



# SAMUEL

## Survey of the Old Testament: The Prophets

Fall 2005

### Introduction

#### Background

**Name:** The original Hebrew bible calls this book “Samuel” after the primary character from the early part of the book. Beginning with the Septuagint the book has been divided into two: 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel.

**Author:** Anonymous. However, the Jewish Talmud indicates that Samuel was the author up to the record of his death, and that Nathan and Gad completed the book. 1 Chronicles 29:29 states that the acts of David were written in the chronicles of Samuel, Nathan and Gad. It is not clear, however, whether or not that reference is actually this book or not.

**Date:** The date of the events recorded in Samuel cover just over 100 years from the birth of Samuel in 1080 BC to the death of David in 970 BC.

The book was most likely written after the reign of King Solomon due to references to Israel and Judah, but before the fall of Israel in 722 BC, as the author does not refer to the end of the northern kingdom<sup>1</sup>.

**Audience:** The nations of Israel and Judah in the time of the kings.

#### Structure

The book is divided into three sections:

- The judgeship of Samuel (1 Sam. 1 – 8).
- The reign of King Saul (1 Sam. 9 – 31).
- The reign of King David (2 Sam. 1 – 24).

Judgeship of Samuel	Reign of King Saul			Reign of King David		
	Saul's Success	Saul's failures	Saul's pursuit of David	David's Success	David's Failures	Last Days of David
1            8	9            12	1    15 3	16            31	1            10	11            19	20            24
1 <sup>st</sup> Samuel				2 <sup>nd</sup> Samuel		

#### Purpose

Samuel was most likely written to defend the institution of the monarchy. Samuel presents the monarchy as a gift from God<sup>2</sup>, established to restore order and promote the worship of the true God

<sup>1</sup> Eugene H. Merrill. “Judges.” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, ed. (Victor Books, 1997). Electronic edition STEP file.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, Ph.D. “Judges.” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Frank E. Gaebelein, ed. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1998). Electronic edition STEP file.

of Israel. Samuel begins with the moral chaos of the time of the judges, including the corruption of the priesthood, the loss of Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines, and imminent threat by the Ammonites. Under the reign of Saul and David, order is brought to the chaos. The worship of the true God is restored, the ark is brought to Jerusalem, and all of Israel's enemies are finally subdued.

Samuel also defends the house of David as the rightful royal family (2 Samuel 7:16), and that someday it would be a son of David who rules from the throne forever (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

## Theme

The book of Samuel begins with the story of a barren woman named Hannah. Hannah's husband had two wives, and the other wife had born children. Hannah, distraught over her barrenness, goes to the tabernacle and fervently prays for a child, promising that any child granted to her would be dedicated to the service of the Lord. The Lord hears the prayer of Hannah and blesses her with a son, Samuel.

In response to the blessing of the Lord, Hannah prays a poem of thanksgiving to the Lord. This poem sets the theme of the entire book of Samuel.

*The LORD makes poor and rich;  
He brings low, He also exalts.  
He raises the poor from the dust,  
He lifts the needy from the ash heap  
To make them sit with nobles,  
And inherit a seat of honor;  
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,  
And He set the world on them.*

*(1 Samuel 2:7-8)*

Throughout Samuel, God, in his sovereignty, lifts the lowly to places of prominence. Hannah, the unfortunate barren woman gives birth to the great judge and prophet of Israel, Samuel (1 Sam. 1:20). Saul is from the least family of the smallest tribe of Israel, but is lifted up to become Israel's first king (1 Sam. 9:21). David is a young shepherd boy who even his father did not consider worth mentioning, but is lifted up to become the greatest of the Israelite kings (1 Sam. 16:11). Indeed, God raises the lowly for:

*God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward  
appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7)*

Likewise, God, in his sovereignty, brings down the arrogant. Eli's sons, the corrupt priests, are cut off from the priest hood (1 Sam. 2:31). Saul who arrogantly offers a sacrifice to God without Samuel and disobeys God by not destroying the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:11), has his family removed from the throne. Even David arrogantly takes Bathsheba from Uriah and is brought low by God through the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 12:13-14). Finally, at the end of David's life he takes a census as an arrogant admiration of his own reign, only to be humbled by the Lord (2 Sam. 24:10).

While the book of Samuel affirms the monarchy as a good and vital institution for Israel, the author shows that the monarchy only works when the king is following after the Lord. God is the one who is sovereign, and he is the one who establishes and strengthens the king.

*Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered;  
Against them He will thunder in the heavens,  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
And He will give strength to His king,  
And will exalt the horn of His anointed.*

*(1 Samuel 2:10)*

## The Judgeship of Samuel (1 Sam. 1 – 8)

### Israel's Low Point

The books of Samuel begin at a low point in the history of Israel. The nation is at the end of the period of the judges, where the nation is in virtual anarchy and is facing the ramifications of its moral decay. It is the time when “there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Joshua 21:25).

