

1-2 SAMUEL

*Israel's first two kings: Saul and David*

SETTING

The transition from judges to kings (approx. 1070 - 972 BC)

KEY VERSE

*"Samuel said to him, “The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors—to one better than you."*

15:28

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## Introduction

The books of Samuel continue the story from the book of Judges and seem to legitimize David's kingship and show that he - and not Saul - was the right king.

The books want to answer these two questions:

1. How will the kingdom of Israel function?
2. Who must the king resemble?

Saul and David are portrayed as contrasts. The kingship should function in such a way that it is God who is the real king, and the earthly king had to listen to the prophets who spoke on behalf of God. They had to recognize that they cannot do as they please, even though they are kings.

In the first 8 chapters, the people were still led by Samuel, the last judge, but then the people wanted a king like the neighboring nations. God calls this an apostasy and a great sin, as they then rejected God as king, but he still allowed it.

Then follow some chapters on how Saul became king and his reign. Saul is from the tribe of Benjamin and not from Judah, so he could never be the king promised in Genesis 49:10. The name Saul also means "asked for", and this pun shows that Saul was the "typical" king that the people wanted. God shows them other characteristics are more important, and that Saul does not measure up. He never understood his role as king and did not accept that God was the real king. He never really took either God or Samuel seriously. It became clear that Saul could not resemble the king.

David appears in 1 Sam 16 and was anointed king at that time. God's spirit passed from Saul to David quite early, but Saul clung to the throne for many years. David would not lay hands on one whom God has anointed, and he was on the run from Saul in the desert for possibly 10 years. This was how he learned perseverance and was waiting for God's timing. He did not until 2 Sam 5 become king. Finally, there are some chapters with episodes from David's life that chronologically were not the last to happen.

David was *"a man after God's own heart"* (1 Sam 16:14). He wasn't perfect, but he had a personal relationship with God, he was humble, and he asked for forgiveness when he made a mistake. He asked God for advice before making decisions and in difficult situations, and he prayed to God in gratitude. He recognized the prophets, and God as the real king. David became the greatest king Israel ever had, and the ideal king to whom all later kings of Judah are compared - and no one quite reached the top.

In 2 Sam 7:11-16, God promised David's kingdom would ill last forever (Heb 1:5) and that one of his descendants will always sit on the throne. The last and greatest Davidic king will have an eternal kingdom. The Messiah was therefore to come from David (Matthew 1:1).

David is mentioned over 1000 times in the Bible, making him the most mentioned earthly person (if we combine "Jesus" and "Christ", Jesus is mentioned more often). This is, among other reasons , because the prophets used "David" when they talked about the Messiah after David's time. After all, David points to Jesus because of the promise in 2 Sam 7.

### The "historical" books of the Bible

"History" is a recent Greek word. Biblical history writing is not modern history writing. The events are presented as if they happened, but the narratives in the Old Testament are "more than history". The interpretations are as important as the events themselves. Theology is more important than chronology. They are "preaching history".

### Author and dating

Samuel is not the author of the entire work because he died in chapter 25. It was common to name a writing after the opening or an early main character.

According to Jewish tradition, the authors are the prophet Samuel (wrote 1 Sam 1-24), Nathan (included in 2 Sam 7-12), and Gad (included from 1 Sam 22 to 2 Sam 24), probably based on 1 Chronicles 29:29: *"As for the events of King David’s reign, from beginning to end, they are written in the records of Samuel the seer, the records of Nathan the prophet and the records of Gad the seer".*

1 Sam 27:6: *"So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since."*  (Also 1 Sam 14:18, 17:52, 18:16, 2 Sam 2:9). Because it says, *"the kings of Judah"*, we feel that we are on the other side of the divided kingdom and that there have been at least two kings of Judah. In this case it is written after King Rehoboam (915 BC).

Judges 18:30: *“... until the time of the captivity of the land.”* - After 734 BC

It is possible that the prophets who experienced the events wrote down most of it. It was then later edited together with some additions. (Deuteronomy - 2 Kings is one long continuous story with many similarities.)

### The Tel Dan Stele

Found in 1993, dated to 841 BC. The first time *"the house of David"* is described outside the Bible:

*"...ram, son of ..., king of Israel, and ... killed ...yes son of ... of the house of David..."*

J(eh)oram and Ahaziah were both killed by Jehu in 841 BC.

*"The house of David"* is probably also mentioned in the Mesha stele (840 BC) and *"David's highlands"* possibly in Shishak's relief (925 BC).

### Two questions that 1-2 Samuel wants to answer:

1. How should the kingdom of Israel function?
2. Who should resemble the king?

### Structure

1 Sam 1-8 Israel under Samuel

1 Sam 9-12 Saul's way to the throne

1 Sam 13-15 Saul's reign

1 Sam 16 - 2 Sam 4 David's way to the throne

2 Sam 5-20 David's reign

2 Sam 21-24 Episodes from David's reign

### The Philistines

Originally a military upper class from Crete. Professional soldiers with technology to produce tools of iron (1 Sam 13:19-22).

*"Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, “Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!” So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plow points, mattocks, axes and sickles sharpened. The price was two-thirds of a shekel for sharpening plow points and mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads. So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them."* 1 Sam 13:19-22

The Philistines were already in the area in Isaac's time (Genesis 26) and appear in Judges 3, 10, and 13-16. In the 12th century BC more of them came, and they occupied the coast from Gaza to today's Tel Aviv. Would they have gained a foothold in the land if the people had been faithful to God in the age of the Judges?

## Hannah (1 Sam 1:1 - 2:11)

The sanctuary was in Shiloh (Josh 18:1)

Similarities with Rachel: Harassed by concubine, loved more by her husband, God heard and gave a child.

Hannah's song (2:1-10):

* *“he humbles and he exalts”* (v. 7) → Saul down, David up.
* *“He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed.”* (v. 10) → A king is coming. The word for *"anointed"* is the same as the word for *"messiah"*. All who are anointed in the Bible are messiahs. Here king and messiah are connected in parallel and have the same meaning. A king is coming. They have heard about this before. Already in the Book of Genesis, it was mentioned that some of Abraham and Jacob's descendants would become kings. In Genesis 49 it was mentioned that one of Judah's descendants would become king. In Numbers, Balaam spoke of a star rising from Jacob and a royal scepter, a ruler. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 gives instructions on how the king should behave when they would appoint a king.

