

1 and 2 Samuel

by Ross Callaghan

<http://rosscallaghan.yolasite.com>



Jonathan and David

Introduction to 1 and 2 Samuel

Title

In the Hebrew Bible 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book called the Book of Samuel. The Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament (around 250 BC.) divided it into two books as part of the Books of the Kingdoms (together with 1 and 2 Kings). The title "Samuel" was given by Jerome in his Latin translation, the Vulgate (around AD. 400).

Author

Samuel probably wrote the first part of 1 Samuel. He can't have written the other parts as his death is described in 1 Samuel 25. Traditionally, the rest of 1 and 2 Samuel were written by Gad, one of David's companions (1 Sam 22:5), and completed by Nathan, who arranged it in its current form. (1 Chronicles 29:29).

Date

1 and 2 Samuel cover a period of about 150 years from the birth of Samuel in 1121 BC through to the revolt of Absalom in 971 BC. 1 Samuel begins at the end of the Judges period while Samson was judging and describes events in the reigns of King Saul and King David. 2 Samuel ends with the death of David.

Scope

1 Samuel records the transition of Israel from leadership by Judges to leadership by Kings. It contrasts Israel's last two judges (Eli, who was a failure, and Samuel, who was a success) and then Israel's first two kings (Saul, who was a failure, and David, who was a success).

Chapter 1-7	Birth of Samuel and his dedication to God. Transition of leadership from Eli to Samuel.
Chapters 8-15	Transition of leadership from Samuel to King Saul.
Chapters 16-31	Transition of leadership from King Saul to King David.

2 Samuel records David's rule as King of Israel.

Chapter 1-10	David's obedience to God brings blessing for Judah, then all Israel. David conquers Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines. David sets up his Kingdom by bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jebus (Jerusalem),
Chapter 11	David's commits adultery with Bathsheba.
Chapters 12-24	God's judgement on David for his sin leads to loss of blessing and trouble in his household.

The climax of 1 and 2 Samuel comes in 2 Samuel 7, where God promises David an everlasting rule. This was fulfilled through Jesus Christ who is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Purpose

1 and 2 Samuel record the establishment of Kings in Israel. 1 Samuel discusses whether and how the Kingship should be established, and 2 Samuel discusses who should be Israel's King. David's kingship is legitimatised.

Outline

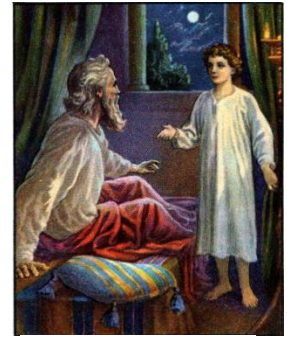
1 Samuel Chapters 1-7

Birth of Samuel and his dedication to God. Transition of leadership from Eli to Samuel.

Elkanah's wife Hannah was childless. She made a vow to God that if He would give her a son she would dedicate him to God as a Nazirite.

"O Lord Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head." 1:11

Eli, the Priest, blessed her, and God granted her a son, Samuel. (Samuel means 'heard of God'). Hannah dedicated Samuel to the Lord after he was weaned saying *"I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord."* 1:27,28



Eli and Samuel

Hannah then blessed the Lord in a wonderful prayer. 2:1-10 and Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest. 2:11 He grew up in the presence of the Lord. 2:21 and continued to grow in stature and in favour with the Lord and with men. 2:26 (As did Jesus. Luke 2:52)

Meanwhile, Eli's sons were abusing their position as priests at Shiloh. A man of God came to Eli saying that God was going to take the priesthood from his family and that his sons would die on the same day. God would *raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind.* 2:35. i.e. Samuel. The Lord then called Samuel three times and he replied *Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.* 3:9 God then confirmed to Samuel that Eli and his family were to be removed.

