
















15 studies on the book of 2 Samuel

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Samuel is a story-book and story-books are meant for reading. A good story-book might be challenging or comforting, exciting or calming, sad or happy, but it is always readable. The books of Samuel are no exception to this rule. They were written not as academic text-books suitable only as examination material for scholars, but as story-books for ordinary people, telling the life-history of Israel. They are a very palatable way for believers to understand what it means to be a believer, Israelites what it means to be an Israelite and kings what it means to be a king.

From The Message of Samuel p 14 by Mary J. Evans.

Notes

In preparing these studies I've used the following sources: The Message of Samuel by Mary J. Evans, New Bible Commentary 3rd edition, New Bible Dictionary 3rd edition, Lion Handbook to the Bible Second Revised Edition, the Bible study booklet 2 Samuel the king we all need by Kerry Nagel and various websites: www.aboutbibleprophecy.com , <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/ark.html> , <http://biblehub.com>.

Study 1, Introduction to the Old Testament

The book of 2 Samuel is in the Old Testament. To refresh our thinking on the Old Testament I thought it would be fun to read some quotes and listen to some sound bites. Your job is to say where the quote is from and its context in the Bible. Some of these are easy and some are quite hard. See how you go.



1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Where? Gen 1:1

Context? creation

2. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."

Where? John 1:1

Context? Jesus is there at creation. John begins his gospel with Jesus in creation.

God created the universe and mankind. Adam & Eve sinned and got kicked out of the Garden of Eden. They had 2 sons, Cain & Abel, but Cain killed Abel and got banished. Adam & Eve had another son, Seth.

The population increased and sin increased until God decided to start again with Noah and his family. So we had the Flood and Noah and his family begin again.

The population increased again and some people decided to make a name for themselves by building the Tower of Babel. God wasn't happy about this so he confused their language and scattered them across the earth.

3. "The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

Where? Gen 12:1-3

Context? God chose Abram to become a great nation and promised to lead him to the Promised Land.

4. Play Highway61Short.mp3

Translation: God said to Abraham "Kill me a son."
Abe said "Man, you must be putting me on."
God said "No."
Abe said "What?"

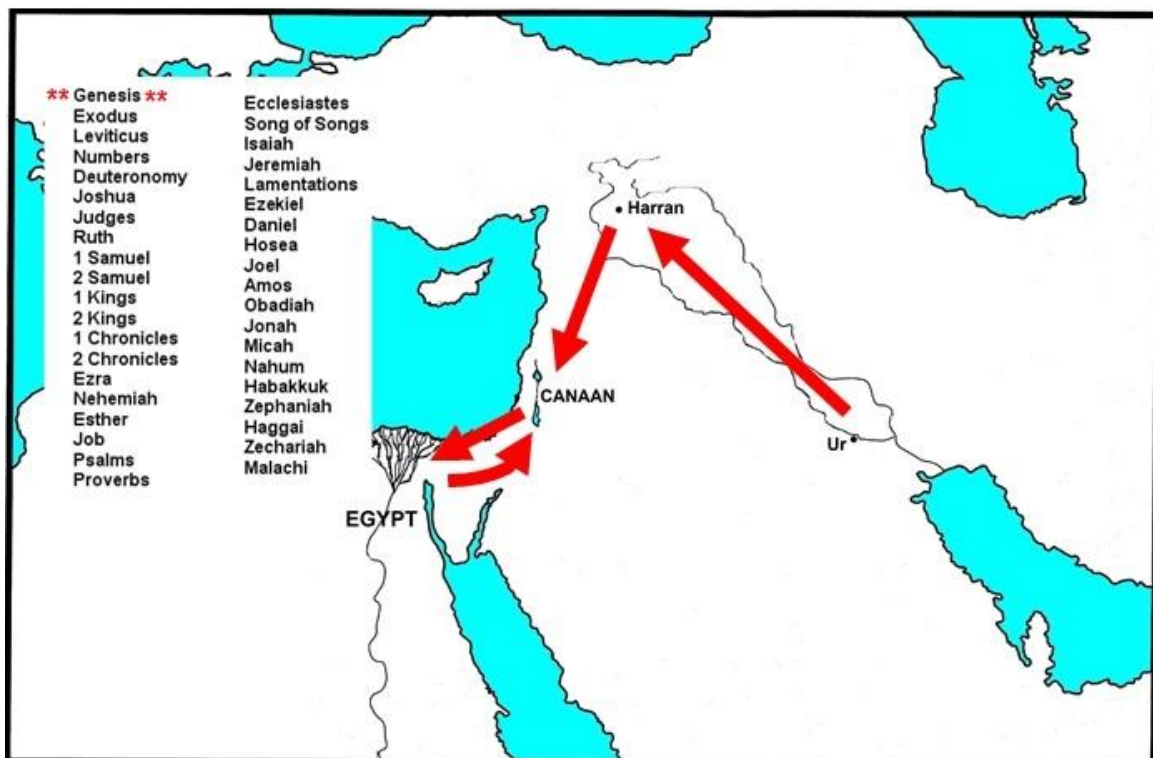
God said "You can do what you want to but, the next time you see me coming you better run."
Well Abe said "Where do you want this killing done?"
God said "Out on Highway 61."

Bible:	Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you."
Where?	Gen 22:1-2
Context?	Bible: Abraham & Sarah finally had a son in their old age but God told Abraham to sacrifice his son as a test of Abraham's faith. In the nick of time God stops Abraham. Bob Dylan: You can get away with anything in America, out on Highway 61.

Beginning at roughly 1900 BC, God called Abraham to be a father of a great nation (Gen 12). Genesis relates the story of his travels from Ur and eventual settling in the Promised Land, Canaan. Isaac married Rebekah and they had twins, Jacob & Esau. Jacob had 12 sons, The favourite of Jacob is called Joseph. His brothers resented Joseph and put him in a pit then they thought about killing him then decided to sell him to people who took him to Egypt. Eventually the whole family ended up in Egypt because of a famine in Canaan.

