listed either in Samuel or Chronicles.

Second Samuel 23:8-17 lists the main inner circle of three mighty men. The first is listed with a number of kills. The next two are listed with the details of particular heroism in battles against the Philistines.

In verses 13-17, there is a touching account of an event that possibly happened while David was in the cave at Adullam [when David was there in 1 Samuel 22, but most correlate it with the events of 2 Samuel 5:17-25]. Here an act of loyalty was carried out without a command to do so. These three, on their own, conjured up a plan, risked their lives, and broke through the camp of the Philistines to bring David water from the well at David's hometown of Bethlehem. But David was so moved that, rather than drink the water, he *poured it out to the Lord* as a ceremony of honor to the three mighty men.

They had risked their lives, just to fulfill David's comment on desiring water from Bethlehem.



Second Samuel 23:18-19 gives special mention to Joab's brother Abishai, who also killed hundreds of men and was promoted to commander of the thirty. But we are also told *he did not attain to the three*.

Second Samuel 23:20-23 tells us about Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. He was also known for the men he killed with an interesting comment, *He also went down and killed a lion in the middle of a pit on a snowy day*. Again, *he was honored among the thirty, but he did not attain to the three*.

Second Samuel 23:24-39 lists thirty-two more warriors of special mention. The first and last names are interesting. The first is Joab's other brother Asahel. He was called *swift-footed as one of the gazelles which is in the field*. He was killed by Abner while pursuing him. The last name is Uriah the Hittite, whom David had sent to be killed after his affair and with, and learning of the pregnancy of, Uriah's wife Bathsheba.

Application: Godly leadership is marked by people willing to follow them, fight for them and with them over a long period of time. Those closest to David at the beginning of his campaign, and those who were with him as he became king, were with him when he died, 30 + years later.

Application: Godly leaders are people who love God more than the people they lead. These men were honored for their loyalty, courage, and hard-fought battles for David, because they saw something in him that was different from Saul. Saul was in it for himself, David was in it for God. David's men understood he was God's anointed king, but he was also a man who loved God, more than winning battles, more than being king, more than his wives, and more than them.

Application: Mighty men and women are those who kill the enemy, the more killing they do, the more honorable they are. The mighty men of David were killers. They killed other men to establish the reign of David over a united kingdom of Israel and Judah. We are also to be killers, but not of people. Our enemy is our own sin nature and the influence of a satanic and demonic world.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places (Ephesians 6:12).

Event #19

David Numbered the People (c. 974, age 66 or 67) – 2 Samuel 24

Focus on 2 Samuel 24:1-4

The first verse of 2 Samuel 24 leaves us with many unanswered and unanswerable questions.

- Why did the anger of the Lord burn against Israel?
- Why did that incite David to take action contrary to the will of God?
- Why did David order the numbering of the people as a response to God's anger?
- Are David and God having a disagreement, where David's response is to number the people and God's response is to send some judgment options for all of Israel?

Second Samuel 24:1 says that God's anger against Israel incited David to number the people. First Chronicles 21:1 says *Satan stood up against Israel and moved David to number the people*. Clearly, God was not tempting David (James 1:3). Nonetheless, it appears that some unknown conflict (as in Job 1:12 and 2:6) allowed Satan to impose himself on David, as God did when He put an evil spirit on Saul. David's sin of numbering the people led to God punishing Israel for some unrevealed reason. It is hard to figure the date for this conflict, but in 1 Chronicles 21, it occurred prior to David's

purchase of the threshing floor from Ornan as a gift for Solomon to build the Temple. So, we will assume the incident came late in David's life.

It seems that God's motivation was to punish Israel. But what was David's motivation for numbering the people? And if the punishment fits the crime, this was, by far, David's greatest sin. Many suggestions have been made: pride, dependence on numbers rather than God, or determining military strength to be passed on to Solomon. We would have to judge his motives to know David's sin here. But that it was sin was even clear to Joab when he commented, "*May the Lord your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are...but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?*" However, that only tells us it was about numbering, not the motivation for it.

Second Samuel 24:5-9 records the almost ten months it took to accomplish the census. Apparently, it took ten months for David to realize his sin.

Second Samuel 24:10-14 tells us *David's heart [finally] troubled him after he had numbered the people*. So David prayed, "*I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O Lord, please take away the iniquity of Your servant.*" Then God sent the prophet Gad with three choices:

1. Three years of famine [the 7 in the Hebrew mss. was probably 3 originally, as in the LXX and 1 Chronicles 21:12]
2. Three months of fleeing from his enemies, or
3. Three days of pestilence

David chose the pestilence. His reasoning was

"Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Theological Note: Since all of this was *the hand of the Lord*, and it was David's sin, it is clear that David believed in both the sovereignty of God and the unhindered free will of man.

