

David, the achievements

David as a King.

2 Samuel records the next period in the life of David, a history of his forty-year rule as a king of the tribe of Judah from Hebron and then all of Israel from Jerusalem. We learn of his abilities, his strengths and his failures. Chapters 1 to 10 cover the period that he was king over Judah. His concern for the religious side of the nation shows in chapters 6 and 7 where he is concerned about the Ark and the house of the Lord. David successfully conquered the surrounding nations as recorded in chapter 8.

1 Chronicles 11 to 19 is a parallel record of 2 Samuel 1 to 10.

David hears of the death of Saul.

[1 Samuel 31:1-13.](#)

Israel and the Philistines met in battle on Mount Gilboa, a 1696 foot hill in the valley of Jezreel. The battle turned against the Israelites and many of the Israelite fighters fled the battlefield but were still slaughtered by the Philistines. As given by Samuel's posthumous prophecy, [1 Samuel 28:19](#), The sons of Saul, Jonathan, Abinadab and Melchishua were killed. Meanwhile Saul was badly injured by an arrow, not wanting to suffer at the hands of the Philistines he ordered his armour bearer to kill him, who refused to do it, Saul therefore fell on his own sword. The armour bearer then took his own life. Saul himself has fulfilled the prophecy and opened the way for God to move his choice into the position of king.

Following the battle many Israelites from the North fled their cities for safety, allowing the Philistines to occupy these cities, [1 Samuel 31:7](#).

The bodies of Saul and his sons were taken to Beth-shan to be put on public display, a sign of dishonour, the bodies appeared to have been hung on a wall in the open square of Beth-shan, [2 Samuel 21:12](#). The head of Saul was being used as a trophy in the temple of Dagon, [1 Chronicles 10:10](#), and his weapons in a temple of Ashtoreth.

The men of Jabesh-gilead learned of the dishonour of Saul and his sons and recovered the bodies at great personal risk, then cremated the bodies and buried the remains under a tamarisk tree in Jabesh. Cremation was not the normal procedure by Hebrews, unless the person was a serious criminal. It was possible that the bodies had been mutilated by the Philistines, hence the cremation. The people had a period of fasting and public mourning for the king.

The life of Saul showed he was a good military leader but his life ended because he refused to seek God and repent of his self-will, disobedience and bad heart. Resisting the Holy Spirit is a serious act of sin, [James 1:15](#) tells us that this will bring death.

Saul, who was the choice of the people, had departed, in ruin and shame. The hope of Israel would now be upon a new king, *"a man after God's own heart,"* David the son of Jesse.

David moves to Hebron

[2 Samuel 2:1-7.](#)

David asked the Lord what to do, and he is instructed to take his men and families into Judah, to move into Hebron, a city about twenty miles south of Jerusalem and about eighteen miles north east of Ziklag, his present home.

The leadership of Judah immediately recognized the abilities of David and anointed him king over Judah. The men of Judah then told him of the action of the men of Jabesh-gilead how they have recovered the bodies of king Saul and buried it. David promised that their good deed will be recognized. David claimed to be the heir to the position of king and asked for their support, v7. He is to reign for seven years from Hebron.

Ish-bosheth is appointed as king of Israel.

[2 Samuel 2:8-11.](#)

Following the death of Saul, Abner, the commander of the army of Saul, made a personal decision and anointed Ish-bosheth, the youngest son of Saul, as king over Israel. Ish-bosheth took up the position as king from Mahanaim, just to the north of the river Jabbok, the Bible records that he reigned for two years, covering the northern Israel while David was king of Judah in the south and reigned for over seven years. This possible difference may be that Ish-bosheth did not actually take on the position of king immediately

after the death of Saul, he may have spent the time attacking the Philistines, to recover the land lost during the war, hence the action by Abner.

Judah and Israel fight.

[2 Samuel 2:12-32.](#)

Abner was the commander of the armies of the northern tribes while Joab commanded the armies of Judah. One day they meet at the pool of Gibeon, located seven miles northwest of Jerusalem, where it was proposed by Abner a contest between their champions. Twelve men from each side were "*play before us.*" This seems to be a "war game" but no other record of it exists. All twenty four men died in the "game," this resulted in a battle between the two armies, Abner was defeated.