## Contrast between Samuel and the corrupt priests (1 Sam 2:12-36)

**v. 11: “The boy ministered before the Lord under Eli the priest.”**

vv. 12-17: Priests who did not know the Lord *(“they had no regard for the Lord”* v. 12). "This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord’s sight, for they were treating the Lord’s offering with contempt." (vv. 17 and 29). They despised God (*“those who despise me will be disdained”* v. 30) and cursed the Lord *(“For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them.”* 3:13).

**vv. 18-21: Samuel served before the Lord and grew up with the Lord.**

vv. 22-25: The priests exploited the religion for their own gain. The people reacted (vv. 23-24), and Eli should have reacted more (v. 29). God wanted them to die (v. 25).

**v. 26: “And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with people.”**

vv. 27-35: God removed Eli's family from their service as priests.

**3.1: “The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli.”**

## Ch. 3

God began to speak to Samuel. Samuel grew up, and everything the Lord spoke to him was fulfilled. All the people from the north to the south understood that Samuel is a prophet of the Lord. What Samuel said went out to all of Israel.

## Ch. 4-6: The Ark of the Covenant is with the Philistines for 7 months.

4:3: *"When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, 'Why did the Lord bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord’s covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies.'"* Right question, but the wrong answer. The problem is sin, they must repent first, it is not only about getting the ark of the covenant.

4:10: First lost 4000, then 30,000 foot soldiers when they thought they were going to win. A judgment on the people and the priests and a fulfillment of chapter 3.

4:19-22: *"His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. As she was dying, the women attending her said, “Don’t despair; you have given birth to a son.” But she did not respond or pay any attention. She named the boy Ichabod, saying, “The Glory has departed from Israel”—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. She said, “The Glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured.”*

Commentary in Psalm 78:55-64

*“He drove out nations before them and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance; he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes. But they put God to the test and rebelled against the Most High; they did not keep his statutes. Like their ancestors they were disloyal and faithless, as unreliable as a faulty bow. They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols. When God heard them, he was furious; he rejected Israel completely. He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent he had set up among humans. He sent the ark of his might into captivity, his splendor into the hands of the enemy. He gave his people over to the sword; he was furious with his inheritance. Fire consumed their young men, and their young women had no wedding songs; their priests were put to the sword, and their widows could not weep.”* Psalm 78:55-64

Ch. 5: The Ark of the Covenant became like a "hot potato" and was passed on.

6:3, 6-7: Did the Philistines understand more than the Israelites?

*"They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”"* 6:3

*“Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel’s god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way? “Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up.”* 6:6-7

"Looked upon the ark" in verse 19 can also be translated as "looked into the ark". The latter provides a better understanding of why God reacted the way he did. Either way, a lack of respect.

6:19 ESV: *“And he struck some of the men of Beth-shemesh, because they looked upon the ark of the Lord.”*

6:19 NIV: *"But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the Lord."*

The people needed a strengthener (6:19-20).

*"But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy of them to death because they looked into the ark of the Lord. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the Lord had dealt them. And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, 'Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?'"* 6:19-20

The original readers would observe that the Ark of the Covenant moved towards Jerusalem (6:19 - 7:1).

## Ch. 7: The people repent.

v. 2: They called upon God. The cycle of Samuel’s judging continued.

vv. 3-6: Got rid of idols and confessed their sin.

v. 10: On that day God gave them a great victory against the Philistines. Commentary in Psalm 78:65-66.

*"Then the Lord awoke as from sleep, as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine. He beat back his enemies; he put them to everlasting shame."* Psalm 78:65-66

vv. 13-14: The Philistines were kept in check under Samuel, and the borders were expanded.

It is clear what was needed to overcome the enemies. As in the books of Moses, Joshua, and Judges, it is about following God wholeheartedly. They didn't need a king to keep the Philistines away.

Repentance is not just regretting something or being sorry for something we have done. It involves throwing away what caused us to sin and coming to terms with it. 1 Sam 7:3-6

*"Cheap grace is preaching forgiveness without repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession, forgiveness of sins without personal confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, alive and incarnate.”* Dietrich Bonhoeffer in "The Cost of Discipleship"

## Ch. 8: The people ask for a king.

Samuel's sons and the Ammonite king Nahash (12:12), as well as the Philistines (9:16), made them want a king like everyone else, even though the Law of Moses said they should be different from the others! They needed no king when they had God.

*"But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, ‘No, we want a king to rule over us’—even though the Lord your God was your king."* 12:12

*"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me."* 9:16

The judges were God's idea - the monarchy was the people's idea. Transition from theocracy to monarchy. It was not ideal, but God allowed it. If the king had followed the law, it wouldn't have looked very different.

## Deuteronomy 17:14-20: Regulations regarding the king.

*"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold. When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the Lord his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel."* Deuteronomy 17:14-20

## Why does God call it a *"forsaking me"* (8:8) and *"an evil thing"* (12:17)?

They deposed God as king. The system with judges required faith in God, they did not need a standing military defense. They trusted more in worldly security and what they could see than in God. In any case, the system was not the problem, but their own sin. It was because of sin that God allowed the enemies to attack.

## Do we want to be a little too much like everyone else?

It is often easier to trust in what we can see than in God. When do we become too concerned with worldly security at the expense of God?

*“Many modern Christians are so eager to be relevant to their culture that they adopt the world's way of thinking. Instead of becoming salt and light to the world, we often become like the world, and need light and salt ourselves.”* John Stott

How can we avoid becoming like everyone else?

## Saul - the first messiah. (1 Sam 9-15)

Exactly what the people wanted. Saul means *"asked for"* (8:10, 12:13).

*“Samuel told all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king.”* 8:10

*“Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the Lord has set a king over you.”* 12:13

In chapter 9, only the appearance is mentioned, nothing about the character.

From the tribe of Benjamin (put in a slightly bad light at the end of Judges, where there was war between Benjamin and the rest of Israel). Not the correct tribe for a king according to Genesis 49:10.

*“The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until he to whom it belongs shall come and the obedience of the nations shall be his.”* Genesis 49:10

God gave them Saul in response to their expectations, to show that there were other things that were more important.

## 1 Sam 10-12: 3 ceremonies

**1) 10:1-16: Samuel anoints Saul.**

In Rama, in secret. Not even Saul's servant knew about this (9:27), and Saul avoided telling his uncle (10:16). A "spiritual" appointment by God.