The Israelites were fighting with the Philistines and decided to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh so that *it may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.* 4:3 Initially the Philistines were afraid when the Ark came into the Israelite camp but they became bold and defeated Israel; captured the Ark, and Eli's two sons were killed on the same day in the battle. When Eli heard this he fell off his chair, broke his neck and died. *He had led Israel for forty years.* 4:18 Eli's daughter-in-law came into labour and had a child who she called Ichabod indicating *'The glory has departed from Israel'.* 4:21



The Ark of the Covenant

The Philistines took the Ark of the Covenant to the Temple of Dagon in Ashdod. Next morning, Dagon's statue was found on its face before the Ark; so they put him back in place. The following morning Dagon was found broken into pieces! The surrounding town then fell victim to tumours so the Philistines tried to get rid of the Ark, first sending it to Gath, then to Ekron, both of which also came down with tumours. The Philistines said *"Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it will kill us and our people"*. 5:11 They put the Ark and some additional offerings on a cow driven cart and send it off, driverless. The cows went to Beth Shemesh where the Ark was received with great celebration. Some of the locals looked into the Ark and died. The people of Beth Shemesh said *Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God?* 6:20 The people of Kiriath Jearim came and collected the Ark, and took it to the house of Abinadab, where it stayed for 20 years.

Samuel encouraged the Israelites to return to the Lord. *“If you are returning to the Lord with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the Lord to serve Him only”*. 7:3.

The Philistines came to Mizpah to attack the Israelites who had gathered there. Samuel prayed and made a burnt offering; the Israelites repented and the Lord thundered against the Philistines so they were decisively beaten. Samuel set up a stone at Ebenezer in memory of this saying *“Thus far has the Lord helped us.* 7:12. The Israelites then re-took towns between Ekron and Gath from the Philistines, freeing the people, and making peace with the Amorites. *And Samuel continued as a judge over Israel all the days of his life.* 7:15.

1 Samuel Chapters 8-15

Transition of leadership from Samuel to King Saul.

When Samuel was old he appointed his sons as Judges, but they did not follow his good example and the people asked for a king to lead them. Samuel was not pleased with this and nor was God! The Lord told him: *“Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you that they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king”*. 8:6

This was a turning point in Israel's history. They chose to have a human king, rather than having God as their King. See 1 Samuel 12:12-15



Samuel

Samuel explained the implications of having a human king to the people, including the demands a king would make on them. *When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.* 8:18 But the people refused to listen to Samuel and the Lord said *“Listen to them, and give them a king”*. 8:21

Meanwhile, Saul was searching for his family's donkeys and came to Zuph. He tried to find the prophet (Samuel) who lived there. Samuel came towards Saul as he entered the town and knew this was the man God had chosen to be king. *This is the man I spoke to you about; he will govern my people.* 9:17 Samuel invited Saul to eat with him and explained that his donkeys had been found and that he had a message from God for him. The next day, Samuel anointed Saul as King and gave three prophecies of events that would occur on Saul's journey home. The third prophecy was that Samuel would meet a procession of prophets preceded by musical instruments. This happened and led to the proverb *Is Saul also among the Prophets?* 10:12 *The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you in power, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.* 10:6,7 *As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart. the Spirit of God came on him in power.* 10:9,10

Samuel called the people together at Mizpah and explained that by calling a king they were rejecting God as their king. Saul, from the Tribe of Benjamin, was chosen and made the King, and he tried to hide, but couldn't as he was so much taller than anyone else. Samuel explained the regulations for kingship and wrote them on a scroll, depositing it before the Lord. The people were then dismissed.

Nahash, an Ammonite, attacked Jabesh Gilead and the people asked him for a treaty. Nahash agreed on the condition that everyone had their right eye gouged out. The people asked if they could send out a request for someone to come and rescue them, and Nahash agreed because he didn't know Israel had a king and believed that all the tribes were still separated. When Saul heard this *the Spirit of God came upon him in power, and he burned with anger.* 11:6 He ordered the people of Israel and Judah to join him in attacking Nahash, threatening to cut up their cattle if they didn't comply. Saul gathered an army of 330,000 and attacked Nahash, obliterating his army. The people took this as evidence of Saul's ability to lead, and confirmed him as King.

Samuel was now old and gave his farewell speech. Everyone agreed he had been honest as a judge. *"You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand."* 12:4 Samuel reminded the Israelites not to forsake the Lord and turn to idols as previous generations had done. He explained that in choosing a king they must still obey the Lord. *If you fear the Lord and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns over you follow the Lord your God - good! But if you do not obey the Lord, and if you rebel against his commands, his hand will be against you, as it was against your fathers. "Now then, stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do before your eyes!"* 12:15,16 When Samuel prayed the Lord sent thunder and rain and the people were afraid because they had disobeyed God and asked for a king. *Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people, because the Lord was pleased to make you his own.* 12:20-22

Saul was 30 years old when he became king and he reigned over Israel for 40 years.