### Failure of Eli's Sons (1 Sam. 2 – 3)

The moral failure of Israel is even found within the priesthood of Yahweh. Eli the priest seems to be a good man, but his sons are corrupt using the power of the priesthood for their own pleasure and gain. Eli's sons would steal the best meat from the temple sacrifices, intended for God, and use it for themselves. In addition, Eli's sons were sleeping with the women who came to worship at the tabernacle. Eli was upset at the behavior of his sons, but he did little about it. As a result, God used the young man Samuel to deliver the message to Eli that his family would be cut off from the priesthood forever.

### The Ark Captured (1 Sam. 4 – 6)

As if the corruption of Eli's sons was not enough, Israel would soon lose the most holy item of worship, the Ark of the Covenant. This ark contained the tablets of the law delivered by Moses, and more importantly was considered the throne of God kept inside the holy of holies of the tabernacle. The ark was where the glory of God dwelt inside the tabernacle.

However, Israel decides to take the ark out of the holy of holies and to carry it into battle against the Philistines. The ark was seen not as an illustration of God's holiness, but as a good luck charm that would bring them success in battle. By carrying the ark into the battle it illustrates Israel's contempt for the true worship of God.

But this good luck charm did not work, and the Philistines captured the ark. Now the ark ended up being a curse to the Philistines, as any town that possessed the ark would suffer from a plague of tumors. As a result, eventually the Philistines ended up sending the ark back.

The loss of the ark represented the removal of the presence and glory of God from the nation of Israel<sup>3</sup>. God no longer dwelt among his people because his people had such disregard for him.

## Samuel's Judgeship

### Samuel's Success (1 Sam. 7)

This low point in Israel's history only has one bright spot: the rise of the last judge of Israel and one of her greatest prophets, Samuel. Under Samuel the nation experienced a revival, repenting of their worship of Baal and Ashtaroth. In the tradition of the judges, Samuel also led Israel into battle against the Philistines. With the help of the Lord they defeated the Philistines and liberated towns which had been under Philistine rule for years. Under Samuel's rule as judge, Israel saw peace from her neighbors, returned to the worship of the true God. Therefore, God caused Israel to start to prosper.

### Samuel's Failure (1 Sam. 8)

Towards the end of Samuel's life he set up his sons as judges over Israel. However, his sons were dishonest, taking bribes from the people. Samuel, who saw Eli unwilling to confront his sons' corruption, now seems to be ignorant of his own sons' sins.

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<sup>3</sup> Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart. *How to Read the Bible Book by Book*. (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2002), 84.

The elders of Israel come to Samuel concerned about his sons and concerned about who would lead them after Samuel was gone. They are looking for a king to lead them.

Samuel was very much against a king. He warned them that a king would draft their sons into his army and a king would tax them heavily. Furthermore, by asking for a king, the people were rejecting Yahweh as their king and substituting a human for the role of God.

The request for a king was not necessarily sinful. First, the book of Judges clearly demonstrated the need for a strong central leader. Secondly, the Torah made provision for a king to rule Israel (Deut. 17:14ff). Certainly, having Israel ruled by Samuel's sons was not better than having a king (vs. 5).

However, the nation wanted a king for other reasons as well. They were under threat from the nations around them, and they saw a king as being able to fight their battles (vs. 20). They no longer trusted God to defend them in battle and instead wanted to see the establishment of a king's standing army to defend them<sup>4</sup>. In so doing, they rejected Yahweh as their king (1 Sam. 8:7).

## The Reign of Saul (1 Sam. 9 – 31)

### Saul's Success (1 Sam. 9 – 12)

#### Saul's Anointing & Coronation (1 Sam. 9 – 10)

##### *Samuel's Search for a King (1 Sam. 9)*

Nonetheless, the Lord grants the nation their request. A king was not the ideal that God had desired for Israel, for He wanted to be their king directly. But if the alternative meant returning to the time of the judges, it would be better to have a king. So God told Samuel that he would send to him the man He had chosen for king.

Saul was a tall and handsome man who was searching for his father's lost donkeys. After searching for sometime, he and his companions decide to consult Samuel to see if he could help them find the donkeys. When Samuel sees him, God tells him that Saul, this donkey herder from an insignificant family in the smallest tribe of Israel was the one chosen to be king.

##### *Saul Prophecies (1 Sam. 10)*

After Saul meets with Samuel and learns that he has been chosen to be king, he heads back home. On the way, however, he meets a group of prophets, and the Holy Spirit comes upon Saul. Saul then begins to prophesy and proclaim the word of the Lord. The king has now been anointed by the Holy Spirit, ready to do the work of the Lord for Israel.