**2) 10:17-27: Saul is selected by lot.**

In Mizpah, so that the people would see that God was behind the election (10:18-19). Still not full support from the people (10:27). A more "political" appointment by God.

**3) Ch. 11-12: Saul is chosen as king because of his skills.**

In Gilgal, to confirm the king's power (11:14), probably because he now had wider support among the people (11:15). A "religious" affirmation of the people.

## Ch. 12: Samuel quits as judge.

Samuel was the last judge before they transitioned to kingship. The judges, represented by Samuel, were officially "acquitted" through Samuel's question and the people's confession in ch. 12:3-5. The conclusion was that the system with judges had worked well.

"Samuel said to them, “The Lord is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand.” “He is witness,” they said." 12:5

vv. 14-15: Obedience to the Law of Moses was still the most important thing. If they served God with all their hearts, it would go well with them (vv. 20-25). The position of Samuel changed because they now had a king, and from now on he would not lead the people, but act as a prophet (v. 23).

God is gracious and committed to his people. His love for them allowed the monarchy.

They had to be faithful to God first, then the king. When Saul and David were anointed, they were anointed rulers or princes, and the word "king" was not used. Thoughts were that it was God who was the king. "Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance?", says Samuel to Saul in 10:1. It was still God's people, even though Saul was king.

## Ch. 13

13:1: *"Saul was thirty[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-[b] two years.”*

[a] Hebrew does not have thirty. [b] Masoretic Text does not have forty-

Different Bible translations have different numbers in verse 1, where NIV has 30 and 42. If translated very literally, the text says, *“Saul was the son of year”*. The number is missing in the Hebrew text but is found in some Greek manuscripts. In Acts 13:21 Paul says, *"Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years."*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **a** | **b** |
| ERV | 30 | 2 |
| ESV/KJV | 1 | 2 |
| NIV | 30 | 42 |
| NAS | 40 | 32 |
| ASV | 40 | 2 |
| NAB/NRS | - | 2 |
| LXX | - | - |

Did Saul's reign start in Ch. 10 or Ch. 13?

Two Greek manuscripts (LXX) have 30.

Did the reign end in chapter 15 or chapter 31?

Josephus mentions 20 years in one place and 40 years in another place.

**Suggestion:**

*Retrieved from "A Biblical History of Israel" by Provan, Long & Longman*

Saul had been king for one year, from his anointing (Ch. 10) to his confirmation as king (Ch. 11), and then two years passed from Ch. 11 to the end of his legal reign in Ch. 15, although he clung to the throne for many years after that. Acts 13:21 refers to his actual reign until in 1 Sam 31.

Saul was at least 40 years old when his reign started. At that time Jonathan was a warrior, so he was at least 20 years old, and David was about 10 years old. David became king when he was 30, when Saul died, which gives 20 years to Saul's reign. (2 Sam 5:4-5, 2 Sam 2:10, 1 Sam 20:31, 1 Sam 14:49 and 1 Sam 31:2). The table below shows various estimates for Saul's reign. For the reigns of David and Solomon, the various sources are mostly in agreement, while there is greater uncertainty relating to Saul.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Kitchen | Merrill | Provan, Long & Longman |
| Saul | 1042-1010 | 1051-1011 | 1030-1010 |
| David | 1010-970 | 1011-971 | 1010-970 |
| Solomon | 970-931 | 971-931 | 970-930 |

## When do things go wrong for Saul?

*"'You have done a foolish thing,' 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."* (1 Sam 13:13)

But what commandment is this?

*"Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and poured it on Saul’s head and kissed him, saying, “Has not the Lord anointed you ruler over his inheritance? When you leave me today, you will* ***meet two men near Rachel’s tomb****, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, ‘The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, “What shall I do about my son?”’ “Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor.* ***Three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you*** *there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them. “After that* ***you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost****. As you approach the town,* ***you will meet a procession of prophets*** *coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying.* ***The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, 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. 'Go down ahead of me to Gilgal.*** *I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but* ***you must wait seven days until I come to you*** *and tell you what you are to do.'"* 1 Sam 10:1-8

Let's take a closer look at the highlighted quotes describing what Saul would experience:

1. *“you will meet two men near Rachel’s tomb, at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin.”* (10:2) Happened on the same day: *“all these signs were fulfilled that day.”* (10:9)
2. *"Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you there."* (10:3) Happened on the same day (10:9)
3. *“After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost.”* (10:5a) This happened in 10:10 *“When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah…”*
4. *“As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place”* (10:5b) Happened in 10:10 *“a procession of prophets met him”*
5. *“The Spirit of the Lord will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them”* (10:6) Occured in 10:10-12 *“the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying.”* (10:10)
6. *"Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you."* (10:7) = Attacked the Philistines! (13:3-4)
7. *"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."* (10:8) This would start a war. Go to Gilgal and waited for Samuel. (13:5-7)

## What commandment has Saul broken? (13:13)

The command Saul broke in 13:8 was given by Samuel in 10:8: *"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."* Samuel was to perform the sacrifices. Saul was to wait.

Saul apologized and tried to blame someone else (13:11-12). He believed victory did not depend on God himself but on the right sacrifices. By performing the sacrifices, himself, Saul went beyond his mandate as king. He broke with the nature of kingship. He did not see God as the real king who also determined the rules of the game. (9:15-16, 10:1)

## Ch. 15: Why did Saul lose his kingdom?

Saul was supposed to execute *"the judgment of God's wrath upon the Amalekites"* (28:18, 15:18, due to 15:2, 15:33, Deuteronomy 25:17-19).

*"Because you did not obey the Lord or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the Lord has done this to you today."* 28:18

*"And he sent you on a mission, saying, ‘Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war against them until you have wiped them out.’"* 15:18

*"This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt."* 15:2

*"Then Samuel said, “Bring me Agag king of the Amalekites.” Agag came to him in chains. And he thought, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.” But Samuel said, “As your sword has made women childless, so will your mother be childless among women.” And Samuel put Agag to death before the Lord at Gilgal."* 15:32-33

*"Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!"* Deuteronomy 25:17-19

v. 3 is a "war exaggeration" (due to 27:8, chapter 30).