Three men of Judah, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, three sons of Zeruiah, pursued Abner, Asahel is a fast runner and caught up with Abner, who wanted no further bloodshed, told him to turn aside, unfortunately Asahel ignored the instruction so "Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib," The hinder end of the spear was not the normal fighting point and should have been quite blunt, but this end of the spear had been sharpened so that it could be stuck into the ground, so entered the body of Asahel, who died. See [The life of Saul is again spared.](#)

Abner called for a truce, a ceasing of the fighting, and the two armies returned to their own area. A count of the dead and missing soldiers indicate that Joab had a victory in the battles, [2 Samuel 2:25-32.](#) If Abner had not issued the challenge at the pool of Gibeon, none of this loss of life would have happened.

Family problems on both sides.

[2 Samuel 3:1-11.](#) The chapter starts with a list of the male children, born of his six wives, to David while in Hebron. Consider the instruction by God, [Deuteronomy 17:17.](#) Marriage between foreign powers was a regular situation, to confirm treaties between the states concerned. This type of marriage was forbidden by the Mosaic law, [Deuteronomy 7:3,4;](#) [Deuteronomy 17:17](#) and also covenants with a foreign nation was also forbidden, [Exodus 23:32,33;](#) [Exodus 34:11-14;](#) [Deuteronomy 7:2.](#) The marriage to the daughter of Talmi, king of Geshur was probably against Israel as the nation is north of the Ish-bosheth's kingdom.

Abner considers defection to David.

[2 Samuel 3:7-39.](#)

Ish-bosheth accused Abner of a relationship with one of Saul's concubine, a concubine was a slave woman owned by the master and could produce an heir for him, so having a sexual relationship was a serious offence. Abner does not appear to deny the relationship but highlights his support for Ish-bosheth as king, he was not planning a takeover. This accusation by Ishbosheth makes Abner consider joining Israel with Judah, so Abner makes contact with David and started negotiation. [2 Samuel 3:2-11](#) shows that Abner was really the power behind the throne in Israel.

Abner starts the Defection to David.

Before any negotiations David insists that his wife, Michal, [1 Samuel 18:27,](#) who had been given to another man by Saul, [1 Samuel 25:44,](#) be returned to him. Abner immediately agreed and Michal was returned to David, despite the protests by the other man, [2 Samuel 3:14-16.](#) This now allowed David to re-establish contact with the family of Saul, this would make it easier to declare David the next king in Israel.

Abner now approaches the elders of Israel, as a start of the negotiations, [2 Samuel 3:17-18.](#) Abner then goes to David at Hebron to report the result where David arranged an official state meal for Abner and some of his men. Later, after Abner had left in peace, Joab returns and finds out about the negotiations and accused Abner of betrayal and disloyalty against David, [2 Samuel 3:25.](#) Joab decided to deal with the situation, unknown to David, Joab sends messengers to Abner, calling him back to Hebron, then Joab, assisted by Abishai, v30, kills Abner as he enters the city gate, [2 Samuel 3:26,27.](#) The writer seems to indicate that the killing was in return for the death of Asahel, [2 Samuel 2:18-23,](#) but Hebron was a city of refuge, [Joshua 20:7,](#) this action was against the law, [Numbers 35:10-28.](#) There may also have been a political reason, Joab and Abner were both commanders of their respective armies, Joab would not want a competing leader. On hearing of the killing, David quickly recognized the wrong and denied any responsibility, [2 Samuel 3:28.](#) David announced a curse on Joab and his family but failed to punish Joab for his action. David make a public mourning for the death of Abner as a sign to the Northern kingdom it was not by his authority, [2 Samuel 3:37.](#)

The Death of Ish-bosheth.

[2 Samuel 4:1-12.](#)

Ish-bosheth hears of the death of Abner and lost confidence, shown by the words "his hands were feeble," so do the people of Israel. It was not long before two commanders from the army, Rechab and Baanah, took the situation in hand and killed Ish-bosheth while he was resting, they pretended to be wheat carriers to enter the home, they then stabbed him and then cut off his head, they then took the head to David expecting to be rewarded but David calls Ish-bosheth a "righteous man" because he was not guilty of any crime and so the action by the two men was a crime of murder and they received their punishment. The mutilation of the bodies of the two men was a public denouncement of their evil action.

It is obvious that God had permitted the two evil men to carry out the murder so that His plan for David could take the next step, for David to become the king over all Israel.

Mephibosheth.

[2 Samuel 4:4.](#)

We had a brief mention that *"Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son that was lame of his feet."* Mephibosheth was five years old when the nurse dropped him as she fled after the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan at Jezreel. (His name was originally Merib-baal meaning *"Baal strives"* but this was changed to Mephibosheth, meaning *"he scatters shame."* to avoid the Baal idol association.

David is king of Israel.