Samuel calls the nation to him to anoint Saul as king. He begins by dividing the congregation into tribes. He then casts lots, and the lot falls to the tribe of Benjamin. He then narrows down the selection to the Matrite family. Then the lot falls to Saul. But no one can find Saul. He is hiding amongst the baggage. But the people nonetheless all shout "long live the king," and Saul begins his rule.

#### Saul's Victory & Confirmation (1 Sam. 11 – 12)

##### *Victory over the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11)*

Saul's first significant act as king was to rebuff an invasion by the Ammonites into Jabesh-Gilead. Saul had been working in the fields when the people came and told him of the invasion. The Spirit returns to Saul and he calls for all Israel to rise up against the Ammonites. Saul's army soundly defeated the Ammonites, and the people become unified under this new king.

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<sup>4</sup> Youngblood.

*Samuel's Address to Israel (1 Sam. 12)*

At the victory celebration, Samuel addresses the nation, recounting the history of the nation to that point. While he still doesn't like the idea of the monarchy, he is resigned to it, and issues a warning to both the king and the people. As long as the king and the people serve the Lord, then God will bring success to the king and the nation. However, if they rebel against the Lord, then the king can not save them from foreign invaders. King Saul may have brought them victory today, but the victory had more to do with their obedience to God than the fact that they have a king.

*"Fear the Lord and serve Him... But if you still do wickedly both you and your king will be swept away." (1 Sam. 12:25)*

**Saul's Failure (1 Sam. 13 – 15)****Saul's Offering (1 Sam. 13)**

Saul's next battle is against the Philistines. He raises an army of 3,000, none of whom have swords or spears. However, the Philistines have 30,000 chariots, 6,000 cavalry, and they had iron swords and spears. Needless to say, Saul is nervous as they get close to the battle, and Samuel is nowhere to be seen. After several days, the army gets restless, for they are supposed to wait for Samuel. Saul, seeing his small army fall apart, decides to rally the troops by giving a burnt offering to the Lord without Samuel.

As soon as the offering was complete, Samuel came and was aghast that Saul, in his arrogance, would make an offering without a priest. In what seems like an innocent act to keep up the morale of his troops, Saul had exceeded his authority, usurping Samuel's role. For this, Samuel tells Saul that his kingdom will not last forever, and that the Lord would now look for a king who was "after His own heart."

**Saul's Fast (1 Sam. 14:1 – 46)**

Saul had split his army, and sent some with his son Jonathon. As the battle begins, Saul told his troops that they were to fast until they had defeated the Philistines. Jonathon's troops hadn't heard the order, so they ate some honey they found in the forest.

When Saul later discovers that Jonathon had broken the fast, he condemned him to death, even though he had not heard the order. Saul did not order his sons death because he was angry at Jonathon, but because he had put the people under an oath. It was a matter of Saul breaking this vow to the Lord. Saul has become like Jephthah, who made a vow to the Lord and ended up sacrificing his oldest daughter. Saul has lost his moral compass and is about to commit such an atrocity, when Jonathon is rescued by the people.

**Saul's Disobedience (1 Sam. 14:47 - 15:35)**

Saul's army battles against all their neighbors, including Moab, Ammon, Edom, the Philistines and the Amalekites. In his battle against the Amalekites, the Lord tells Saul through Samuel, that because of the way this nation treated Israel as they passed through on the way to the Promised Land, they were to be utterly destroyed, included all men, women, children and livestock.

Saul and his army defeat the Amalekites and destroy all the people. But Saul kept the best of the livestock. This is the last straw for God. Because of Saul's disobedience in this matter, God would remove the throne from Saul's family.

Saul is upset at this pronouncement and apologizes and offers to give a sacrifice to atone for the sin. But it is too late. Samuel says, in a theme repeated throughout the prophets, "to obey is better than sacrifice." Disobedience and rebellion against God is as bad as divination and idolatry (1 Sam. 15:23).

Saul's sin is that he saw his throne as an absolute monarchy<sup>5</sup>. He did not see the need to obey God and his prophet Samuel. As was the case of the kings in the neighboring nations, Saul saw his authority as final. His rule would be law.

But Israel already had a law, the Torah, and the king is subject to that it (Deuteronomy 17:18-20). The prophets were the enforcers of God's covenant and are established by God to hold the king in check. Saul had put himself above Samuel, God's prophet, and in so doing had put himself above God and His law. For this, the house of Saul would end.

## Saul's Pursuit of David (1 Sam. 16 – 31)

### David's Fame (1 Sam. 16 – 18)

#### *David's Anointing (1 Sam. 16:1-11)*

Samuel is so upset over the failure of Saul, that he delays seeking after another king. But finally the Lord tells Samuel to go to Bethlehem and to the house of Jesse, for there he would find the next king of Israel. Samuel goes to Bethlehem, and there Jesse parades out each of his sons. But none of them is the one the Lord has chosen. Samuel asks if there are any other sons. There is, but the youngest son is out tending the sheep. When this son comes, the Lord tells Samuel that this young man, named David, will be the next king of Israel. Samuel anoints the young man.