Saul's army attacked the Philistines at Michmash, and his son Jonathan's army attacked at Geba. The Philistines gathered for a major battle, frightening the Israelites, but in accordance with Samuel's instructions, Saul waited seven days for Samuel to arrive. When Samuel didn't come he made a sacrifice and his men started to scatter. Samuel said Saul was foolish for not waiting and declared that his kingdom would not last. *"You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."* 13:13,14 (This new king was David).



King Saul

There were no blacksmiths in the land so Israel had no weapons, except for some held by Saul and Jonathan. Jonathan secretly attacked a Philistine outpost at Michmash and defeated a number of Philistines causing them to panic and scatter. *It was a panic sent by God.* 14:15 Saul called for the Ark to be brought and then sent his army to help. The Philistines were so confused they defeated themselves! *So the Lord rescued Israel that day.* 14:23 Saul had made an oath saying that no-one could eat before the evening, but Jonathan didn't know and ate some honey he found. Soon everyone was eating, ignoring Saul's oath. Saul built an altar, wanting to use the food that had been captured as a sacrifice before it was eaten. When God didn't speak at the sacrifice Saul found that people had been eating and condemned to death those who had disobeyed his oath. He used urim and thummin to find that it was Jonathan, and reluctantly condemned him to death. The army threatened to revolt if Saul killed Jonathan so he relented. *Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.* 14:46

Samuel said to Saul that God wanted him to totally destroy the Amalekites. Saul went and defeated them but did not kill the best of their animals and took King Agag alive. Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel: *"I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions".* 15:11 Also Saul erected a monument at Carmel in his own honour. Samuel confronted him for not obeying the Lord and Saul repented and begged Samuel to go with him. Samuel refused saying *You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel.* 15:26 Saul grabbed at Samuel and tore off part of his robe. Samuel said that part of Saul's kingdom will be torn off and given to another who is better than him. (David). *He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind.* 15:29. Samuel then killed Agag, but *the Lord was grieved that he had made Saul king over Israel.* 15:35.

1 Samuel Chapters 16-31

Transition of leadership from King Saul to King David.

God told Samuel to go to Jesse's sons in Bethlehem to find a replacement for Saul. Each of the sons were rejected because *The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.* 16:7 David, the youngest son, was tending the sheep and was called and the Lord said, *"Rise and anoint him: he is the one".* 16:12 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the *Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.* 16:12,13

Saul was tormented by *'an evil spirit from the Lord.'* 16:14. His servants tried to find a harpist so he would feel better and brought David to him. Initially Saul liked David and made him his armour bearer.

The Philistines gathered to attack Israel, and the giant Goliath mocked them, inviting one Israelite to fight him. Israel was scared of him and he did this for 40 days. David heard Goliath's challenge when he was bring food for his brothers and persuaded Saul to let him fight Goliath. David said *"The Lord who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine".* 17:37 David was dressed in armour but it was too heavy so he went to fight Goliath with just his staff, his sling and 5 stones. *I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the god of the armies of Israel whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me..... and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel.* 17:45-47 David hit Goliath in the forehead with a single stone from his sling and killed him. As a result the Philistines ran away and the Israelites chased them and plundered their camp.



David and Goliath

Jonathan *became one in spirit with David and loved him as himself.* 18:1 Meanwhile David was very successful and Saul was afraid of him because *the Lord was with David but had left Saul.* 18:12 *In everything he did he had great success because the Lord was with him.* 18:14 Saul tried to get rid of David by promising he could marry his daughter Merab and then he would send him into battle against the Philistines. Merab married someone else but Michal, another of Saul's daughters loved David. Saul said David could marry her if he brought the foreskins of 100 Philistines, but David successfully killed 200 Philistines, and wed Michal. *When Saul realised that the Lord was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy for the rest of his days.* 18:28,29

Saul told Jonathan he wanted to kill David, but Jonathan told David and persuaded Saul not to do it. When an evil spirit came upon Saul he threw a spear at David but missed and David escaped. Saul then sent men to David's house to kill him, but Michal helped him escape out the window and by putting an idol in his bed. David stayed with Samuel but Saul found where he was and sent out groups of men to capture him. Each group started to prophesy when they were near Samuel and the prophets! Finally Saul went and he too started to prophesy, hence the phrase *Is Saul also among the prophets?* 19:24