*"Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys."* v. 3

Saul disobeyed God. (vv. 9 and 19)

*"But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs — everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed."* v. 9

*"Why did you not obey the Lord? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the Lord?"* v. 19

Saul demonstrated again that he did not have a complete grasp of how to relate to God, and of God's character. (v. 13, and 15)

*"When Samuel reached him, Saul said, 'The Lord bless you! I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.'"* v. 13

*"Saul answered, 'The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the Lord your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.'"* v. 15

He exalted himself (v. 12)

*"Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, 'Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honor and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.'"* v. 12

He apologized again and blamed the people (vv. 20-21). He called God "your God" (vv. 21, 30).

*"'But I did obey the Lord,' Saul said. 'I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.'"* vv. 20-21

It was never about the sacrifice. God would rather have obedience (vv. 11, 22-23).

*"'I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.' Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night."* v. 11

*"But Samuel replied: 'Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has rejected you as king.'"* vv. 22-23

Saul rejected God's word because he did not take it 100% seriously. Therefore, God rejected Saul as king. (vv. 23 and 26)

*"But Samuel said to him, 'I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you as king over Israel!'"* v. 26

Saul admitted he feared the people more than God. Therefore, he was not suitable as a king. (vv. 24 and 30)

*"Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them."* v. 24

He lost the dynasty in chapter 13, now the throne was taken from him by himself. (v. 26)

## Can God change his mind? (15:11, 29, 35)

*"'I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.' Samuel was angry, and he cried out to the Lord all that night."* v. 11

 *"He who is the Glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind; for he is not a human being, that he should change his mind."* v. 29

*"Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel."* v. 35

The same word ("*naham"*) is used in all three of these verses translated as *"regret"* or *"change his mind"*. This word can describe:

1. an emotional response of sorrow or pity (as in Judges 2:18).

*"Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the Lord relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them."*

1. to change one's mind (as in Numbers 23:19)

*"God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"*

In these three verses, the word is used in both senses. In verses 11 and 35, God was "sorry" that he had made Saul king. In verse 29, Saul tried to have the judgment reversed, but God does not change His mind after He has decided. Had God been like a man, then perhaps Saul would have been able to persuade him to have another chance. When it says God regrets, especially in the prophets, it is often about God changing his plan based on how the people responded. When the people repented, they were blessed instead of punished.

### Don't be a Saul!

* Obedience is our responsibility. The result is God's responsibility.
* It's not about your skills, it's about your obedience.
* If the vision came from God, then don't forget God.
* Don’t do yourself, what God will do. Don't think it's all up to you.
* Don't hold on to what isn't really yours.

## Ch. 16

Samuel anointed David as king.

The Spirit of the Lord came upon David and left Saul.

David went to Saul's court.

## Ch. 17: David the shepherd

3 things to learn from this story (retrieved from Peter J. Williams):

1. **Think of God's glory (vv. 26, 36, 45):** "Hallowed be thy name." David was willing to fight for this. What do we need to do for the glory of God?
2. **Trust God's revelation:** David knew he could win because he was going to be king and could not die. He knew it was his job to take the lead when leadership was missing. He relied on God's revelation, not on a feeling. What is God revealing to us that we should do?
3. **See things with God's eyes:** David looked at Goliath differently than everyone else. Everyone else looked at David and thought he would not make it. God looks at people differently than we do (16:7). We are impressed by VIPs. We rank people. Do not look at others with human eyes, but as God sees them.

### David → Jesus:

It is no coincidence that David was a shepherd, one who risked his life for the lambs (vv. 34-35). David was a good shepherd, but Jesus is even better. Jesus died for all the lambs. He is the Good Shepherd who gave his life for them (John 10:11). Good leaders think like a shepherd and like the Good Shepherd. They care about the little lambs. The first sign of a bad/dangerous leader is that he feeds himself instead of the lambs (Ezekiel 34) and doesn't care about individuals.

vv. 25-27,30. Is David's motivation divided? He seems to be very focused on the reward:

*"Now the Israelites had been saying, “Do you see how this man keeps coming out? He comes out to defy Israel. The king will give great wealth to the man who kills him. He will also give him his daughter in marriage and will exempt his family from taxes in Israel.” David asked the men standing near him, “What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?” They repeated to him what they had been saying and told him, “This is what will be done for the man who kills him…He then turned away to someone else and brought up the same matter, and the men answered him as before."* 1 Samuel 17:25-27, 30

## Ch. 18: Saul understood what was about to happen.

v. 8: The women sang of one who was "better than" Saul.

v. 9: Suspecting that David was the one to replace him.

v. 12 Became afraid (because God was with David).

v. 15 Even more scared because it was going well for David (= God was with him).

v. 29 Even more scared when he saw that God was with David and that Michal loved him.

## "An evil spirit from the Lord"

To emphasize this spirit came from God. God is anyway the one ultimately responsible for evil? (Isa 45:7, Am 3:6)

*“I form the light and create darkness, I bring prosperity and create disaster; I, the Lord, do all these things.”* Isa 45:7

*“When a trumpet sounds in a city, do not the people tremble? When disaster comes to a city, has not the Lord caused it?”* Am 3:6

16:14: The evil spirit led to David entering Saul's court and becoming Saul's armor bearer (v. 21).

18:10: Saul tried to kill David → David miraculously escaped because God was with him → Saul became afraid of David and sent him away → David was put in charge of 1,000 men → military success → popular among all the people.

19:9: Saul tried again to kill David → David finally escaped the country and became an outlaw for many years. Did he need to learn to trust God and be patient?

Could this have been God's way of making the next step in His plan happen?

## Some points from chapters 20-23.

20:31: Saul believed David was a threat to both himself and Jonathan as heir. He did not accept that he has lost the throne.

20:33: Saul tried to kill his own son?

21:1: Nob was at the Mount of Olives. A sanctuary after the destruction of the temple in Shiloh. Called *"the house of God"* in Mark 2:26. Had showbread, but the ark of the covenant was still with Abinadab in Kiriath Jearim (7:1-2).

21:11: The Philistines knew who the king really was, but Saul was the last to admit it.

22:8: Saul was getting paranoid. He said it was Jonathan who made David become his enemy.

22:13: Saul said Ahimelech conspired with David against him.

22:17-18: *"Then the king ordered the guards at his side: 'Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David.'"* Saul seemed to have gone mad, but this was predicted in chapter 2.

23:12: God also knew what would have happened.

23:16: David found strength in God. Was he frustrated?