#### *David in the Service of the King (1 Sam. 16:12-23)*

David has been anointed by Samuel, and the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him. However, the Spirit of the Lord has departed Saul. Furthermore, the Lord has sent an evil spirit to torment Saul. David, who by now has a reputation as a musician, is sent to Saul to sooth him when the evil spirit comes to him. The evil spirit was used by God as a punishment for Saul's sin and seemed to drive King Saul to a certain madness or mental instability. From here forward, Saul begins acting more and more paranoid and mentally unstable.

#### *David & Goliath (1 Sam. 17)*

The army of Israel is once again ready to fight against the Philistines. This time, however, the Philistines have raised a champion, Goliath to battle for them. Saul should have been the champion of Israel, for he was the tallest warrior. Yet he cowered, leaving the Philistine to taunt the Israelites and their God.

David visits his brothers at the front, and is offended that this heathen should ridicule the name of the Lord. If no one else will confront this blasphemer, then David himself will do it. Saul is certain David will be defeated, but he allows him, nonetheless to battle him. In this famous story, David gathers 5 stones and with a shepherd's sling, defeats the great Goliath.

#### *Saul's Jealousy (1 Sam. 18)*

David becomes a commander in Saul's army as a result and has great success in battle wherever he went. From this, David's fame grew. The women of Israel would sing:

*Saul has slain his thousands,  
And David his ten thousands.  
(1 Samuel 18:7b)*

Saul becomes jealous of David's fame and suspect that David will use this fame to mount a rebellion against him. So the next day when David was brought in to sooth Saul from the evil spirit, Saul threw a spear at David to try and kill him. From that point, David was banned from Saul's court.

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<sup>5</sup> Albert H. Baylis. *From Creation to the Cross*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan. 1996), 192.

Saul also tried to kill David by sending him on a suicide mission. He offered David his daughter's hand in marriage if he would bring him 100 Philistine foreskins, expecting that David would die in the attempt. The plan backfired, however, as David was able to defeat the Philistines and Saul had to give his daughter Michal as David's bride.

### **David Flees Saul (1 Sam. 19 - 22)**

#### *Jonathon and David (1 Sam. 19 – 20)*

While Saul is jealous and paranoid about David's fame among the people and favor from the Lord, his daughter, Michal is in love with David and Saul's son Jonathon has developed a close friendship with David. When Saul sends servants to find and kill David, Michal helps him to escape. Likewise, Jonathon warns David of Saul's desire to see him killed. This feeds Saul's paranoia that everyone is conspiring against him.

As Jonathon warns David to flee from Saul, in a very heartwarming scene, these two good friends make a covenant together to take care of each other's family in the future. David later will abide by this covenant when he is king.

#### *David's Protection by Prophet & Priest (1 Sam. 21 - 22)*

David flees from Saul and first stays with Samuel. When Saul sent troops to seize David from Samuel's house, the Spirit of the Lord came upon the troops and they would begin prophesying rather than taking David. This happens twice, before Saul himself goes up to Samuel's house to seize David. But upon approaching the house, Saul too receives the Spirit and begins to prophesy before Samuel all day and night.

David then flees and finds refuge temporarily with the priests in the tabernacle of the Lord. The priests supply David with food, namely the holy show bread placed as an offering before the Lord, and with Goliath's sword and spear which they have kept for him since his defeat of the Philistine. David then flees into the wilderness.

When Saul discovers that the priests have aided David, he commits a terrible atrocity and slaughters the priests of the Lord in the tabernacle.

### **David in the Wilderness (1 Sam. 23 – 26)**

#### *David Spares Saul (1 Sam. 24, 26)*

Saul is continuing down a dark path. He has fallen from being the Lord's anointed king, full of the Holy Spirit to a man willing to kill his own son and willing to slaughter the priests of the Lord. He is suffering from mental instability and has paranoid tendencies as his own daughter and son are aiding and abetting his enemy.

But Saul's paranoia is baseless, for David is a man of God who refuses to kill his pursuer. God has selected Saul as king, and even though David knows he is the chosen successor, he refuses to usurp the throne. On two different occasions, David has an opportunity to kill Saul, and is encouraged to do so by his troops. But David will not commit murder against the man he knows God chose as the ruler of Israel.

David's example is an excellent lesson in biblical leadership. How are we to treat those whom God has placed in power? Do we have a right to rebel against those in authority over us if they are evil, mentally unstable, and seeking to persecute us? What if our leaders are bad leaders?