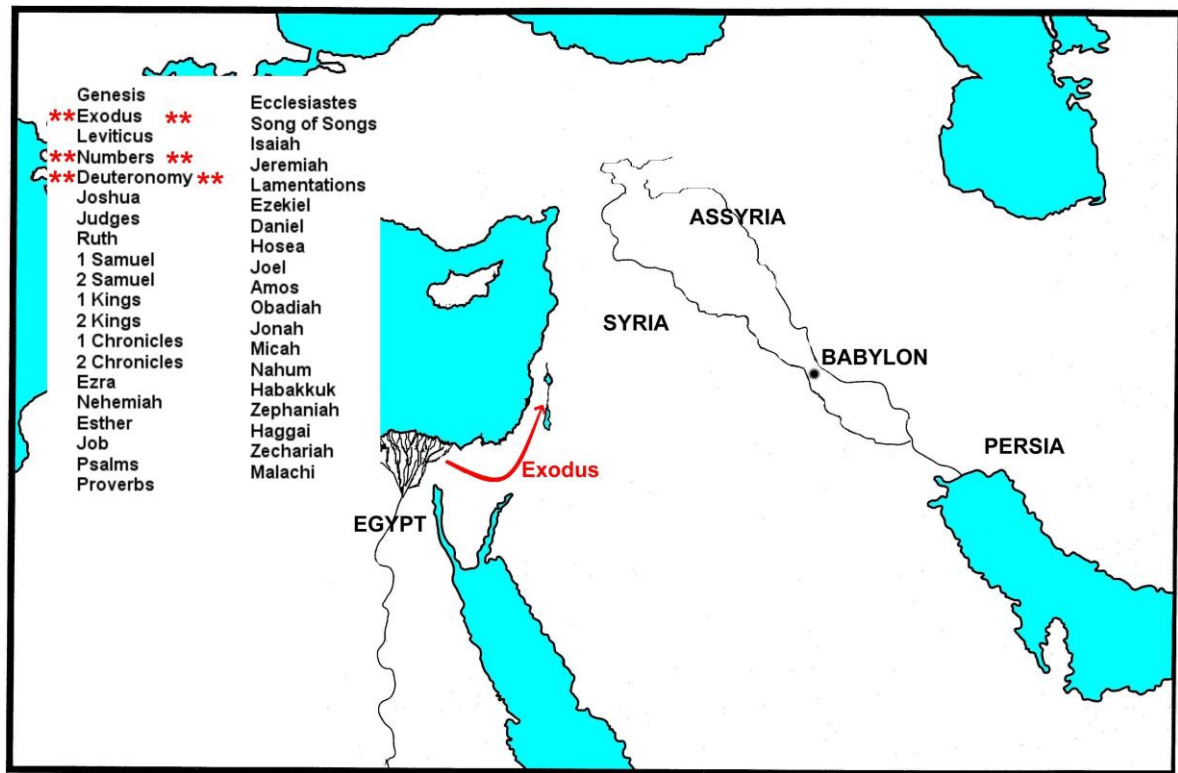
5. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Where?	Gen 50:20
Context?	Joseph rose to be the second most powerful man in Egypt after Pharaoh. He saved his family from the famine even though his brothers had meant to harm him.



Famine forced God's people to Egypt and they spent more than 400 years in bondage to the Pharaohs. God worked to release them from slavery and, under Moses' leadership, they escaped (the Exodus, roughly 1300 BC) and travelled back to the land God had promised them.

The Egyptians were the major world power from 3000 BC to 1000 BC (these dates are very approximate). The Great Pyramid of Giza was completed in 2600 BC. The escape from Egypt is described in the book of **Exodus**. The trip of 40 yrs. wandering in the desert before getting to Israel is described in **Numbers**. On the verge of Palestine, Moses lectures his people to prepare them for their new life in a new land as related in the book of **Deuteronomy**.



6. "Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour."

Where? Ex 20:12-16

Context? On the way from Egypt to Canaan/Israel God gave his people commandments on how they should live under his rule.

7. "After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them, the Israelites."

Where? Joshua 1:1-2

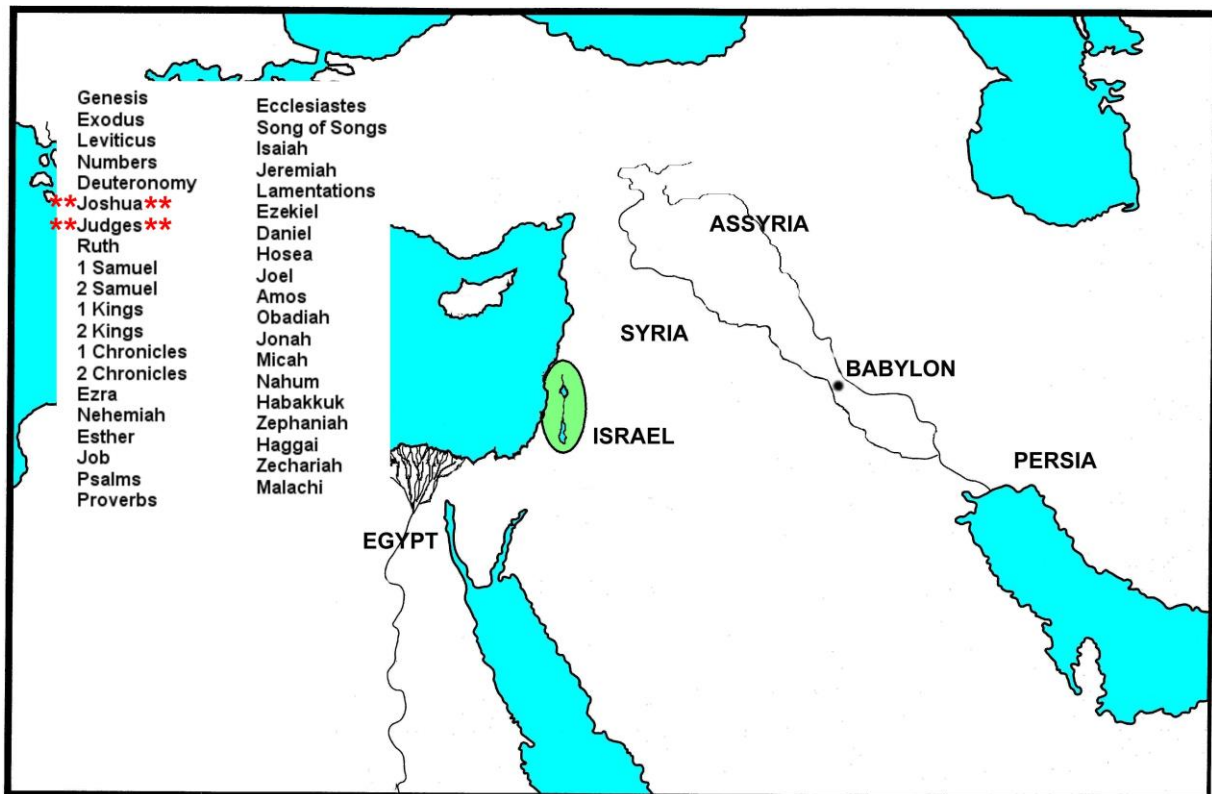
Context? After 40 years wandering in the desert Moses died and Joshua led God's people into Canaan, the Promised Land.

8. "Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man.'"

Where? Judges 16:7

Context? After entering the Promised Land Joshua and God's people were to defeat the Canaanites and live in the land. This process began in the book of Joshua and went from there to the books of Judges and 1 and 2 Samuel. In Judges God brought a succession of leaders or judges who are given victories over various sections of Canaan. One of these judges is Samson who was betrayed by Delilah but still defeated the Philistines.