23:17: Jonathan fully agreed David would become the next king, and not himself. The symbolic action for this is seen in 18:4 *“Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.”*

## David's historical psalms.

**Psalm Reference**

59 1 Sam 19:11

56 1 Sam 21:10

34 1 Sam 21:13

142 1 Sam 22:1

52 1 Sam 22:9

54 1 Sam 23:19

57 1 Sam 24:1

18 1 Sam 24:11-12

51 2 Sam 12:13-14

3 2 Sam 15:14-16

63 2 Sam 16:2

## 1. Sam 22 - 2. Sam 1

David had to learn to trust God and not take matters into his own hands, while he was on the run for perhaps 10 years as the anointed king. He had to learn important points when things didn't happen right away.

## Ch. 24-26: A “blood guilt sandwich.”

*Retrieved from* *Robert P. Gordon's “David’s Rise and Saul’s Demise: Narrative Analogy in 1 Samuel 24-26”*

Will David be able to assume the throne without incurring blood guilt?

Ch. 24: David spared Saul's life.

Ch. 25: David spared Nabal's life.

Ch. 26: David spared Saul's life.

* Ch. 25 has a function between the parallel stories in Ch. 24 and Ch. 26.
* All three times there is a theological reason why David did not take his own life.
* Maon and Carmel (25:2) provided associations with Saul (23:24-25, 15:12).
* Chapter 26 builds on chapter 24. The reason for the similarities is for us to see David's character development.

### Parallels between Nabal and Saul.

* Rich people
* 3000 men/sheep
* Refused to acknowledge David.
* They did not have a close relationship with their loved ones (Saul with Jonathan, Abigail with Nabal) (22:8, 25:17, 19).
* They called David "the son of Jesse".
* Nabal means *"fool"*, and Saul said he has *“acted like a fool”* (26:21).

## David's lesson.

Ch. 24. Pushed to kill Saul, cut off a flap of his cloak, regretted it afterward. Seemed a bit unsure of what would be the right thing to do.

Ch. 25. David intended to kill Nabal but was stopped by Abigail. David saw what it had led to and was grateful. God took Nabal’s life. Learned what would have happened if he had left it to God.

Ch. 26. David knew in advance he would not kill Saul. He was sure God would take care of Saul.

One can learn important things in "desert periods" when one may be frustrated and do not understand what God is doing. David learned to be patient and trust God, and not take God's matter into his own hands. Maybe God had to humble him before he became king, so he would not think too highly of himself. He learned to follow God and not exalt himself above God. Therefore, he became Israel's best king. Do you have any similar experiences?

## Samuel from the dead? (Ch. 28)

*“The Lord brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and raises up.”* (1 Sam. 2:6)

She screamed when she saw Samuel. Was she a cheater? Was it unusual for her to see the dead?

Nothing to suggest that this was not Samuel himself. He spoke exactly as Samuel did, using the name YHVH and making a true prophecy about the future.

1 Chron 10:13-14: *“Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.”*

*“up out of the earth”* (v. 13) and *“disturbed me by bringing me up”* (v. 15): From the grave (*"sheol"*).

## Ch. 28-30: Chronology vs. theology.

Chapters 28:4, 29:1 and 29:11 show that chapters 28 and 29 are not chronological. Why did the author choose to do this?

David went to Ziklag (30:1) approximately at the same time as the Philistines went to Jezreel / Shunem (28:4, 29:11). Saul then got scared and went to Endor (Ch. 28).

David's crisis (Ch. 30) took place approx. at the same time as Saul's crisis (Ch. 28). The chronology is not followed because the author wanted to bring out the contrast between Saul and David. How did they react to a deep crisis - at the same time?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Saul (ch. 28)** | **David (ch. 30)** |
| **Crisis**  | Afraid when he saw the army of the Philistines. *(“terror filled his heart” 28:5*)  | Tired, despairing, threatened to be stoned. |
| **Solution** | Seeking counsel from God, then counsel from a fortune teller/Samuel. | Seeking strength from God, perhaps before he sought counsel from God. |
| **The Amalekites** | Samuel mentioned Saul lost the throne because of them. | David completed God's judgment on them. |
| **Relationship with God?** | No. Searched for answers but no relation. Unable to figure out God's will anymore. | Yes. The relationship seemed to be more important than the answer. Was constantly seeking God's advice. |

## David → Jesus

1. David was tired, despairing and threatened with stoning → *"And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground."* (Luke 22:44)
2. David sought strength from God → Jesus prayed urgently (Luke 22:44)
3. David sought a relationship with God → Jesus made this relationship possible for everyone

## Where do you go when life is hard?

1. To the TV? To bed? To exercise? On shopping? Or do you just become indifferent?
2. Is faith a "crutch" (as for Saul) and you only pray when you need help? Or do you have a relationship with God (like David) and go to God in all situations, but not primarily for answers?
3. What do you do when you are not in the mood to pray?

David had prioritized his relationship with God all his life. "A man after God's heart" will seek a relationship with God's heart.

We see David doing this in many personal psalms about seeking strength from God. Perhaps he prayed something like Psalm 25:1 and 16, or 142:2-4a?

*"In you, Lord my God, I put my trust."* Psalm 25:1

*"Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'"* Psalm 16:1-2

*"I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. When my spirit grows faint within me, it is you who watch over my way."* Psalm 142:2-3

*"Pray without ceasing"* 1 Thess 5:17

*"In every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."* Phil 4:6

*"I can do all this through him who gives me strength."* Phil 4:13

*“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So, we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?”* Heb. 13:5-6a

## A summary of Saul

1 Chronicles 10:13-14 summarizes Saul's life as *"...unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, and did not inquire of the Lord."*

He never understood the nature of Israelite kingship and neglected both God and God's prophet. He never accepted that God was the real king. Later kings should not be like Saul.

The Philistines controlled a larger area at the end of his reign than at the beginning (31:7). He had not done his task as king (9:16). He also died in a war against the Philistines.

*"About this time tomorrow I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for their cry has reached me."* 9:16

It is easy to feel sorry for Saul. But we must trust the author who knows best and who has not included all the details.