David's example tells us that we still must respect and honor those God has placed in authority over us. It doesn't matter if we know we could be a better leader. It doesn't matter if you are the "heir apparent." It doesn't matter if the leader is out to get you. Biblical leadership requires humility and faith in God's timing. Biblical leadership is not arrogantly being proactive about playing politics to get ahead.

This is the very theme of Samuel. It is the Lord who raises up and brings low. He will be the one who gives strength to the king and exalts his anointed. To seek this ourselves is to put ourselves into the role God has reserved for himself alone.

*The Death of Samuel (1 Sam. 25)*

In chapter 25, we see that Samuel, the great judge, prophet and king-maker dies. All Israel mourns for him.

**David with the Philistines (1 Sam. 27 – 31)**

*Refuge & Distrust (1 Sam. 27, 29)*

David finally flees from Israel to the Philistines, where he and his followers stay about a year and a half. Under the protection of the Philistine king, Saul stopped searching for David. David and his army continued to defend Israel by battling against their neighbors.

However, when the Philistines went to battle against Saul, they invited David to go with them. However, several were afraid that David's troops would turn against them in battle and side with Israel. So the Philistines asked David not to go to battle with them as they went up against Saul.

*Saul consults a Medium (1 Sam. 28)*

As Saul is about to go to battle against the Philistines, he grew afraid. So he sought the Lord, desiring to ask God what he should do. But the Lord did not answer him, by dreams, by Urim, or by the prophets.

This gives us some insight into how the Kings heard the word of the Lord. The Urim are the lots found on the priests' ephod. The lots would be cast by the priest in order to determine the will of the Lord. We see that David consults the will of the Lord by this method in 1 Samuel 23:9 and 30:7.

Saul used to have the Holy Spirit within him. But now the Holy Spirit was gone. There were no dreams, the Urim didn't provide answers, and the prophets weren't talking with Him.

You can see the frustration of Saul. It's as if in desperation he says, "Oh, if only Samuel were here, he would tell me what God says." So, Saul decides to inquire of the deceased Samuel through a medium. The only problem is that Saul had been obedient to the Law of Moses and had thrown out all the mediums from Israel. Nonetheless, there was one in Endor. So Saul goes and disguising himself, he asks the medium to conjure up the soul of Samuel. Samuel tells Saul that he and his sons would die the next day in battle because of his disobedience.

How could this medium be able to actually conjure up Samuel from the dead? Does this mean that mediums, or at least this medium from Endor, are actually able to communicate from the dead? We must be careful not to set our theology from a single narrative. We know that God can use anyone at anytime for his purposes, and in this case God used this medium to communicate to Saul. But that does not mean that mediums are able to actually conjure the dead. What we can know for certain is that God prohibits the use of mediums and conjuring the dead, real or not, is a violation of God's law (Duet. 18:10-12).

In the midst of this, we should not lose the point of the passage. Saul had been God's anointed and had prophesied in the Spirit, but because of his disobedience, was now cut off from communication with God.

*David and Amalekites (1 Sam. 30)*

When David and his troops returned home from the Philistine army, they discovered that the Amalekites had attacked their family and carried off their women, children and livestock. David asked the priest of the Lord if they should pursue the Amalekites. Through the priest's ephod, the Lord assures David he will be able to rescue all his family. Just as the Lord says, David and his men are able to rescue their families. God was not talking with Saul, but David could still consult the Lord.

*Saul & Jonathon's Death (1 Sam. 31)*

Meanwhile, the Philistines have attacked Israel. Saul, after being mortally wounded, asks his armor bearer to kill him so the Philistines won't abuse him. But the armor bearer refuses, so Saul takes his own life rather than be captured by the Philistines. Jonathon and most of Saul's other sons are also killed in battle.

## The Reign of King David (2 Sam. 1 – 24)

### David's Success (2 Sam. 1 – 10)

#### Civil War (2 Sam. 1 - 4)

When David heard of Saul and Jonathon's death, he grieved over the death of the king and his good friend. In fact, an Amalekite who delivered the news, boasting that he had killed Saul, was killed by David for killing the Lord's anointed. David then writes a song lamenting their death.

The tribe of Judah immediately crowns David as their king in Hebron. However, the other tribes of Israel crown Saul's son, Ishbosheth. This plunges Israel into a civil war. The civil war lasted 7 years, and David's household became stronger while Ishbosheth became weaker. Finally, two events brought an end to the war.

First, Joab, David's general, murders Ishosheth's general, Abner, out of revenge for the death of Joab's brother in battle. Joab's murder of Abner was not a justifiable homicide occurring in the heat of war<sup>6</sup>. This was premeditated and calculated. Furthermore, this took place in Hebron, a city of refuge, established in the law as a safe haven for the accused (Joshua 21:13). Joab did not recognize that he was bound by the law. While David does not punish his general, he does mourn the death of Abner.