In Israel, God fought for his people to conquer the indigenous peoples. These battles are described in **Joshua** and **Judges**.



Samuel led God's people after the Judges. After Samuel came the kings with Saul as Israel's first king and David as Israel's second and greatest king until Jesus. David began his reign at about 1000 BC. The history of Samuel and Saul is written in **1 Samuel**.

David was a warrior king and expanded Israel's borders (represented by the green area below). David's story begins at 1 Samuel 16 and continues through **1 and 2 Samuel** and **1 Chronicles**, ending with his death in 1 Kings 2. The focus in Chronicles is on David as king and what is happening in the kingdom, whereas Samuel is interested in David as a person and what is happening in his life. David was also a singer and musician and he wrote many **psalms** describing his feelings, experiences and prayers.

9. "As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground."

Where? 1 Sam 17:48-49

Context? David kills Goliath, the Philistine champion. Israel has a king, Saul, but David will be the next and greatest king besides Jesus.

10. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want."

Where? Ps 23:1

Context? Psalm of David. Samuel anointed David as the next king of Israel. Saul saw this as a threat and tried to kill David a number of times. David prays Ps 23 and trusts God to rescue him.

11. 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.

Where? 2 Sam 7:12-16

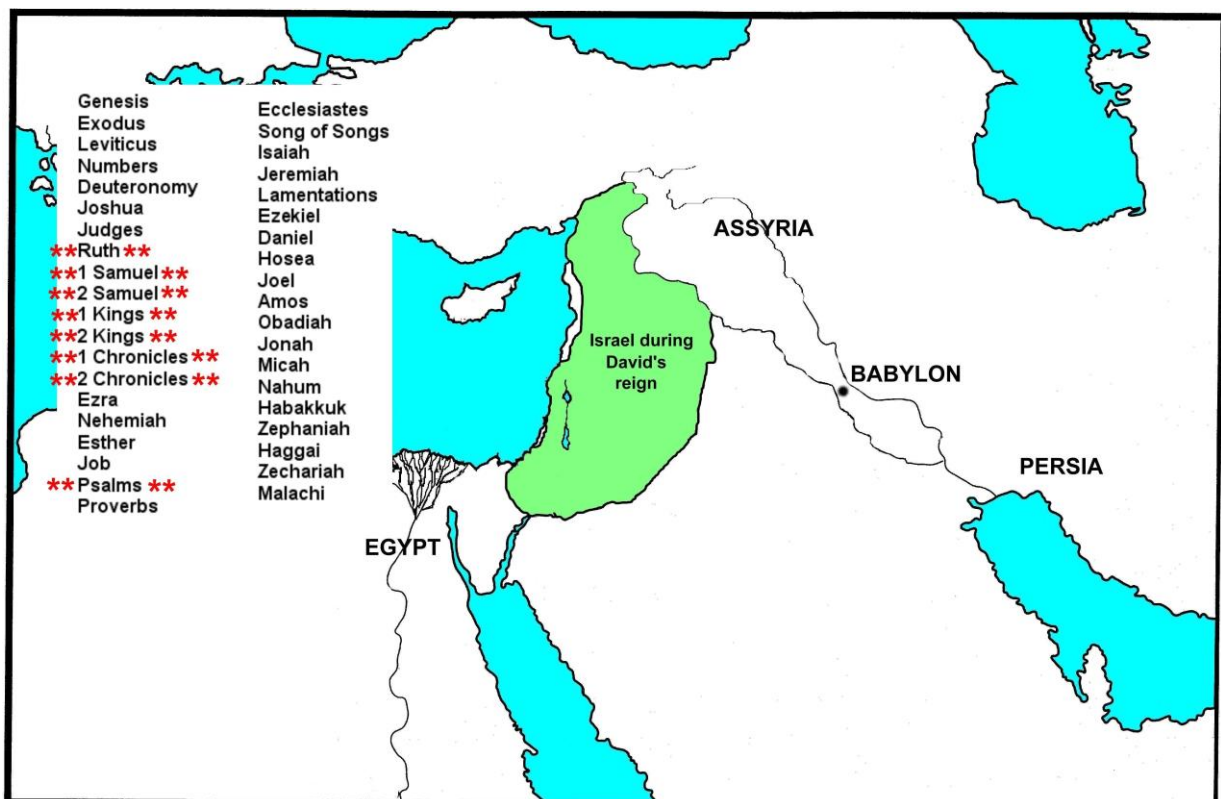
Context? God's line of kings, through David, will be established forever.

Solomon, David and Bathsheba's second son (2 Sam 12), became king in 961 BC. After Solomon Israel was split in two in 922 BC with the northern kingdom called Israel and the southern kingdom called Judah. This division into two kingdoms weakened them both and it wasn't long before other nations threatened them.

1 and 2 Kings account for four centuries of Israel's history with a succession of kings from both the northern and southern kingdoms, ending in exile. 1 and 2 Kings were written as one book from the viewpoint of an Israelite living in exile in Babylon.

1 and 2 Chronicles follow the kings from the line of David, ignoring the northern kings. The Chronicler wrote from the viewpoint of an Israelite who had returned from exile with Ezra and Nehemiah.

In contrast, **Ruth** is a quiet tale of ordinary life where a mother, Naomi, and her daughter-in-law, Ruth, move from Moab to Bethlehem and are treated kindly by Boaz. Boaz and Ruth get married and their great grandson is King David.



These studies will be focusing on the book of 2 Samuel. We've looked at the wider context above. The more immediate context is 1 Samuel, the book before 2 Samuel, and 1 Kings, the book after 2 Samuel. 1 Samuel is about Samuel, Saul and David. Samuel's birth is described in 1 Sam 1 and his death is described in 1 Sam 25 (there 31 chapters in 1 Sam). Saul is introduced in 1 Sam 9 and dies in 2 Sam 1. 2 Samuel is about David but he is introduced in 1 Sam 16 and dies in 1 Kings 2 (there are 24 chapters in 2 Sam). Here's a brief summary of Samuel, Saul and David:

Samuel, the son of Elkanah, and his wife Hannah, was a prophet and the last of Israel's Judges. Samuel grew up under Eli, who was the priest at Shiloh. He served a variety of roles in Israel. He was a prophet, a judge and a military leader. He was widely recognized throughout the country (1 Samuel 3:20). His home was in Ramah, where he headed groups of prophets. At this time in Israel's history the nation was ruled by judges who settled disputes, not kings. But the people demanded to have a king, like other nations. Samuel was

opposed to having a king rule over Israel because he interpreted that as an act of apostasy and a rejection of the Kingship of God. God told Samuel to anoint Saul, son of Kish, as king, and so the people got what they wanted. In time, the relationship between Saul and Samuel deteriorated and Saul took over certain functions that had belonged to a priest, not a king. In addition, Saul disobeyed God after the battle with the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15:1-23). God had Samuel anoint young David to be the next king. King Saul grew jealous of David. David fled from Saul and was given refuge by Samuel in his home in Ramah. David eventually succeeded Saul as king, but Samuel did not live long enough to see that.