Second Samuel 24:15-25 tells us an angel brought death to 70,000 men from Dan to Beersheba. When he was about to destroy Jerusalem, God said: "*It is enough.*" Then David saw the angel at the future Temple Mount site, the threshing floor of Ornan [Araunah], and asked that he alone be punished. The prophet Gad then told David, "*Go up erect an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah.*" So David purchased the threshing floor for 50 shekels of silver. This purchase meant the Temple Mount area belonged to the Jews. David built an altar there, and *the plague was held back from Israel*.

Postscript: David's Death – 1 Kings 1:1–2:11

Event #20

David Died and Solomon Became King (c. 970, age 70) – 1 Kings 1–2:11

First Kings 1:1-37 has four paragraphs [we shall not discuss verses 38-53 because they are not about David]:

1. Acquiring Abishag the Shunammite (vv. 1-4)
2. Adonijah attempting to gain the throne (vv. 5-10)
3. Bathsheba appealing for Solomon to be king (11-27)
4. David relinquishing the throne to Solomon (vv. 28-37)

Focus on 1 Kings 1:1-4

At the age of 70 (2 Samuel 5:4), David was not only old but apparently in poor health, because they couldn't keep him warm and he did not cohabit with the girl they found for him. The solution to *seek a young virgin* was apparently a common practice, and the woman would: (1) attend the king, (2) become his nurse, (3) lie in his bosom, and (4) keep him warm. She was to be sort of a hospice. Josephus (A.D. 37-100), a Jewish historian, and Galen (ca. A.D. 130-200), a Greek physician, both tell us this was the custom of the day, and it appears to continue into the Middle Ages. The servants organized a search *for a beautiful girl throughout all the territory of Israel*, until they found Abishag the Shunammite. Her town Shunam was in the Jezreel Valley off the southern edge of the Hill of Moreh, seven miles (13 km) southeast of Nazareth. We are told she was *very beautiful; and she became the king's nurse and served him, but the king did not cohabit with [literally know] her*. Even though David did not have sexual relations with Abishag, she was apparently considered a concubine because, after David's death, Adonijah tried to take her as a wife and Solomon considered that an attempt to gain *the kingdom* (1 Kings 2:21-22).

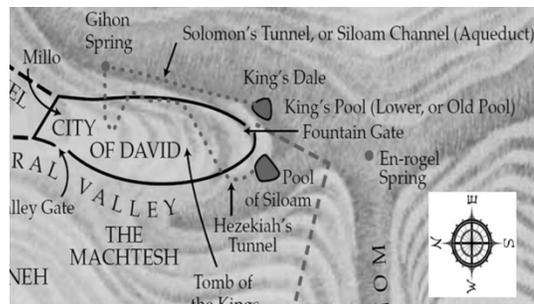
Focus on 1 Kings 1:5-10

Adonijah was David's third son, born to his fifth wife Haggith. Since his first two sons, Amnon and Absalom had been killed, Adonijah was the natural and expected heir apparent for the throne. Adonijah was a handsome, but undisciplined, son. We are told that David *never crossed him* [KJV *disciplined him* (literally *grieved* or *hurt* him)]. Apparently, Solomon was the only son David personally educated (Proverbs 4:3-4). But Adonijah said, "*I will be king,*" and he did four things to make it happen:

1. He prepared chariots, horsemen, and 50 runners (v. 5).
2. He conferred with Joab, David's nephew, the head of the army (v. 7).
3. He conferred with Abiathar the priest who had escaped from Nob and had been with David for about 40 years (v. 7).
4. He held a feast and invited these two but not Zadok the priest nor Nathan the prophet, nor Benaiah the head of the mighty men, and he invited all of David's sons except Solomon (vv. 9-10).

The gathering was held at the *stone of Zoheleth, which is beside En-rogel*. Constable tells us,

The Stone of Zoheleth has been identified on the steep rocky corner that overlooks the plain where the Valley of Hinnom joins the Kidron Valley just south of Mount Zion where the City of David was situated. En Rogel is one of the two main springs in the Kidron Valley that supplied water for Jerusalem.



Focus on 1 Kings 1:16-27

Apparently, David was bedridden, under the constant care of Abishag, when his eighth wife Bathsheba came to appeal for her second son Solomon to be the next king. David was 70, Bathsheba was probably in her mid-40s. Bathsheba did not come as a demanding wife but *bowed and prostrated herself before he king*. Her appeal was based on a previous oath where David promised before God that Solomon would be the heir to the throne. She then informed David of Adonijah's self-coronation feast, with the consequence that she and Solomon would be killed if Adonijah became king. This seems to be the first David heard about it. But then, as planned, Nathan the prophet came in, confirming her story. Rather than make an appeal, Nathan simply asked David if he had planned

this. But the implication was that his life, along with that of Zadok the priest and Benaiah the commander, were also in jeopardy.