1 Sam 1-8 Israel under Samuel.

1 Sam 9-12 Saul's way to the throne.

1 Sam 13-15 Saul's reign.

1 Sam 16-21 David in Israel

1 Sam 22 – 2 Sam 1 David as an outlaw in the desert.

2 Sam 2-4 David as king of Judah.

2 Sam 5-10 David as king over all Israel.

2 Sam 11-12 David and Bathsheba.

2 Sam 13-18 Absalom's rebellion / David in the desert.

2 Sam 19-20 David back in Jerusalem.

2 Sam 21-24 Episodes from David's reign.

## How did Saul die?

1 Sam 31:4-6: Took his own life.

2 Sam 1:8-10: Killed by an Amalekite.

2 Sam 21:12: Killed by the Philistines.

1 Chronicles 10:13-14: Killed by God.

Saul took his own life. Since it happened in a war against the Philistines, it could be said they killed him, but ultimately God was behind it. The Amalekite's story might have complemented the previous chapter but was most likely a lie because he thought David would reward him for it (4:10).

## 2. Sam 2-4

**Ch. 2:** David asked God for advice and cautiously approached the throne. The people of Judah came and anointed him king over Judah, with his seat in Hebron. Abner made Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king of the north. Prolonged war, but David was getting stronger (3:1).

**Ch. 3:** Abner gathered the rest of the land under David. Abner was killed, and David (and the author) made it clear he had nothing to do with it. David now had 7 wives and 6 sons.

**Ch. 4:** Something similar to chapter 1. Baanah and Rekab thought they would be rewarded for killing Saul's son Ish-Bosheth, but David killed them for killing an innocent man.

## Ch. 5: David becomes king over all of Israel and conquers Jerusalem.

David settled in the castle and called it the City of David. (5:9). He took even more wives (5:13).

## Ch. 6: The Ark of the Covenant is brought to Jerusalem.

1. Jerusalem as the new capital (5:6-9)
2. A royal palace (5:11)
3. The Philistines overcome (5:17-25)
4. The Ark of the Covenant retrieved (Ch. 6)

The last step in establishing a new and necessary center for the new kingdom.

David also needed a strengthener (vv. 8-9), like the people in 1 Sam 6:20.

*"When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God. Then David was angry because the Lord’s wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, 'How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?'"* 2. Sam 6:6-9

David danced before God in a linen garment (v. 14), Michal called this "naked" (v. 20) and thought David had lost honor among the people (v. 16, 20). David said he danced for God and did not care about his honor (v. 21-22).

*"David said to Michal, 'It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.'"* 2. Sam 6:21-22

This points to Jesus who humbled himself (Phil 2:8-9):

*"And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,"* Phil 2:8-9

*“Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.”* Luke 6:22-23

We must also be prepared to lose status and be humbled because we follow Jesus (Luke 6:22-23, Acts 5:41, Phil 2: 5, 1 Pet 4:13-16).

*"The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name."* Acts 5:41

*“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.”* Phil 2:5

*"But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name."* 1 Pet 4:13-16

## 2. Sam 7

2 Sam 7:1b: *"the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him,"*

Deuteronomy 12:9-11: *"since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the Lord your God is giving you. But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. Then to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the Lord."*

2 Sam 7:1-16 *"After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.” But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’”"*

David spoke of a concrete house, but God turned this around and spoke of a metaphorical house, a dynasty. God said David's line would have the kingdom forever. In Hebrew, "forever" does not necessarily mean without end, it can also mean very long (longer than anyone can see). To that extent, indeed, there will always be someone from David's line on the throne, because Jesus is of David's lineage and is king forever.

Timeless truth: God's grace is overwhelming. When we think of doing something for God, he gets ahead of us and does much greater things for us. We had no chance to go to him, but he came to us instead and saved us when we were *"dead in our trespasses"* (Eph 2:5).

## David's success (1. Sam 18 – 2. Sam 10)

*Retrieved from Peter J. Williams*

**God gives David a great kingdom.**

* He was promoted quickly (1 Sam 18:1-5).
* He was saved from Saul again and again (1 Sam 18-26).
* The rivals were removed (1 Sam 31 – 2 Sam 5).
* The Kingdom was established (2 Sam 6–10).

**Timeless truth (even if you're not David):**

* Success in God's kingdom comes by God's grace and according to God’s will. (1 Cor 3:5-7)
* Don't give yourself credit for your success.

**God gives David a great kingdom, although:**

A. David was an ordinary person

*"But David said to Saul, 'Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?'"* (1 Sam 18:18)

*"Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"* (2 Sam 7:18)

**Timeless truth (even if you're not David):**

When God chooses to use us, it is because we are ordinary people. Not because we are better than others, but perhaps because we are smaller, as Israel was smaller than all the other peoples (Deuteronomy 7:7).

Perhaps he chooses to use us precisely because of our weaknesses. (2 Corinthians 12:9)

Don't forget where we started.

**God gives David a great kingdom, although:**

B. David had opponents.

Military: Saul (1 Sam 31), Abner (2 Sam 3), Ish-Bosheth (2 Sam 2–4) and Hadadezer (2 Sam 8)

Tacticians: An Amalekite (2 Sam 1), Joab (2 Sam 3), Baanah & Rekab (2 Sam 4)

Mockers: Nabal (1 Sam 25), Michal (2 Sam 6) and Hanun (2 Sam 10)

**Timeless truth (even if you're not David):**

Don't be afraid of opposition. Resistance (internal or external) is not a sign that we are doing something wrong. Jesus had many opponents. David always had opponents, but God allowed his kingdom to grow despite this.

**God gives David a great kingdom, although:**

C. David would not attack the Lord's anointed, like we have seen, especially in the sandwich in chapters 24-26. David knew because Saul was anointed by God, he could not touch him.

**Timeless truth (even if you're not David):**

* Our job is not to succeed, but to be faithful and obedient.
* Don't try to bring God's kingdom on our way. Wait on God.

**God gives David a great kingdom, although:**

D. David falters.

1 Sam 27:1-2: After being saved time and time again from Saul (most recently in chapter 26), he nevertheless believed Saul would one day succeed in killing him. Therefore, he went over to the Philistines, the main enemy whom was the king's task to fight (9:16). David was saved by God's grace and did not have to fight against his people. (29:6-10)

**Timeless truth (even if you're not David):**

Don't find security in compromises.

The fact that God blesses what we do in his kingdom does not necessarily mean that we are doing the right thing. (Matthew 7:22-23) He never thinks sin is okay, even if your service doesn't suffer from it.

*"Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’"* Matthew 7:22-23

Don't think that when things go well, it's because we're doing things right. It is going well because of God's grace and despite our actions.