Saul was the first king of Israel. He was the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin. He became king at about the time that Samuel had retired as the last Judge of Israel. Saul, his army, and a miracle from God, defeated the Philistines in their first battle. He then defeated Moab, Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Amalekites. However Saul did not obey the Lord, and kept some of the loot after defeating the Amalekites. For this, God rejected Saul as king of Israel. The Lord had Samuel anoint young David as the next king. After David killed Goliath, Saul made David his special assistant, and as David succeeded in everything he did, Saul grew extremely jealous. Saul became possessed by an evil spirit, went into fits of anger and tried to kill David several times. He even threw a spear at his own son Jonathan, who had become David's close friend. After Samuel died, the Philistines invaded Israelite territory and gathered forces at Shunem. Saul had a foreboding of his fate, and as he did not have Samuel to ask God for advice, he travelled to En Dor to consult a witch about the outcome of the battle (1 Sam 28). The result of the séance confirmed his worst fears, he was told that the entire Israel army would be routed by the Philistines, and that he and his three sons would be killed. The Israelite army had no chariots and could not withstand the assault of the heavy Philistine weaponry. On Mount Gilboa, Saul and his three sons were killed. Their bodies were brought to Jabesh where they were cremated. David after learning of Saul's death, moved to Hebron and was crowned king of the Judean confederacy.

David was the youngest son of Jesse, the great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth, born in Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah. He was handpicked by God, anointed by Samuel, and became Israel's second, and greatest, king. David was a shepherd in his early years. After killing Goliath he joined the entourage of King Saul but Saul became jealous of David's popularity with the Israelites and tried to kill him several times. David and his followers had to flee and hide out from Saul, but with the defeat of the Israelites and the death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines (2 Sam 1) David was anointed King over Judah. This brings us to the beginning of 2 Samuel.



From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com.

To finish

12. (a) Do you have a favourite Old Testament book? What is it?

(b) Why is it your favourite?

13. Do you have any difficulties reading the Old Testament? What are they?

Study 2, 2 Sam 1, Saul's death

Getting started

1. Do you always say nice things about people? Why/why not?

2. When is it appropriate to make an honest assessment about someone?



Bible

2. Read the two accounts of Saul's death, 1 Sam 31:1-7 and 2 Sam 1:1-16. Why are the accounts different?



3. In 2 Sam 1:10 the Amalekite killed Saul.
 - (a) Why could the Amalekite have possibly been right in doing this?

 - (b) Why could the Amalekite have possibly been wrong in doing this?

4. Was David right in having the Amalekite killed (2 Sam 1:15-16)? Why/why not?

5. Read 2 Sam 1:17-27e.
 - (a) What does David say about Saul?

 - (b) Given the summary about Saul in the previous study, is this an accurate assessment? Why/why not?

To finish

6. Why are nice words always said about people once they have died?
7. In 1 Sam 31:4 and 2 Sam 1:9 Saul asks someone to kill him. This could be considered as voluntary euthanasia. The arguments for and against voluntary euthanasia are:

FOR

About 85% of people support it.

Allowing people to “die with dignity” is kinder than forcing them to live with continued suffering.

Every person should have the right to choose.

It can be safely regulated by govt.

Passive euthanasia is already a widespread practice e.g. “do not resuscitate” order, sedation when there is no effective treatment until death.

AGAINST

Bible says it's wrong Ex 20:13, Job 1:21

Nearly all pain can be removed by palliative care and hospices.

There is no “right to be killed”. It could lead to involuntary euthanasia e.g. Netherlands example.

Can't be regulated – doctors don't always report it.

People could be pressured into ending their lives.

Doctors who are asked to perform euthanasia are put in a position against their medical ethics.

Definition: Euthanasia is an act where a doctor intentionally ends the life of a person by the administration of drugs, at that person's voluntary and competent request, for reasons of compassion.

Where do you stand on this issue? Give reasons.

Study 3, 2 Sam chs 2-5

Getting started

1. Is war ever justifiable? Why/why not?
2. Is holy war justifiable? Why/why not?

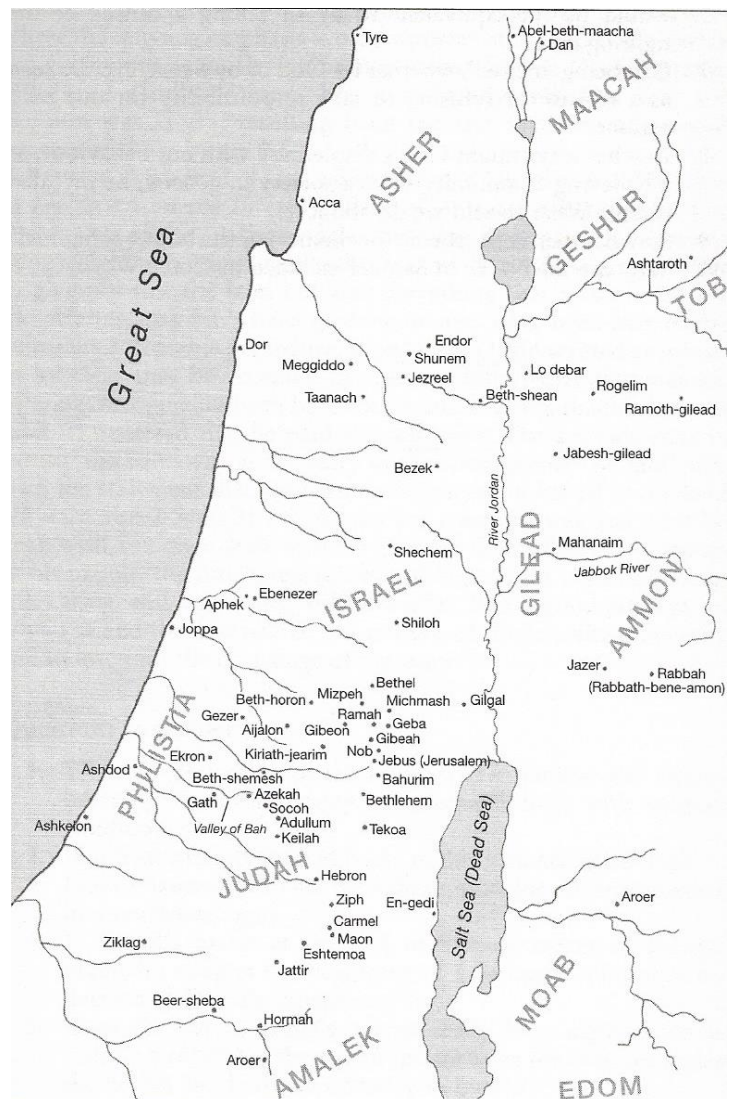


The story so far . . .