[2 Samuel 5:1 to 2 Samuel 10:19.](#)

David now rules the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah for the next thirty-three years from Jerusalem. During this time he brings the Ark to Jerusalem, plans to build the Temple, and expands the kingdom in all directions by conquest and alliances, *"And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him,"* [2 Samuel 5:10.](#)

God is carrying out His plan.

[2 Samuel 5:1-4.](#)

The Leaders of Israel approach David at Hebron to become their king, they have realized that this was the desire of God, v2.

Jerusalem becomes the capital.

[2 Samuel 5:6-9.](#)

Jerusalem was occupied by the Jebusite, see [Genesis 10:16-18](#), originally of Canaanite descent. The Jebusite's were so convinced that no one could capture the city that they announced that the those who are blind and lame could protect it. David and his men entered through the water supply tunnel which went under the wall, Jerusalem became the capital city for the nation of Jews. Jerusalem was also to become called the *"city of David,"* [1 Chronicles 11:5-7.](#)

David the king is recognized internationally.

[2 Samuel 5:11-25.](#)

Some nations were pleased with David becoming king, others wanted to destroy David and the Jews. Hiram, the king of Tyre, arranged negotiations, he saw an economic linkup, see [1 Kings 5:1-11.](#) King of Tyre also sent experts to build David a fine house.

Unfortunately the Philistines objected to David, their previous vassal, being king and made a move to attack. David turned to the Lord for guidance and was told to attack, "I will deliver them to you." The Philistines were so defeated that they even left their victory idols behind and became trophies for the Jews. The Philistines were not easily put off by the loss and again moved up the valley of Rephaim towards Jerusalem. The Lord instructs David to attack from behind. They are to hid in the amongst the Balsam trees and when they hear the sound of footsteps in the top of the trees as a sign from God they are to attack with God leading the way. The Israelites won a great victory with the help of God and drove the Philistines out of the area, and were much subdued.

David and his wives.

[2 Samuel 5:13-16.](#)

David increases his wives and concubines, a direct disobedience of the Law of God, [Deuteronomy 17:17](#), some of these wives and concubines had connection to international treaties and agreements with the local nations, sealed by marriage to daughters from the nations leadership. This culture remained with David's son Solomon when he became king.

The Ark of the Covenant is brought to Jerusalem.

[2 Samuel 6:1-23](#); [1 Chronicle 15:1-29](#).

David had a great desire to worship God throughout his life so now turns his attention to the location of the Ark. The Ark had remained in the house of Abinadab that was in Gibeah, Saul had totally ignored the Ark during his reign.

David takes thirty thousand specially chosen men to escort the Ark to Jerusalem. Unfortunately two violations of the Lord's instructions concerning the Ark were broken. David arranged for the Ark to be transported on an oxen cart, this broke the instruction of [Exodus 25:14,15](#); [Numbers 3:29-31](#) and [Numbers 7:9](#), record that the Ark was to only be *carried* by the sons of Kohath, not on a vehicle of any sort, this action was a copy of the Philistine method of moving their idols on carts, compare [1 Samuel 6:7,8](#).

The second violation was when Uzzah reached out to support the Ark when the ox cart became unstable, a direct violation of [Numbers 4:15](#), this violation of the Ark's holiness caused the death of Uzzah. David was petrified by this action by God, not angry of God but for his failure to carry out the instruction correctly, a warning to all Believers that His Law cannot be broken under any conditions. As a result the people were too scared to move the Ark any further and it now remained in the house of Obed-edom.

The second attempt to move the Ark to Jerusalem.

[2 Samuel 6:12-23](#).

The second attempt to take the Ark to Jerusalem was done according to the instructions in the law, David was very excited and full of joy at the move of the Ark, David, dressed in a linen ephod, as used by the levite priests when officiating at the altar, [1 Samuel 2:18, 28](#), danced before the ark as it moved towards Jerusalem, [2 Samuel 6:14](#), he was literally "spinning round." David was not actually a priest, compare [Zechariah 6:12,13](#). [Christ the king and priest](#).

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

Watching David was Michal, his wife, she appears to have contempt for his behaviour, he was the king, v20. The mention that he was "uncovered" was probably referring to the priests clothes he was wearing. Later David responded with a rebuke for her, he was willing to humble himself before the Lord who chose me to be king. [1 Samuel 6:23](#) indicates that David ceased to have a marriage relationship with Michal as punishment, this act also prevented there being a successor to the throne from the family of Saul, according to the Lord's will, v21.

The Lord's covenant with David.

[2 Samuel 7:1-29](#).

God sends a message to Nathan the prophet for David, who now felt that he should build a temple for God. This was not as planned by God who now told David that he would build him a "house" or a dynasty, a line of family rulers, v11.