**Not:**

…give oneself credit for ones success.

…forget where we started.

…be afraid of opposition.

…try to bring the Kingdom of God on your way.

…find security in compromises.

…think when things go well, it's because we do things right.

## Ch. 11: The tragic turning point

v. 1: *“In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king’s men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.”*

*"One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home."* 11:2-4

Here is the same pattern as when Eve fell into sin Gen 3:6: saw - pleasing to the eye - took.

Honor/shame language throughout the narrative.

v. 1: David did not behave honorably as a king.

v. 2: Bathsheba bathed with light in the darkness, visible on a roof that she knew could be seen from the king's roof. Did she think he was away at war, or did she know he was at home?

v. 3: It is possible to translate this in such a way that the servant answers with a question (e.g., ESV): *“Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”* In this way, David could’ve answered "that's right" and both would’ve kept the honor. In that culture, it was a shame if the servant knew more than the king.

We in the West have a guilt/innocence culture. But David didn’t seem to have a guilty conscience, he was trying to keep his honor.

## David's plan A.

2 Sam 11:8-9: *"Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master’s servants and did not go down to his house."*

2 Sam 11:11*" Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!'"*

The gift was a bribe for Uriah to let David get away with it.

a) Uriah is unsuspecting.

b) Or he wants to humiliate David by pointing out:

1. everyone was where they were supposed to be (except David).
2. Joab led the army (not David).
3. he knew exactly what David wanted, but he wouldn’t cooperate. Joab mentioned *"make love to my wife"*, which has not been mentioned in the text before.

## David's plan B.

v. 13: *"At David’s invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master’s servants; he did not go home."*

## David's plan C.

vv. 14-15: *"In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, 'Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.'"*

2 Sam 11:25: *“David told the messenger, “Say this to Joab: ‘Don’t let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.’ Say this to encourage Joab.”*

*"But the thing David had done displeased the Lord."* 11:27

The Hebrew word translated as *"this"* in verse 25 is the same word translated as *"the thing"* in verse 27. It was common for a king to do this in those days, but here the narrator wanted to let us know this was evil in the eyes of the Lord.

No signs of a guilty conscience. His honor was intact, and he was satisfied. David might have thought "such things happen" about Uriah's death, and that it was his fault for not playing along.

*“The honor/shame aspect of David's culture determined his behavior. At every step he did what was typical of a king at that time in a situation like this.”* Richards & O'Brien

*"Sent"* is a repeated word in chapter 11. David had been influenced by the culture and became a king who sent and took. David had acted according to the cultural standards, but God was not satisfied. God held him to a higher moral standard.

## Ch. 12

v. 1: *“The Lord sent Nathan to David.”* Now it was God who "sent" to David. This happened at least 9 months later (11:27, 12:14). No sign that David had a guilty conscience. The culture had no way of addressing this issue. God used Nathan and shame to make David realize that.

vv. 9-10: *“Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.”.*

David had broken the law of God, if not the law of culture.

v. 13: No excuse followed, as with Saul.

*“Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'”* (v. 13)

Psalm 51 proves David's true repentance. 51:4: A sin against God, but not against the others and their culture.

*"Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge."* Psalm 51:4

v. 25: God "sent" one last time: *“because the Lord loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah [Jedidiah means loved by the Lord.].”*

## Ch. 11-12: David's sin.

He had gone from being a good shepherd who was willing to risk his life for the sheep, to becoming a "predator" who took the sheep from his neighbor.

What happened, and how did it happen?

1. Did he ignore the Law (Deuteronomy 17:14-17)?

*"When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” be sure to appoint over you a king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. 16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.” 17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold."* Deuteronomy 17:14-17

1. More than 7 wives + 10 concubines (1 Sam 25:39, 43–44; 2 Sam 3:2–5, 12–16; 5:13–15; 15:16). Is this many?
2. Are 100 horses “many”? (2 Sam 8:4)

2. Did he have some shared motivation in the beginning? (1 Sam 17:26) And then he couldn’t handle having so much power?

3. Has he allowed a little lying and trickery (1 Sam 21:2–5, 13; 27:8–12, 1 Sam 29:8) to develop into more?

*"David answered Ahimelek the priest, “The king sent me on a mission and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about the mission I am sending you on.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. "* 1 Sam 21:2

### Application

Matthew 5:29: *" If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away."*

*"Temptations are not primarily about individual choices, but about malformations that have occurred "under the radar" over time. We are deformed by values in society that violate the values of God's kingdom, without us noticing it."* James K. A. Smith

* Be aware of the weaknesses that can grow over time and cause great damage. Do not deliberately expose yourself to temptation. Don't be in the wrong place, like David was.
* God did great things through David despite this and can also work through us despite our weaknesses.
* Bathsheba's son Solomon became the next ancestor of Jesus. The result of this story is the salvation of all people.
* We must be careful not to mess things up, yet God's grace endures.

## 2. Sam 13-19: Out into the wilderness again.

*"Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own."* (2 Sam 12:10)

Ch. 13: Amnon raped Tamar. Absalom killed Amnon and fled.

Ch. 14: Absalom was allowed to return.

Ch. 15-17: Absalom got the people on his side and rebelled against David. David fled from Jerusalem. David was open to the fact that this could mean God had rejected him as king (15:25-26), probably because of chapters 11-12. He did not cling to the throne (as Saul did) and did not punish Shimei (nor in 19:23) but hoped God would turn the situation around (16:10-12).

Ch. 18: Absalom was killed and David mourned.

Ch. 19: David returned to Jerusalem.

## Ch. 21: Bloodguilt on Saul and his house

*“During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death.”…David asked the Gibeonites, “What shall I do for you? How shall I make atonement so that you will bless the Lord’s inheritance?”…“let seven of his male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the Lord at Gibeah of Saul—the Lord’s chosen one.”… After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.”* 21:1,3,6,14b

Drought/hunger was a covenant curse. Blood guilt means that someone has been innocently killed. Saul had broken the national covenant with the Gibeonites from Joshua 9; therefore this concerned the entire nation. Bloodguilt is defined in Numbers 35:33.*“Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.”* Numbers 35:33

The result was that David agreed with the Gibeonites to select seven of Saul's descendants for the Gibeonites to execute. This probably happened not long after Saul's death, and probably before ch. 9:1. It is probably what Shimei refers to in ch. 16:7-8.