Saul's death opens the way for David to become king.

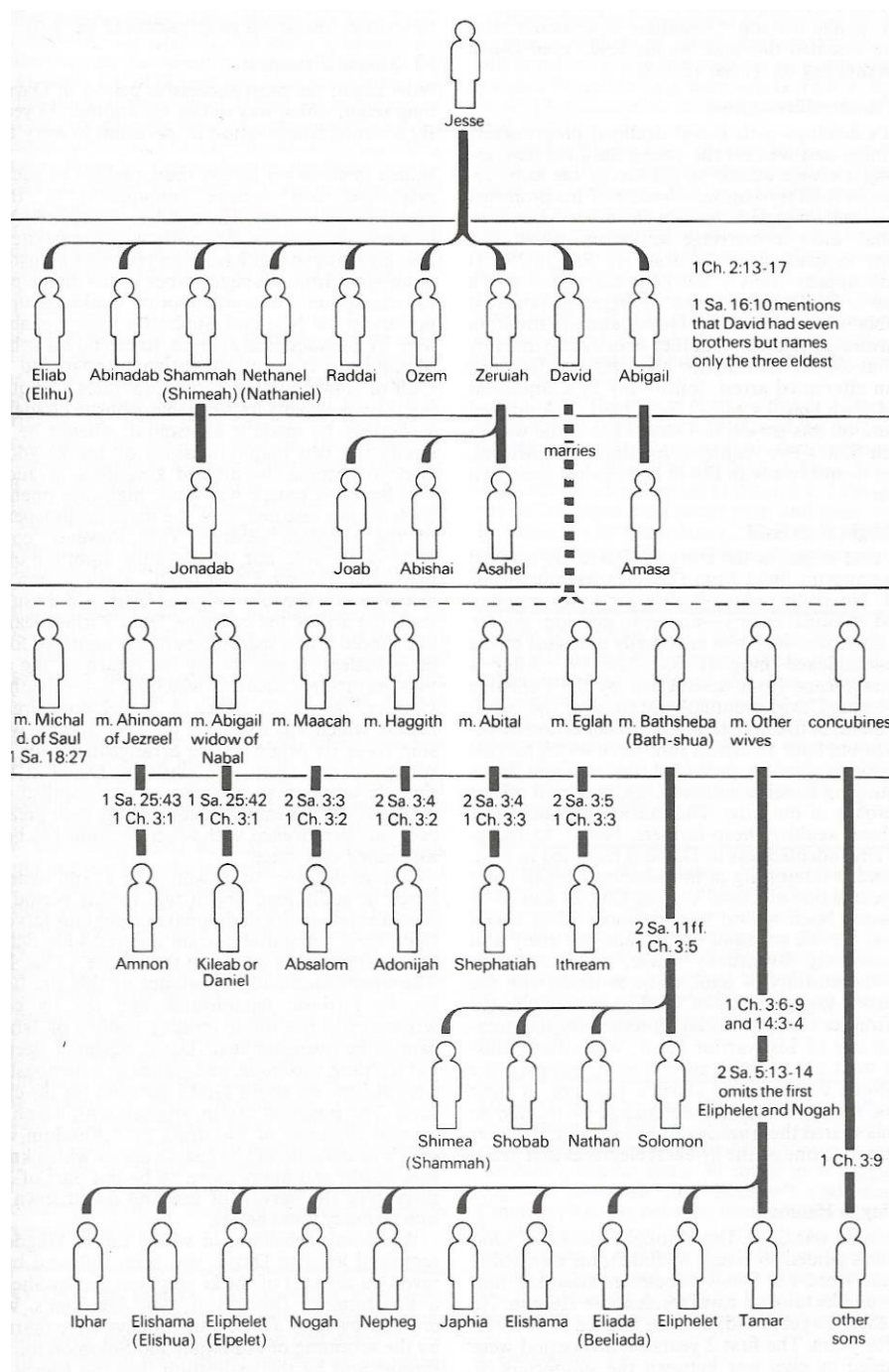
Bible

2. Read 2 Sam 2:1-7 and 1 Sam 31:8-13.
Why were the actions of the men of Jabesh Gilead so commendable?



From The Message of Samuel by Mary J. Evans p 284.

2 Sam 2:2 mentions 2 wives of David and more wives (and sons) are mentioned in 2 Sam 3:2-5, 12-16. The family members given in the Bible are outlined in the diagram below:



From New Bible Dictionary 3rd edition p 259.

3. Read 2 Sam 2:8-17.
Why would they want to have 12 men from each side kill each other?

4. Read 2 Sam 2:18-32e.
(a) Why is the story about chasing Abner rather than the war between Israel and Judah?

(b) Who is in control – the commanders or the kings? Give reasons.

5. Read 2 Sam ch 3.
(a) Why did Abner defect to David's side?

(b) Why does David make so much fuss about the murder of Abner?

Abner was commander in chief of the army of Saul. He was Saul's highest military official. He inquired about David after his battle with the giant, Goliath, and introduced David to King Saul (1 Samuel 17:55-58). Abner was with the guard protecting Saul when David entered the camp of the king while everyone was asleep (1 Samuel 26:5-7).

After the death of Saul and his three sons Abner established Saul's son Ish-Bosheth as King. Of the 12 tribes of Israel, only the tribe of Judah followed David as their King. War broke out between the armies of David and Ish-Bosheth, during which Abner killed Asahel, a brother of Joab - one of David's military officers - in self-defence (2 Samuel 2:18-23). Later a crisis developed between Ish-Bosheth and Abner, and Ish-Bosheth accused Abner of plotting to take over the kingship. Abner eventually shifted his loyalties to David, and he also persuaded all the tribes to follow David's leadership (2 Sam. 3:6-21).

Abner was killed by David's commander, Joab, in an act of vengeance over the death of his brother (2 Sam. 3:22-30). To counter any backlash from this act, David reprimanded Joab publicly and had Abner buried with full honours (2 Sam. 3:27-39). The name Abner means "the father is a lamp."

Joab the commander in chief of King David's army. He was the eldest son of David's sister, Zeruiah, and the brother of Abishai and Asahel (1 Chronicles 2:16 and see above). Joab played an important role in the establishment, unification, and consolidation of David's kingdom. His military acumen gained him the position of commander in chief, and he proved himself a shrewd tactician and resourceful general. He helped David crush the Philistines and subdue several of the neighbouring nations, including the Arameans, Moabites, Edomites and Ammonites.

On one hand, Joab's loyalty to David was exemplary. On the other hand, Joab was relentless and unscrupulous towards his enemies and rivals. He slew Abner perhaps out of rivalry or to avenge his brother. When Absalom revolted against his father, Joab killed him in stark violation of David's command to spare his life. Joab later slew Amasa, who had been appointed by David to head the campaign against Sheba.