David then met Jonathan and asked why Saul was trying to take his life. They hatched a plan to find Saul's intentions and made a covenant with each other. *And Jonathan made David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.* 20:17 Saul clearly intended to kill David so Jonathan let him know this by their prearranged plan - where he would shoot some arrows. They parted saying *"Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the Lord".* 20:42

David then fled to Ahimilech, the priest of Nob, and asked for some bread. Ahimilech had consecrated bread which is only for men who have kept themselves from women. Since David

had done this Ahimelech gave David some bread and also Goliath's sword which he had been keeping. David then fled to Achish, King of Gath, and feigned insanity so was turned away. He then went to the cave of Adullam and gathered together about 400 men. David and his men went to Mizpah in Moab but were warned not to stay there so went to Hereth. Doeg, one of Saul's men, had seen Ahimelech helping David so Saul had Ahimelech killed and all the people in Nob, but Ahimelech's son Abiathar escaped and told David.

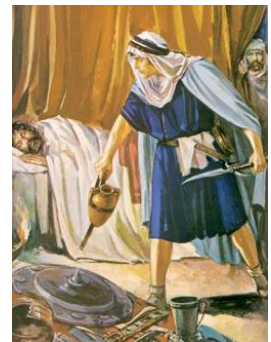
David rescued the people of Keilah from the Philistines but Saul heard about it and set out after him. David and his army moved from place to place in the desert and hills to get away from Saul, all the while asking the Lord what to do next. Jonathan briefly visits David at Horesh *and helped him find strength in God.* 23:16 The Ziphites told Saul where David was and he chased David into the mountains. Just as he was about to capture David, Saul heard the Philistines were raiding elsewhere so Saul had to go away and deal with that.

David hid in the caves near En Gedi. When Saul heard this he pursued him, even entering the cave where David was hiding. The Lord spoke to David saying *"I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish". Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.* 24:4 David regretted doing this because Saul was the Lord's anointed king and stopped his men from harming Saul. David stepped out of the cave and showed Saul that he was not a threat, and the two were briefly reconciled. Saul said *"May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand".* 24:20

At this stage, Samuel died *and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah.* 25:1.

When David was in Maon he asked the wealthy Nabal (whose name means *fool*) for food and water, explaining that David and his men had treated Nabal well. Nabal was *surlly and mean in his dealings.* 25:3. In anger, David prepared to attack Nabal but his clever wife, Abigail, sent provisions to David and he relented. Nabal was drunk so Abigail waited till he was sober before telling him what had happened. Nabal's heart failed and he soon died. David then proposed to Abigail, and she became his wife. He also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Meanwhile Saul gave Michal, David's original wife, to another man, Paltiel.

The Ziphites told Saul that David was hiding at Hachilah, so Saul went there to search for him. David and Abishai went into Saul's camp at night and could have easily killed Saul. David said *"The Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed".* 26:11 Instead David stole Saul's spear and water jug. Far from the camp they shouted out what they had done, again persuading Saul that David was not a threat. *The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The Lord gave you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from trouble.* 26:23,24 Once more, Saul and David were briefly reconciled.



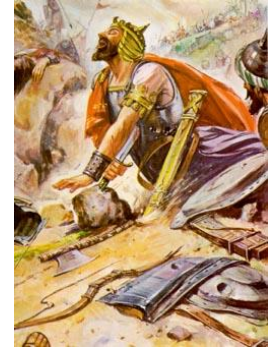
David spares Saul's life

David stayed with King Achish in the land of the Philistines to keep away from Saul. Achish gave him the town of Ziklag and David stayed there for 16 months. David attacked the surrounding towns killing everyone so Achish wouldn't know what he was doing. Achish trusted David and asked him to be his bodyguard and join him in attacking Israel. Saul saw the Philistines gathering at Shunem and was afraid. He tried to ask God for advice but God wouldn't answer him. He disguised himself; went to the Witch of Endor, and asked her to bring up Samuel, which she did. Samuel admonished Saul for acting this way and reminded him *The Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbours - to David.* 28:17 Saul was filled with fear on hearing this and was condemned because he had failed to obey God. He collapsed on the ground and refused to eat, but eventually did so.