Second, Rechab and Baanah kill Ishbosheth while he was asleep in his bed. These two brought the head of the now dead king to David. But David grew angry at Rechab and Baanah, for they had murdered the king in his sleep. So he had them killed.

With the death of Ishbosheth, the remaining tribes of Israel come to Hebron and crown David the king over all Israel.

These incidents show the humility of David. He grieves over the death of his enemies. He punishes those who kill in cold blood rather than in the field of battle. Even when he knows he should be king, he does not revel in the destruction of his enemies.

#### David's Greatness (2 Sam. 5 –1 0)

##### *David's Conquests (2 Sam. 5, 8, 10)*

As king, David is able to subdue all the nations in and around Israel. He starts with his conquest of Jerusalem, long held by the Jebusites. Then he defeats the Philistines, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Arameans. David brings peace to Israel by subduing all his neighbors.

##### *David Brings the Ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6)*

After conquering Jerusalem, David moves his capital to this city. He first builds a beautiful palace in the city. Then he begins plans to build a temple to Yahweh in the city. But first he must move the Ark of the Covenant from the tabernacle and bring it into the city. However, David put the ark on a cart and had it hauled up. The law said that the ark should be carried on poles by the priests. When the ark begins to slip off the cart, a man named Uzzah reaches out to steady the ark, and is struck down by God for touching the holy object.

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<sup>6</sup> Baylis, 205.

David needed to remember that, although he is the king, he is a sub-regent under the real king of Israel, Yahweh. God will enforce his law, and David is subject to that law<sup>7</sup>. David may decide to move the ark by cart, but the law says the priests are to carry it. David's disregard for the law cost a man his life.

After a time, they decided to again move the ark, this time in the appropriate manner. As the ark is moved, David is caught up in the worship of the Lord, dancing and leaping (much to the chagrin of his wife, Michal).

This story serves as a contrast to the beginning of the book when the ark is lost to the Philistines and the presence of the Lord leaves the nation. Now the ark is in David's capital city. We have gone from the low to the high point.

#### *David's Compassion (2 Sam. 9)*

After David has established his throne in Jerusalem, he remembers his vow with Jonathon to take care of his family. So David asks his advisors to search for any from Jonathon's family that might still be alive. A crippled young man named Mephiboseth is found. David invites him to live at the palace and to eat with the king. While most kings would have looked for remnants of the royal family and killed them to prevent rebellion, David remembers his vow and shows compassion on Saul's family.

#### **The Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7)**

##### *God's Promise to David*

Since the time of Moses, more than 400 year prior, the center of the worship of Yahweh was in a tent. Now David wanted to establish a permanent temple. The prophet Nathan, at first, thinks this is a good idea. But Nathan receives a vision from the Lord in which God tells Nathan that David is not to build a house for Him, but that He would build a house for David. However, this is not a physical house, but a family dynasty.

God is making an agreement with David and his family, called the Davidic covenant, where God promises:<sup>8</sup>

- David's name would be made great (7:9).
- There will be peace and rest for God's people (7:10-11).
- David would have a son who would receive the kingdom (7:12).
- That son (Solomon) would build the temple (7:13).
- Sin will bring judgment, but not removal of the Davidic line (7:14-15)
- The house of David will be an eternal dynasty (7:16).

David is overwhelmed by the unconditional grace of God. Here David wanted to do something great for God, and God responds by doing something great for him. David is overwhelmed and praises the Lord in prayer:

*Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? And yet this was insignificant in Your eyes, O Lord God, for You have spoken also of the house of Your servant concerning the distant future. (2 Samuel 7:18-19).*

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<sup>7</sup> Baylis, 197.

<sup>8</sup> Barry Davis. "2 Samuel." *Genesis through Song of Solomon* classnotes. (Multnomah Biblical Seminary, Fall 2003), 8.

### *Christ as the Fulfillment*

The Davidic covenant did not guarantee that there would always be a son of David on the throne, for the Babylonian exile will end the rule of the Davidic kings. However, the right to rule would remain with this family and will be eventually established for eternity in the coming of the Messiah<sup>9</sup>.

The whole of Samuel shows a transition from the low point in Israel's history to its high point. Under David, Israel went from moral decay and anarchy to a re-established worship of God in Jerusalem and a strong centralized government. In so doing, David became the type of Christ. The Messiah will come one day to take a fractured nation and bring renewal to Israel and the entire world.

<b>Israel before David</b>	<b>Israel Under David</b>	<b>Israel Under the Messiah</b>
Loose association of tribes with inconsistent leadership	A strong centralized kingdom	The Son of David will unify the nation (Ez. 37:22).
Internal fighting	Military and economic world power	The Son of David will bring justice and righteousness to the earth (Jer. 33:15)
Inability to hold of invaders	All surrounding nations conquered	The Son of David will bring peace and safety to Jerusalem (Jer. 33:16)
The presence of the Lord leaves Israel as the ark is lost to the Philistines	David brings the ark to Jerusalem	The Son of David will establish a new sanctuary in Jerusalem and God will dwell with his people (Ez. 37:26-28)

The line of David was to be the line through which the Lord established his sub-regent. Yahweh was still the true king of Israel, and the line of David was to be the family which would rule Israel as the representative of the true King. This would come to its greatest fulfillment, however, in the coming of Jesus Christ, when the line of David is no longer just a sub regent. For in Christ, Yahweh and the Son of David reign in the same person as king over Israel.