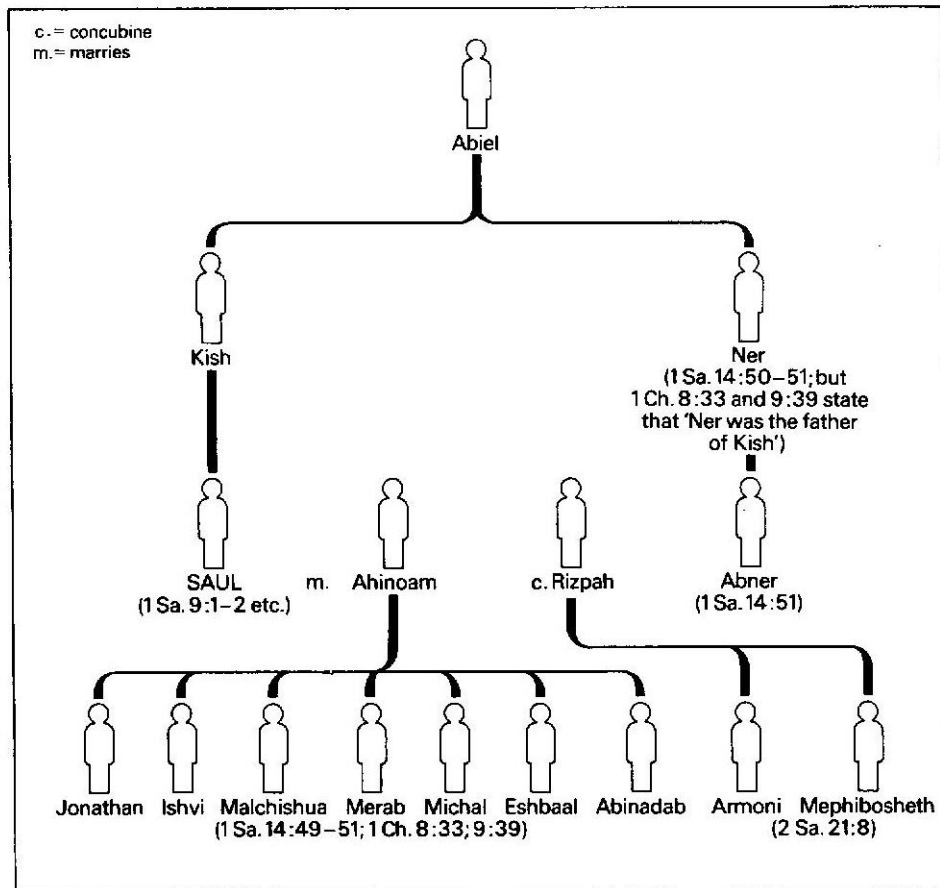
Joab was unaware that David preferred Solomon to succeed him, and sided with Adonijah. When Solomon was established on the throne, he ordered the death of Joab in accordance with David's command that Joab, who had shed innocent blood, must not be allowed to go down to the grave in peaceful old age (1 Kings 2:5-6). The story of Joab is found in the Books of 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles.

From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com.

6. Read 2 Sam ch 4.
Baanah and Recab kill David's enemy, Ish-Bosheth.
(a) Is Ish-Bosheth an innocent man (v 11)? Why/why not?

Ish-Bosheth, a son of Saul who Abner proclaimed king after Saul's death (2 Sam. 2:8-10). The tribe of Judah proclaimed David king after the death of Saul, but the other 11 tribes remained loyal to Saul's family. Ish-Bosheth reigned two turbulent years from Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River, while David ruled Judah from Hebron. Ish-Bosheth made a grave error in charging Abner with having relations with Saul's concubine, Rizpah. In anger, Abner changed his alliance to David (2 Sam. 3:6-21). When Joab murdered Abner in Hebron (2 Sam. 3:27), Ish-Bosheth became discouraged. Two captains of his guard, Baanah and Rechab, assassinated Ish-Bosheth as he lay napping. They carried Ish-Bosheth's severed head to David, who ordered it buried in the tomb of Abner in Hebron. Then David put the assassins to death (2 Sam. 4:5-12). Saul's Dynasty ended with Ish-Bosheth's death. The name Ish-Bosheth means "man of shame."

From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com.



Saul's family.

From New Bible Dictionary 3rd edition p 1066.

Ishbosheth. The name (2 Sa. 2-4) is commonly thought to have been Eshbaal originally, altered by scribes who wrote *boset* ('shame') instead of the apparently pagan divine name Baal. In 1 Ch. 8:33; 9:39 the form Eshbaal is written. Recently a strong case has been argued against this view, *boset* being understood as a divine attribute, 'pride, strength'. Ishbosheth and Eshbaal would be alternative names for one man (so, too, Mephibosheth and Meribbaal; see M. Tsevat, *HUCA* 46. 1975, pp. 71-87). A son of Saul, the Ishvi of 1 Sa 14:49 (a corruption of Ishiah, i.e. Ishbaal).

From New Bible Dictionary 3rd edition p 518.

(b) Is David right to have killed Baanah and Recab? Why?

(c) What if Baanah and Recab had killed Ish-Bosheth in battle? Why would that have been ok?

7. Read 2 Sam ch 5.

2 Sam 5:13. The taking over of the women who had been wives or concubines of a former king was commonly seen as a sign that the throne too was or should be 'under new management' (cf. 2 Sam. 16:22; 1 Kgs. 2:17).

David seems to have been particularly annoyed by the Jebusites' taunt that the city was so well-defended that even a weakened, disabled army could hold David off. There is possibly an implication here that David himself included a number of *the blind and the lame* within his initial raiding party to turn the taunt back onto the Jebusites. Certainly the city that they thought was so well-defended, in fact was taken without difficulty.

From The Message of Samuel pp 179, 186 by Mary J. Evans.

(a) Who was living in Jerusalem at the time David became king over all Israel (v6)?

- (b) What had God said about these people (see Gen 15:12-21)?
- (c) How the “narrator” attribute the rise of David (2 Sam 5:10)?
- (d) What does David see as the reason for God making him king (2 Sam 5:12)?
- (e) Why does David win his battles so easily?
- (f) Is God on anyone’s side today? Why/why not?

David had consulted the Lord before taking over as king of Judah, and had waited patiently for God to give him the throne that he had been promised so long before. Perhaps he should have waited a little longer rather than assuming that his rule over the whole territory would need to be achieved by war. . . . **War** — or confrontation in more everyday situations — may sometimes be necessary, but we should be very sure that we have reached that point of necessity before engaging in ‘violent’ action (or introducing ‘violent’ words), even in pursuit of an end result that we firmly believe to be part of God’s plan. God is not usually in a hurry and he can be trusted to bring about his purposes without resorting to the kind of power-hungry manipulation that is pictured in the account in Samuel.