The Philistines gathered in their thousands to attack Saul and the Israelites, but noticed some Hebrews (i.e. David and his men) with Achish. Uneasy they told him to send David away as they remembered “*Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands*”. 29:5

Meanwhile Ziklag had been burnt to the ground by the Amalekites and David's wives and families taken captive. David and his men were distressed *But David found strength in the Lord his God*. 30:6 God said they should pursue the Amalekites and that they would be successful in rescuing their families. They set off in pursuit, but 200 men gave up on the way. They met a slave who had been abandoned and he led them to the Amalekite camp. David overcame all but 400 of the raiders and recovered all of his wives, children and possessions. There was also extra plunder which he divided amongst his followers, including those that gave up. He also sent a portion of the plunder back to Judah.

The Philistines attacked the Israelites at Gilboa and killed Jonathan and two of Saul's other sons. Saul was critically injured and asked his armour bearer to kill him, but he wouldn't. Saul then fell on his own sword and died. The Israelites fled when they saw that Saul and his sons had died, so the Philistines were able to take over many towns. The Philistines cut Saul and his sons' bodies into pieces and displayed them on the walls of Bethshan. People from Jabesh Gilead later came and took the bodies down, cremating them and burying their bones under a tamarisk tree.



Death of King Saul

2 Samuel

2 Samuel records David's rule as King of Israel. The book shows how obedience and disobedience have direct consequences on a person's life.

2 Samuel Chapters 1-10

David's obedience to God brings blessing for Judah, then all Israel.

David conquers Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Philistines.

David sets up his Kingdom by bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jebus (Jerusalem),

An Amalekite came to David and told him that Saul and Jonathan were dead. Saul had asked the Amalekite to finish him off after he fell on his sword. David had the Amalekite killed because he knew he was killing the Lord's anointed. David then delivered a lament for Saul and Jonathan. *How the mighty have fallen*. 1:19

David went back to Judah and settled in Hebron but there was war between the houses of David and Saul. Abner made Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, king over Israel and he reigned for 2 years. David was king over Judah and he reigned for 7½ years. The two sides warred against each other with Abner leading Saul's side, and Joab leading David's. They realised it was fruitless fighting their brothers and gradually David's side grew stronger and Saul's weaker.

Abner was accused of being intimate with Rizpah, one of Saul's concubines and decided to go over to David's side. David would only take him if he brought Michal so she was taken from her other husband, Paltiel, and brought back to David. Abner also persuaded the elders of Israel to change to David's side. When Joab heard what Abner had done he killed him to revenge the death of his brother. David cursed Joab for this and sang a lament for Abner so everyone knew David had nothing to do with his murder. King Ish-bosheth was killed by his own leaders and they took his head to David, but David had them killed for killing a king.

David was then anointed as king over all of Israel and Judah. *David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned for forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel for thirty three years*. 5:4,5

When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over all Israel they went in full force to attack him. *David enquired of the Lord* 5:19 and convincingly defeated them.

David then set out for Jerusalem, taking the Ark of God on a new cart. *David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, sistrums and cymbals.* 6:5 Uzzah laid his hand on the Ark when an ox stumbled and was struck down for his irreverence. David was angry about this and *afraid of the Lord that day* 6:9 so wouldn't bring the Ark into Zion, The City of David, and left it with Obed Edom for 3 months. Obed Edom's was blessed so David then brought the Ark into Zion. David danced before the Lord with all his might, while he and the whole house of Israel brought up the Ark of God with shouts and the sound of trumpets. 6:1 Michal saw this and despised David for it. He said he would continue to celebrate before the Lord, no matter how undignified he was! And Michal became infertile and had no more children. So the Ark was brought into Zion in Jerusalem.

David asked Nathan the prophet whether the Ark should be housed in a tent, and was told to go ahead with building a suitable place for it. God told Nathan to tell David *I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.* 7:10 David's offspring (Solomon) would *build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever.* 7:13 *Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.* 7:16 David was humbled by this revelation and responded with a lovely prayer in which he promised to obey the Lord, and asked God to *bless the house of your servant, that it may continue for ever in your sight.* 7:29

The house of David and his kingship has been continued forever. Jesus, who *belonged to the house and line of David* Luke 2:4 is now King of Kings! *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the House of Jacob for ever; His kingdom will never end.* Luke 1:32

David attacked and defeated the surrounding nations including Edom, Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines. *The Lord gave David victory everywhere he went.* 8:6.