### **David's Failures (2 Sam. 11-19)**

While the Davidic covenant affirms his approval by God, that does not mean that he is without his faults. In fact, David has some tremendous failures in life.

#### **David & Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11 – 12)**

##### *David Commits Adultery (2 Sam. 11:1-5)*

At the time when kings go to war, David sent his army to fight the Ammonites, while he stayed in his palace in Jerusalem. David is looking out over the city from his palace and sees a woman bathing in her house. He calls for the woman, named Bathsheba, to be brought to the palace, and he commits adultery with her. Later Bathsheba discovers that she is pregnant by David.

##### *David Murders Uriah (2 Sam. 11:6 – 26)*

Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, is part of David's army, fighting the Ammonites. Bathsheba's pregnancy will result in all kinds of questions and could lead back to David. So David recalls Uriah from the battle field under the guise of having him report on the progress of the war. After Uriah gives his report, David tells Uriah to go home and spend time with his wife. Uriah, however, has more integrity than that, for he says, if his comrades can't be home, he shouldn't be able to go home to his wife. So he spends the night in the palace, not at home.

David must come up with another plan. So he sends Uriah back to the battle field, with a written command for Joab, the general. Those instructions tell Joab to put Uriah in the front of the battle, and then to abandon him there so that he will be killed. The command is delivered by Uriah, and Joab carries them out. Uriah is killed in battle. David then takes Bathsheba as his wife.

<sup>9</sup> Charles C. Ryrie. *Ryrie Study Bible*. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 488-489.

David is guilty of adultery and murder. This was not just a personal moral failure. In this incident David had acted like any other king who saw himself above the law. David has abused his power as king in the commission of these crimes. He used his influence as king to lure Bathsheba. He used his authority as king to set up Uriah. David was acting as if he was above the law. He was acting like the kings in the neighboring nations, who believed they had absolute rule<sup>10</sup>. But the King of Israel was not above the law. The king of Israel was ruling as an administrator of the law under the authority of Yahweh, the true King of Israel.

#### *Nathan's Confrontation (2 Sam. 12)*

Part of the role of a prophet in Israel was to enforce the covenant between God and his people. The prophet served as the conscience of the king, and in the check and balances of the Israelite law, it is the prophet who holds the king to the law. So the prophet Nathan, comes to David to confront him.

David is a good and fair judge. So Nathan appeals to David's innate sense of justice when confronting him. He tells a hypothetical story of a rich man who steals a poor man's only lamb. David becomes outraged at the injustice of the rich man and orders him killed. Nathan then drops the bomb: "You are the man."

David declares, "I have sinned against the Lord." He is recognizing that he is under the authority of the Yahweh<sup>11</sup>. He is recognizing that he had placed himself above God and was ruling as an absolute monarch, rather than the representative of God.

While David truly repented and was forgiven by God, there were still consequences to his actions. Most immediately was the death of Bathsheba's baby. Longer lasting, however, was David's inability to control his own household.

#### **Absalom's Rebellion (2 Sam. 13 – 19)**

##### *The Rape of Tamar (2 Sam. 13 - 14)*

David had many wives and many children by these wives. Within his household then were a number of half-brothers and half-sisters. One of these sons of David, Amnon, had raped his half-sister, Tamar. This infuriated Tamar's full brother, Absalom, who then had Amnon killed.

When David had learned of the rape of Tamar, he grieved over it, but he took no action against Amnon. When David learned of the murder of Amnon, again he grieved, but he took no action against Absalom. David is aware of the sins of his sons, but like Eli, he is unable to control the situation. David has just been confronted with his own adultery and murder and can not bring himself to condemn his sons for the very same crimes.

##### *Absalom's Rebellion (2 Sam. 15 – 19)*

Absalom flees from his father out of concern that David might punish him for the murder of Amnon. But when David does not act, Absalom sees weakness in his father. Absalom mounts a rebellion against his father and wins the popular support. He mounts a movement and heads for Jerusalem to take the throne. David and his followers are forced to flee Jerusalem.

David does mount an army to fight the rebellion, and in a great civil war battle, 20,000 Israelites died. Among the dead was Absalom, the rebel and son of David. David sees Absalom's death as part of his punishment from his sin with Bathsheba<sup>12</sup>. As a result, David grieves over the loss of his son, for he sees the entire incident as the consequences of his sinful behavior.