In ch. 21:8 five sons of Adriel and Michal, Saul's daughter, were among those who were executed. In 1 Sam 18:19, LXX, and two Hebrew manuscripts it is written that Merab, another daughter of Saul, was married to Adriel. In 2 Sam 6:23, it says that Michal remained childless. Jewish tradition says that Mikal raised these five orphans after Merab died. Most others take it as a copying error.

**Interpretation 1: They were innocent in a culture of guilt, but not in a culture of shame.**

Honor/shame and collective thinking. This was the family's joint responsibility (*"Saul and his house"*). Made sense to those to whom it mattered.

**Interpretation 2: They were innocent, and they should not have been executed.**

David should have asked God instead of the Gibeonites (v. 2).

*"He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the Lord."* 2 Sam 21:9.

*"Before the Lord"* (v. 9) means before the sanctuary, not that God accepted it.

It took some time before the rain came (v. 10). This was not the solution God wanted.

The problem was not resolved until David gave Saul and Jonathan an honorable burial (v. 14).

**Interpretation 3: They had been involved.**

Saul did not do this alone, and the bloodguilt was upon *"Saul and his house"*.

*"Saul and his house"* are used as a unit in v. 4 since Saul is dead.

If they were innocent, David violated Deuteronomy 24:16 *“Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin.”*.

This also fulfills *"the blood of him that shed blood"* in Numbers 35:33.

*“Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.”* Numbers 35:33

## Ch. 22: David's song of praise.

How could David have said he kept all God's laws? (vv. 21-24)

A. This may have been written earlier in his life (due to v. 1), and thus before 2 Sam 11. Sounds like a king in vv. 44-45, so perhaps early in his reign. In that case, it reflects more on his life until then.

B. In any case, he did not claim to be sinless in Psalm 51. He must have meant it in general, as an expression of an attitude or way of life.

C. He could refer to himself as "clean" because he was forgiven.

## Ch. 21-24: Epilogue (a conclusion)

(How can David be a man after God's own heart after all he has done?)

1. David inherited problems and made them himself.
2. He gained victory with the help of many others.
3. His strength and joy were in God, whom he praised because all he was and all he had achieved was because of God.

A. God's wrath against Israel (21:1-14) (narrative).

B. David's heroes (21:15-22) (list).

C. David's song of praise (Ch. 22) (song).

C. David's last words (23:1-7) (song).

B. David's heroes (23:8-39) (list).

A. God's wrath against Israel (24:1-25) (narrative)

These stories had to be included to give a complete picture of David.

David's dependence on God is not so evident in the latter part of the story. It is only mentioned in 15:31 that he prayed. Would the author focus on David's relationship with God to balance the picture and conclude positively?

Despite David's faults, he continued to please God.

## David's relationship with God.

Often asked God for advice when making decisions (1 Sam 22:10, 15, 23:2, 23:4, 30:8, 2 Sam 2:1, 5:19, 23, 21:1).

* *“Ahimelek inquired of the Lord for him”* 1 Sam 22:10.
* *"Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not!"* 1 Sam 22:15.
* *"He inquired of the Lord, saying, 'Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” The Lord answered him, “Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.'"* 1 Sam 23:2.
* *"Once again David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him, 'Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand.'"* 1 Sam 23:4.
* *"And David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?' 'Pursue them,' he answered. 'You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.'"* 1 Sam 30:8.
* *"In the course of time, David inquired of the Lord. 'Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?' he asked. The Lord said, 'Go up.' David asked, 'Where shall I go?' 'To Hebron,' the Lord answered."* 2 Sam 2:1.
* *"So David inquired of the Lord, 'Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?' The Lord answered him, 'Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands.'"* 2 Sam 5:19.
* *"So David inquired of the Lord, and he answered, 'Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees."* 2 Sam 5:23.
* *"During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the Lord."* 2 Sam 21:1.
* Praying to God in difficult situations (1 Sam 30:6, 2 Sam 12:16, 12:20, 15:31, 24:10 + the Psalms).
* Praying to God in gratitude (2 Sam 7:18-29, 2 Sam 22 + the psalms).
* Had greater faith in God's mercy than in man's (2 Sam 24:14).
* He always recognized God as the real king.
* He listened to the prophets, not seeing them as competitors as Saul did. He set their words high.
* It was this relationship, his humility and his whole-hearted conversion that made him "a man after God's own heart".

## 10 signs of a bad leader (from Ezekiel 34:1-6).

*Retrieved from Ed Taylor*

1. SELF-CENTERED - shepherds himself. Does not care about the needs of others.
2. USES HUMANS - eats the fat and dresses himself. Exploiting others.
3. TAKES THE BEST - Slaughter the best animals, don't herd the sheep.
4. IGNORES NEED - Does not empower the weak.
5. IGNORES SUFFERING - Does not heal the sick.
6. LOOKING AWAY FROM PAIN - Does not connect the injured.
7. DON'T CARE - Does not bring back the displaced.
8. REFUSES TO HELP - Does not look for the lost.
9. HARD/ANGRY - Rule by force and coercion.
10. CARELESS - Allows the sheep to be scattered.

## A good leader must resemble the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-30).

1. KNOWS THEM BY NAME AND IS KNOWN BY THEM (vv. 3-5, 14).
2. LEADS THEM (vv. 4, 27).
3. GIVES HIS LIFE FOR THEM (v. 11).
4. IS MOTIVATED BY THE SHEEP AND NOT BY MONEY (v. 12).
5. STAYS WITH THEM AND KEEP THE FLOCK TOGETHER (v. 12).
6. CARES FOR THEM (v. 13).
7. GIVES THEM SECURITY AND PROTECTION (v. 28).

*"The healthy spiritual leaders bind you to Christ and not to themselves. You breathe easily and freely in their presence. You know that they want you well, without being intrusive. They see you and confirm your value, but still preserve a distance. Even after being with them over time, you understand that they are not driven by hidden agendas or looking to use you for their own purposes. They are often clear about what they want and mean, but do not try to manipulate you if you disagree. They may have a clear vision and a high sense of calling, but they don't need you to flatter them or dance around their service like a golden calf. They're not trying to make you a blueprint of themselves but want you to flourish in your own way. All in all, they convey that your human and spiritual growth is basically God's business, not theirs. The basic tone they set is that life and service are under a higher authority, and we can rest in that."* Geir Otto Holmås (the quote has been translated).