David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. 8:15. David showed kindness to Mephibosheth, Jonathan's crippled son, and restored all of Saul's land to him, and allowed him to eat at his table.

When the king of the Ammonites died David sent messengers to Hanun, his son, to show his sympathy. They were treated as spies and humiliated. The Ammonites prepared an army for war, together with the Arameans, and David sent Joab and his army to confront them. Joab split his army into two, one to fight the Ammonites, and the other to fight the Arameans. The Arameans fled before David's army, and so the Ammonites withdrew. David then gathered his whole army against the Arameans and defeated them. This led to some of the surrounding nations becoming subject to Israel, and the Arameans not being willing to help the Ammonites.

2 Samuel Chapter 11

David's commits adultery with Bathsheba.

David saw Bathsheba, Uriah the Hittite's wife, bathing. He summonsed her, lay with her and she became pregnant. Uriah was Joab's armour bearer and was very loyal to David. David ordered that he be placed at the front of the battle in Rabbah and he was killed, thus enabling David to marry Bathsheba. *But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.* 11:27



David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel Chapters 12-24

God's judgement on David for his sin leads to loss of blessing and trouble in his household.

Nathan told David a parable in which a rich man abused a poor man and David got angry about the injustice that occurred. Nathan then revealed that the parable described David's actions towards Uriah and David realised he stood condemned. *I have sinned against the Lord.* 12:13 David repented before the Lord and was forgiven but Nathan said that David's house would always be affected by the sword, and Bathsheba's child died as punishment. David lay with Bathsheba and she had another son, Solomon who was loved by the Lord. Joab finally captured Rabbah, and took the king's crown for David.



Nathan rebukes David

David's son, Amnon, fell in love with his brother Absalom's sister, Tamar. He pretended to be sick and got Tamar to look after him. He persuaded her to feed him in his bedroom, and raped her. Afterwards he hated Tamar more than he had loved her. David was furious when he heard what happened and Absalom hated Amnon and planned to kill him. Two years later Amnon was killed by Absalom's servants and he fled to Geshur. David mourned for the loss of Amnon, but, in time, was reconciled to Absalom. Joab used a wise woman to trick David into acknowledging that Absalom should be brought back to Jerusalem unharmed. When Absalom was brought back David ordered him to remain in his own home and he didn't see David for two years. Absalom asked Joab to see David but he would not respond so Absalom set fire to Joab's field. He was then able to persuade Joab to let him see David, and the two were reconciled.

Absalom gradually built up a following by acting as a wise judge, and after four years put together an army so he could become king. When David heard this he and all but 10 concubines fled to the Mount of Olives, taking the Ark of God. David told the priest to take the Ark back into Jerusalem saying *If I find favour in the Lord's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again.* 15:25 David was encouraged when Ziba brought supplies for his group, but Shimei, one of Saul's family, threw stones at David and cursed him. Abishai asked David to kill Shimei, but David would not let him saying *It may be that the Lord will see my distress and repay me with good for the cursing I am receiving today.* 16:12

Absalom was advised by Ahithophel to abuse David's concubines on the roof so everyone could see. This would show the nation how much contempt he had for David. He also said Absalom should attack David that night. Absalom also consulted Hushai who said he should gather all Israel together and attack David wherever he could be found. Absalom chose Hushai's plan for *the Lord had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.* 17:14 Ahithophel went home and hanged himself in shame. Hushai sent word to David of the plan and David was able to escape cross the Jordan. Absalom's army also crossed the Jordan and they prepared for battle. David asked his troops to treat Absalom gently and stayed out of the battle. The battle took place in the forests near Mahanaim and David defeated Israel. Absalom's hair got caught in a tree and he was left hanging there. Initially David's men didn't harm him, due to David's request. Joab, however, went and killed Absalom. When David heard that his son had died he was very upset, and the victory of the whole army was turned to mourning. Joab rebuked him saying that those who fought for David must mean nothing to him. David replaced Joab with Amasa and returned to Jerusalem. On his return he was gracious towards Shimei, Mephibosheth and Barzillai.