Focus on 1 Kings 1:28-31

Either Bathsheba left the room when Nathan came, or was standing back out of David's sight, because after Nathan's report, David said, "*Call Bathsheba to me.*" David affirmed his vow to her that Solomon would be the next king, and added, "*I will indeed do so this day.*"

Focus on 1 Kings 1:38-40

In 1 Kings 1:32-40, we read about David's specific commands for Solomon's coronation as king, all of which were carried out by Benaiah and the special forces of the Cherethites and the Pelethites.

That involved four specifics:

1. Solomon was to ride on David's own mule from the palace area in central Zion down to the Gihon Spring at the lower southern edge of Zion.
2. Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet were to anoint Solomon king over the kingdom of Israel and Judah.
3. They were to blow the trumpets and say, "*Long live King Solomon.*"
4. Then Solomon was to ride back up to the palace, followed by Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah with the military men, and Solomon was to sit on David's throne.

As these commands were carried out, *all the people went up after him, and the people were playing on flutes and rejoicing with great joy so that the earth shook at their noise.* We later learn, when this is reported to Adonijah by Joathan the son of the priest Abiathar, that David *bowed himself on his bed* and said, "*Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who has granted one to sit on my throne today while my own eyes see it.*"

So, David relinquished the throne and ceased to be king before his death. We might also note that, from this point on, for the rest of her life, Bathsheba was the most influential woman in all of Israel, being the Queen Mother of the united kingdom (see 1 Kings 2:13; Song of Solomon 3:11).

[The remainder of 1 Kings 1 is about the response of Adonijah, which will not be discussed here, since it is not about the life of David.]

Focus on 1 Kings 2:1-12

As David realized his death was near, he charged Solomon, undoubtedly having Solomon come to his bedroom. David said one thing about himself, gave one command to Solomon, and made suggestions about three people.

The only thing David said about himself was "*I am going the way of all the earth.*" David understood that death is universal, and our bodies return to the dust of the earth. But he also understood that our spirit goes to a place of conscious existence called *sheol* (1 Kings 2:6, 9). [Sheol is mentioned 65 times in the Old Testament. It can mean extreme trouble, death, or the place of death, depending on the context.]

David's overriding command for Solomon was what God told Joshua (1:8), David told Solomon to obey the written Word of God.

"Keep the charge of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His ordinances, and His testimonies, according to what is written in the Law of Moses."

This would require Solomon to, (1) *be strong and* (2) *show yourself* (become) *a man*. And it would result in (1) *you may succeed in all that you do and wherever you turn*, and (2) the fulfillment of God's promise to David, *you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel*.

David also left Solomon with four instructions:

1. Joab had murdered two of David's generals during peace time (2 Samuel 3:27; 20:10), so David said, "*Do not let his gray hair go down to Sheol in peace.*" David knew, even with all his wild disobedience, Joab would remain loyal to David. He was not convinced of the same concerning Solomon, since Joab had already killed David's other son Absalom, and had conferred with Adonijah.
2. David recommends *kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite*. Barzillai was the wealthy old man who helped David with supplies when he was fleeing from Absalom in the Transjordan (2 Samuel 19:31-39). Apparently, Barzillai had died in the interim, and David wanted Barzillai's sons to receive a reward for what their father had done.
3. Then there is Shimei the son of Gera. He cursed David and threatened his life (2 Samuel 16:5-13). When Shimei asked for mercy, David promised, "*I will not put you to death with a sword.*" But cursing a ruler in Israel is a capital offense (Exodus 22:28). David left him up to Solomon's wisdom but recommends *bring his gray hair down to Sheol with blood*. Solomon told Shimei he would let him live if he stayed in Jerusalem. After three years, he left Jerusalem to retrieve some servants, and Solomon had him killed.
4. David essentially gave Solomon the blueprints for the Temple. David said, "*the Lord made me understand in writing by His hand upon me, all the details of this pattern*" (1 Chronicles 28:19). The Ark of the Covenant was in a tent near David's palace. The other sacred vessels were in the Tabernacle, which had been moved from Shiloh to Gibeon. David told Solomon to "*bring the ark of the covenant of the Lord and the holy vessels of God into the house that is to be built*" (1 Chronicles 22:19). They would once again be joined in one place to worship God.

Then David slept with his fathers and was buried in the city of David. The days that David reigned over Israel were forty years [1011-971 B.C.]: seven years he reigned in Hebron and thirty-three years he reigned in Jerusalem (1 Kings 2:10-11).

THIS CONCLUDES OUR STUDY OF THE LIFE OF DAVID