David's grief over Absalom begins to affect the morale of David's troops. Finally, Joab confronts David and warns him that he had better get his act together and start acting like the king again or he

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<sup>10</sup> Baylis, 196.

<sup>11</sup> Baylis, 198.

<sup>12</sup> Baylis, 196.

would lose control of his followers. David has been paralyzed by his own personal failures and it affects his ability to provide decisive leadership for the nation. As a result, thousands of Israelites are killed and David loses two sons.

### *Contrast of David and Absalom*

Absalom had fled the court of the king because he feared for his life, just as David had fled the court of the king for fear of his life. Absalom, as the eldest son of David, was the heir apparent to the throne, just as David was heir apparent to King Saul. But how Absalom responds to these circumstances is dramatically different than David's response.

Absalom sees a failure in David's leadership. As heir apparent, he doesn't respect the king's position but decides he can do better. He usurps the throne, because he thinks he will be a better king than his father. But this is not God's design for leadership. David respects Saul's position and does not kill the king, even when he has the chance. He humbly waits until the Lord lifts him up to the throne.

The story of Absalom takes us back to the song of Hannah and reminds us that it is humility which God honors, not arrogance. The humble are lifted up, but the arrogant are destroyed.

## **Last Days of David (2 Sam. 20 – 24)**

After Absalom's rebellion, the king has to put down another rebellion by a "worthless fellow" named Sheba. David also faces a famine, which is caused because of Saul had broken a long standing treaty with the Gibeonites and killed most of them in battle. David allows the remaining Gibeonites to kill the rest of Saul's family, with the exception of Mephiboseth.

### **The Census**

Except for these incidents, the remainder of David's reign was peaceful and prosperous. So much so, that by the end of David's life he starts becoming proud over all his accomplishments. To quantify these accomplishments, David takes a census of Israel. The results of the census are that there are 800,000 men who could draw the sword in Israel and 500,000 in Judah.

This show of arrogance, however, was a sin against the Lord. By checking to see the size of an army he could muster, he was showing that his confidence was in himself and in the might of Israel rather than in God. As a result, God punishes David by sending a plague in which 70,000 people are killed. David repents before the Lord and asks that his people be spared, for it was his sin, not the people's.

### **The Preparation for the Temple**

The book of Samuel closes with a message from the prophet, Gad. David is to erect an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. David goes to purchase the land from Araunah, but Araunah offers to donate it to the king. The king insists, however, on purchasing it. David is recognizing that the king is not above the law, for he could have demanded the land himself. Instead he insists on purchasing it. There David builds an altar and prays to the Lord. The Lord is pleased by this sign of humility and he stops the plague affecting Israel. This land will become the place where Solomon builds the temple to the Lord<sup>13</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the book of Samuel, we see God takes the humble and lifts them to places of prominence. From Hannah, a poor peasant woman, comes Samuel, the greatest judge of Israel. From an obscure family in the smallest tribe comes Saul, the first king of Israel. From the youngest son of Jesse, a mere shepherd boy, David, comes a great warrior king. God gives his grace to the humble.

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<sup>13</sup> Fee and Stuart, 84.

But God also opposes the proud, even when they are his anointed ones. Eli's sons are priests of God who are cut off from the priesthood due to their corruption. Saul's household is cut off from the throne due to his arrogant disobedience of God. Even David, the man after God's own heart, suffers violence and plague due after committing adultery and arrogantly admiring the census.

*The LORD makes poor and rich;  
He brings low, He also exalts.  
He raises the poor from the dust,  
He lifts the needy from the ash heap*  
(1 Samuel 2:7)

Biblical leadership requires first and foremost humility. A true leader of God does not try to usurp the existing leadership, as did Absalom, but patiently waits upon the Lord to lift them up, as did David. A true leader of God recognizes their authority comes from God and that they are subject to Him and His law, as David did in his repentance after his sin with Bathsheba, but not as Saul did after his disobedience regarding the Amalekites. A true leader of God recognizes that their accomplishments come from God, unlike David who took a census to admire his reign.

With the exceptions noted above, David was this kind of leader. He exemplified biblical leadership. He also served as a type of one who would be the ultimate example of biblical leadership, that is, Christ. Jesus is the king who fulfills the Davidic covenant, ruling on an everlasting throne. But Jesus did not arrogantly take the authority for which he was appointed, but is waiting for his father to establish him (Philippians 2:8-9). Jesus did not wield his own authority, but recognized his authority comes from God (John 5:30). Jesus recognized that all he did came from the Father, not boasting of his own accomplishments (John 17:4).

As we serve God as leaders, let us never forget that:

*Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered;  
Against them He will thunder in the heavens,  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
And He will give strength to His king,  
And will exalt the horn of His anointed.*  
(1 Samuel 2:10)

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