The Israelites were put out that the people of Judah accompanied David back making Judah be even more harsh towards Israel. Sheba rallied the people of Israel to follow him, so they deserted David, while Judah stayed loyal to the king. David asked Amasa to summon the people of Judah but he didn't return quickly enough so Joab's men were sent out after Sheba. Amasa met Joab at the Great Stone in Gilead and Joab stabbed him to death while greeting him. Joab then led the army of Judah against Sheba and the army of Israel. At Abel Beth Maachah Joab built a siege

ramp to get into the city, but a wise woman explained to Joab that he was destroying the Lord's inheritance and that only Sheba needed to die. She got the people to cut off Sheba's head and throw it over the wall to Joab. Joab then returned to Jerusalem, and the rebellion ended with Joab leading the entire army.

During David's reign there was a famine that lasted for three years. David said this was because Saul had put many of the Gibeonites to death. David asked the Gibeonites what he should do to make amends and they asked for seven of Saul's descendants to be killed. Rizpah protected the bodies from scavengers. When David heard this he buried them properly in Kish, Saul's father's tomb, together with the bones of Saul and Jonathon. Then the famine ended.

There were ongoing battles against the Philistines, and David's men prevented him from going to battle *so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished.* 21:17

David sang to the Lord when he was delivered from the hands of his enemies:

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior - from violent men you save me. I call to the LORD, who is worthy of praise, and I am saved from my enemies". 22:2-4 "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me. For I have kept the ways of the LORD; I have not done evil by turning from my God". 22:21,22 "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God, the Rock, my Savior! 22:47



David sings to the Lord

David's last words were recorded as:

"The oracle of David son of Jesse, the oracle of the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, Israel's singer of songs: "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me; his word was on my tongue. The God of Israel spoke, the Rock of Israel said to me: 'When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise on a cloudless morning, like the brightness after rain that brings the grass from the earth.' "Is not my house right with God? Has he not made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part? Will he not bring to fruition my salvation and grant me my every desire? 23:1-5

David's 'mighty men' are listed with some of their exploits. Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar and Shammah broke into a Philistine camp and got water for David, but he poured it out saying *is this not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives.* 23:17. Abishai and Benaiah were also famous, like 'The Three'. A total of 37 men are listed.

God was angry with the people, and David was told to take a census of Israel and Judah. There were 800,000 fighting men in Israel, and 500,000 in Judah. (See also 1 Chronicles 21). David was conscience-stricken when he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant,. I have done a very foolish thing". 24:10 The prophet Gad told David that he had three options for punishment: three years of famine; three months of fleeing from enemies, or three days of plague. David chose the plague and 70,000 of the people died. When it was time to destroy Jerusalem, *the Lord was grieved because of the calamity* 24:16 and it was stopped. David bought land from Araunah and built an altar there. David insisted on paying for the land saying *I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing.* 24:24.

For us the Books of 1 and 2 Samuel highlight the importance of hearing God's voice and acting in obedience to what He says. David was an imperfect follower of the Lord, but he was a man 'after God's heart', and achieved much for the Lord, despite his imperfections.

Discussion questions

Draw up a timeline showing the main events that are described in 1 and 2 Samuel.

What was the significance of this period of history

- for Israel?
- for God in His dealings with the Israelites?

What is the Ark of the Covenant? What was its significance in the relationship between God and the Israelites?

Samuel, Saul and David were leaders in Israel but all had quite different natures and approaches. Identify the qualities and characteristics that each man demonstrated in his role as a leader. Which of these qualities and characteristics made him effective as a leader?

Why was God angry when Israel wanted a King?

Why was Saul so threatened by David? How did David respond to this? What lessons can we learn from Saul and David's relationship?

David was and is highly venerated as Israel's greatest King. He had many wonderful qualities and also lots of weaknesses, but He was an effective King and *a man after God's own heart*. What does this say to you about your own strengths and weaknesses? What can you learn from David about qualities like repentance, facing up to sin, dealing with personal issues, reacting to enemies, worship, leadership, endurance, courage, steadfastness and love?

Study the theme of "obedience to God" in 1 and 2 Samuel. What were God's requirements for obedience? What happened when His people obeyed and disobeyed? What lessons can you learn about obedience that are relevant for your life?

What have you learned from your study of 1 and 2 Samuel? How will you apply this in your life?