There are reasons for the rejection of a David building the "house" or temple for God.

- 1) God had not requested it, since Exodus He has resided in a tent for His temple at His request.
- 2) One day God will request a temple to be built it will not be by David because he was a man of war and had shed blood, [1 Chronicles 22:8](#); [1 Chronicles 28:3](#).

The Lord showed David his plan and future for him as He blessed David, these promises are based upon the promises given to Abraham, [Genesis 12:1-3](#), a nation, a land and the blessings of God. Eventually the temple would be built by the son of David, Solomon, a man of peace.

The Davidic Covenant.

[2 Samuel 7:12-16](#).

The Davidic covenant consists of five promises:-

1. v12. David will have a son and through him God will establish the kingdom.
2. v13. David's son (Solomon) will build the temple instead of David.
3. v13. The throne of Solomon's kingdom will be established as a permanent throne for all time.

4. v14,15. Though Solomon will sin, commit iniquity, the right to the throne of David will never be taken away.

5. v16. The house / line and throne of David will be forever, a royal line with the right to the kingdom. Please note that the promise did not say that the rule by the line of David would not be interrupted, for example it happened when Judah was taken by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, [2 Kings 25:1ff](#). This was eventually fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ who is promised an eternal kingdom, [Luke 1:32,33](#). The final installation of this kingdom will not occur until the second coming of Christ. As a result of these promises to David by God there are five resulting prophecies:-

1. Israel cannot be destroyed as a nation.

Compare [Jeremiah 31:27-37](#).

2. Whatever the future held, Israel must be in their land, or brought back to it if not there. The nation was returned to the land in 1948.

Compare [Deuteronomy 30:1-5](#).

3. The kingdom must be eventually ruled by a son of David, Jesus the Messiah, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS,

4. There must be an earthly Jewish kingdom for Christ to rule over.

[Rev 19:16](#).

5. This kingdom must be eternal, as the promise has no conditions, therefore these promises must be fulfilled.

On hearing this promise David goes in prayer to the Lord, David had great joy at these promises, he glorified God, then said how great He is and that God will be glorified and magnified forever. David has some concern in v29 that his descendent's will be faithful to the situation and the status they have.

David the Conqueror

[2 Samuel 8:1-18](#).

The kingdom of Israel under David now expands, the major enemies are defeated or subdued, the kingdom prospers under the hand of the Lord, v6, *"And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."*; The Philistines were quickly defeated, [1 Chronicles 18:1](#), taking Gath and surrounding towns. The Moabites were next, he required a tribute payment to acknowledge the victory, this seems a change from [1 Samuel 22:3,4](#).

It is not clear what was happening in v2, what the reason was for the choice and what actually happened. Did he kill those who were above a certain height or age as they lay on the ground, the "two line"? Or perhaps there were three lines of soldiers and two was executed, sparing the third row, we are not told why and what happened.

David now looked north, King Hadadezer of Zobah, a town north of Damascus in Syria was next, he won many horse drawn chariots and also gold, many of the chariot horses were later hamstrung, back leg tendons damaged, to prevent use in war.

King Toi of Hamath was pleased to hear of the defeat of Hadadezer, they had been at war, so he sent gifts to David, indicating that he had submitted to the rule of David. All the gifts and rewards from the fighting David dedicated to the Lord in thanks.

David's battles now move to the South where he crushes the Edomites, the descendants of Esau, *"throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the people of Edom became David's servants."* *"And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went."*

As a result of David's conquests the nation of Israel now covers The Gulf of Aqaba and the River of Egypt up to the Euphrates river, as promised to Abraham in [Genesis 15:18](#). Was the promise to Abraham fulfilled? No the conquered nations were slaves of Israel, the land was not personally possessed or owned by Israel, the promise God had made was off a permanent possession of the land, [Genesis 13:14-17](#), it has still to be fulfilled.

Mephibosheth and David.

[2 Samuel 9:1-13](#).

David now showed his love and the covenant with Jonathan, [1 Samuel 20:42](#); [1 Samuel 23:18](#), David looks for any descendent's of Jonathan, he learns from an old servant of Saul, Ziba, of a crippled son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who lived in Lo-debar, which is believed to be 10 miles south of the Sea of Galilee. David at once sent for Mephibosheth to come to Jerusalem.

When Mephibosheth arrived he was terrified for his life. "*A dead dog as I am?*" has the meaning of being useless, he did not deserve anything but David only wants to take care of him, David was showing grace as Mephibosheth could never repay the gifts by David.