From The Message of Samuel pp 174-175 by Mary J. Evans.

To finish

8.
 - (a) If someone hurts you do you want to hurt them back? Why/why not?
 - (b) Is revenge ever a good idea? Why/why not?
 - (c) On a political level is revenge (= a proportionate response) appropriate? Why/why not?
 - (d) How do you cope with anger if you don’t take revenge?

Study 4, 2 Sam 6, the Ark

Getting started

1. Play theme to "Raiders of the Lost Ark".
Who saw the movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981)? What do you remember about it?

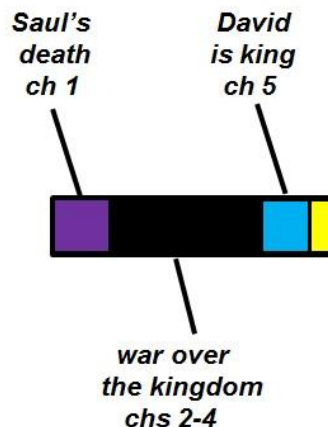
(As an alternative go to Q 4 (d) then back to Q 3.)

2. (a) What is luck?

(b) Do lucky charms work? Why/why not?

The story so far . . .

Saul's death opened the way for David to become king (ch 1). Abner was the commander of Saul's army and Joab was the commander of David's army. After Saul's death Abner made Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth, king over Israel. The two armies went to war and when the dust settled David was now king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). David defeated the Jebusites and made Jerusalem his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25).



Bible

3. Read Exodus 16:33-34, 25:10-22 and Numbers 17:10. What was placed in the Ark and what did God promise to do "from" the Ark (Ex 25:22)?
Note on Ex 16:34 from New Bible Commentary 3rd edition p 130, "This is an anticipation of the erection of the Tabernacle. The Jar of manna was placed with the tables of the law in the ark."
4. Read 2 Sam 6:1-11.
 - (a) Why do you think David chose so many men for the task of moving the Ark (verse 1)?
 - (b) What is the significance of the description of the Ark in verse 2?
 - (c) What did Uzzah do wrong (read Num 4:4-6, 15, 17-20)?
 - (d) Why does David at first, abandon his plan to bring the Ark up to Jerusalem?

(e) What do we learn about God from this event?

5. Read 2 Sam 6:12-23.

(a) Why did David start moving the ark again?

(b) What is different about the second attempt (see Deut 12:8-14)?

(c) Is the ark a lucky charm of sorts? Why/why not?

The ark's surface or lid, the mercy-seat, was surrounded with a rim of gold; and on each of the two sides were two gold rings, in which were placed two gold-covered poles by which the ark could be carried (Num 7:9, 10:21, 4:5, 19-20, 1 Kings 8:3,6). At each end, there were two cherubim over the ark, with their faces turned toward each other (Lev 16:2, Num. 7:89). Their outspread wings over the top of the ark formed the throne of God, while the ark itself was his footstool (Exodus 25:10-22, 37:1-9). . . .

Stored in the ark were the ten commandments on two tablets of stone which were the "testimony" or evidence of God's covenant with the people (Deut. 31:26), the "pot of manna" (Exodus 16:33), and "Aaron's rod that budded" (Num. 17:10) . . .

During the journeys of the Israelites the ark was carried by the priests in front of the crowds (Num. 4:5-6; 10:33-36; Ps. 68:1; 132:8). It was carried by the priests into the bed of the Jordan, which separated, opening a pathway for the whole host to pass through (Josh. 3:15-16; 4:7, 10-11, 17-18). It was carried in procession around Jericho (Josh. 6:4, 6, 8, 11-12). After Israel settled in Canaan, the ark remained in the tabernacle at Gilgal for a while. It was then moved to Shiloh till the time of Eli (Jer. 7:12), when it was carried into the field of battle in an attempt to guarantee victory. However, it was taken by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:3-11), who later returned it after seven months when they realized it was bringing a curse on them (1 Sam. 5:7-8). The ark then remained at Kirjath-jearim for 20 years (7:1-2) till the time of David who wished to move it to Jerusalem. They did not move the ark in the proper way and Uzzah was killed for putting "forth his hand to the ark of God." The ark was then left in the house of Obed-edom in Gath-rimmon for three months (2 Sam. 6:1-11), after which David moved it in a grand procession to Jerusalem where it was kept till a place was prepared for it (12-19). Solomon later deposited the ark in the great temple he built (1 Kings 8:6-9). When the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and plundered the temple, the ark disappeared. Some believe it was taken away by Nebuchadnezzar and was destroyed.

From <http://www.christiananswers.net/dictionary/ark.html>

(d) The movie "Raiders of the Lost Ark" (1981) is set in 1936. Indiana Jones, played by Harrison Ford, is searching for the "Ark of the Covenant" to prevent the Nazis getting to it first and becoming invincible. After many adventures the film comes to a climax with the Nazis in possession of the ark and Indiana and Marion, his girlfriend and fellow adventurer, tied up and watching as the Nazis open the ark. It appears to contain nothing but sand, all that remains of the Ten Commandments. Suddenly, angelic ghost-like beings emerge from the Ark. Indy cautions Marion to keep her eyes closed as the apparitions are revealed to be angels of death. A vortex of flame forms above the Ark and shoots bolts of fiery energy into the Nazi soldiers. Worse things happen to the others and flames then engulf them, save for Indy and Marion, and the pillar of fire rises into the sky. The Ark's lid is blasted high into the air before dropping back down onto the Ark and sealing it. Jones and Marion find their ropes burned off and embrace.

Which bits of this are true?



6. Read 2 Sam 6:13-23.
What does Michal do wrong?

7. The ark contained the 10 commandments, among other things, and David was keen to have the ark with him in Jerusalem. What is the connection between the ark and Jesus (see Matt 1:23)?

8. (a) The ark was considered sacred. Is there anything today that expresses the kind of sacredness seen in the ark?

(b) If so, what would be the equivalent accompanying benefits and dangers?

Video

The Nooma video, #4, Sunday, by Rob Bell is one of 24 made between 2002 and 2009. In each video Rob Bell takes an aspect of Christian life and expresses it in an interesting and challenging way.

9. What are your first impressions of this video?



10. What is the main point of the video?

11. At the beginning there were well-dressed people filing into the building with organ music playing.
(a) Did you think they were going to church?

(b) Later in the video when the camera showed us a wider vision of people at tables in the restaurant do you think there was a subtle message about people at church? If so, what was that message?

12. When Rob Bell starts his commentary he says he used to go to church because he was supposed to but things didn't seem right and he wonders if this is what God had in mind. Thinking about church as it is today and comparing it with your Bible knowledge, do you think this is what God had in mind?

13. Rob Bell next describes a confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees. He begins by talking about how Jesus was invited to a meal but ignores the hand washing rules. He is commenting from 2 passages that are probably describing the same event: Matt ch 23 and Luke 11:37-54. We will look at the Luke passage.
Read Luke 11:37-46.

Rob Bell finishes this bit by saying “Jesus has infinite patience and understanding for people who are genuinely searching for God but people who claim to know and speak for God but have cold, hard hearts – Jesus is relentless in slamming them.”
How do you think all this applies to church today?

14. Then he talks about buying flowers for his wife. He says that if he is buying flowers out of a sense of duty or because they were on sale or because he felt the house needed them then his wife probably won't even want the flowers because she wants his heart. The Bible says something similar.
Read Isaiah 29:13.
Context: Chapters 28 and 29 of Isaiah are full of scorn, particularly for the leaders of Israel and Judah who ignore God's warnings through his prophets. Judgement will follow, beginning with Jerusalem (Ariel).

How much of what we do at church is about obeying rules or going through the motions?

15. Rob Bell talks about giving money and says that one motive for giving could be guilt i.e. you give to get God off your back. We will read the passage that he refers to in the Old Testament but before we do that . . .
. . . why do we give?

16. Read Isaiah 1:11-17.
Context: Isaiah begins his book with the denunciation of the Israelites for their rebellion against God.

Rob Bell is drawing a comparison between the Old Testament sacrificial system and our giving of money to God. What should we be doing instead?

To finish

17. The people of God experienced great blessing because God dwelt with them as symbolised in the Ark.
How do we experience God's presence and blessing today?
18. (a) When the ark is brought into Jerusalem David gets so excited that he disrobes and dances in public (2 Sam 6:16, 20-22). We don't have to run around naked but are we too dignified in our worship of God? Why/why not?
- (b) How would things be different if we were less inhibited and more enthusiastic?

Study 5, 2 Sam 7, the Davidic covenant

Getting started

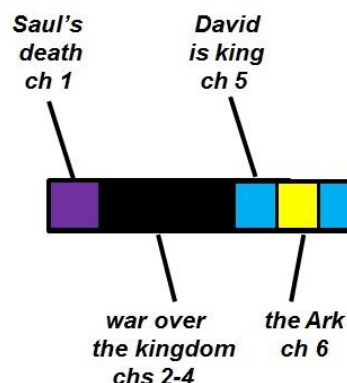
1. This study is largely about a covenant between God and David. A covenant is an agreement that forms a solemn bond between two parties.
 - (a) When someone gets married they form a covenant or solemn bond with their spouse. What are some examples of the promises that define this solemn bond?
 - (b) What are the rings for?
 - (c) Can you think of a covenant in the Bible that had a sign?
 - (d) What was God's covenant with Noah?
 - (e) In our studies in 2 Sam we have looked briefly at God's covenant with Abraham and how God was fulfilling this covenant through David.
 - (i) What are the 3 main elements of God's covenant with Abraham (see Gen 12:1-3, 17:1-14)?
 - (ii) What did Abraham and his descendants have to do?
 - (f) Besides God's covenants with Noah and Abraham can you think of any other covenants in the Bible?
 - (g) Why did God make covenants with people?



In this study we will look at God's covenant with David.

The story so far . . .

Saul's death opened the way for David to become king. Abner was the commander of Saul's army and Joab was the commander of David's army. After Saul's death Abner made Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth, king over Israel. The two armies went to war and when the dust settled David was king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). David defeated the Jebusites and made Jerusalem his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25). Then David brought the Ark to Jerusalem (ch 6).



Bible

2. Read Deut 12:8-14.
Context: On the eve of entering the Promised Land Moses addresses his people, some of which is a re-statement of various laws.

Once they entered the land, where were Israel told to worship God?

3. Read 2 Sam 7:1-3.
(a) David seems to recognise that God has chosen to 'dwell' in Jerusalem, to be worshiped there. What are the signs of this (v 1)?

(b) How does Nathan first respond to David's plan (v 3)?

4. Read 2 Sam 7:4-7.
(a) How does God respond to David's plans?

(b) Why do you think God responds in that way?

5. Read 2 Sam 7:8-17.
(a) God now begins to declare his plans to David. What does God say he is going to do (vv 8-11a)?

(b) What sort of "house" does the Lord then promise to build (vv 11b-17)?

(c) What is promised regarding David's "son"?

(d) How were these promises fulfilled by Solomon (see below)?

(e) How were these promises fulfilled by Jesus?

(f) How do we share in these promised blessings of God?

Solomon, the son of King David and Bathsheba, was the third king of Israel. Solomon was renowned for his wisdom, wealth and for his construction projects. Israel enjoyed an era of security, prosperity, and international political and economic importance under Solomon.

Solomon was anointed king when his older brother, Adonijah, rashly tried to proclaim himself as ruler when their father, King David, became old. But Bathsheba and the prophet Nathan, with the support of others, crowned Solomon as King.

Solomon began his 40-year reign in 967 BC while David was still alive. Thanks to the conquests of David, Solomon's domain stretched from Tipshah on the Euphrates to Gaza on the border of Egypt. The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and told him to ask for anything he wanted. Solomon asked for wisdom to lead the Israelites. God was so pleased with Solomon's reply, He not only gave him wisdom, but riches and honour too.

It was in the fourth year of Solomon's reign, that he began the construction of the Temple. Seven years later it was completed, and the Ark of the Covenant was moved from the Tabernacle in Jerusalem to the Temple. Solomon built a large palace for himself, Fort Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, the cities of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer, cities for grain storage, cities to keep his chariots, homes for his army, and resort cities. He built a fleet of ships to bring gold in from Ophir. People from many lands came to visit him and to listen to his God-given wisdom, including the Queen of Sheba.

Solomon took many foreign wives - 700 wives and 300 concubines. They turned his heart away from the Lord and encouraged him to worship their gods. He even built temples for these foreign wives to use for burning incense and for offering sacrifices to their gods. This made the Lord angry and he told Solomon that after his death he would take the Kingdom away from Solomon's son, except for one tribe. After Solomon's death his son, Rehoboam, became King of Judah, while an enemy of Solomon, Jeroboam, became king of the northern tribes.

3,000 proverbs, 1000 songs, the books of Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs and parts of Proverbs are ascribed to Solomon. The story of Solomon is found in 1 Kings chs 1-11 and in 2 Chronicles chs 1-9. The name Solomon means "peace/welfare."

From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com.

6. How is the Davidic covenant an extension of God's covenant with Abraham (see Gen 12:1-3)?

7. Read 2 Sam 7:17-29.

(a) What has God done that David praises him for?

(b) How does this also apply in our day?

(c) What does David ask of God?

To finish

8. (a) What is the new covenant (see Luke 22:14-20)?

(b) Can we break the new covenant? Why/why not?

(c) How permanent is our standing before God? Give reasons for your answer.

Study 6, 2 Sam chs 8-10, the Moabites, the Ammonites and Mephibosheth

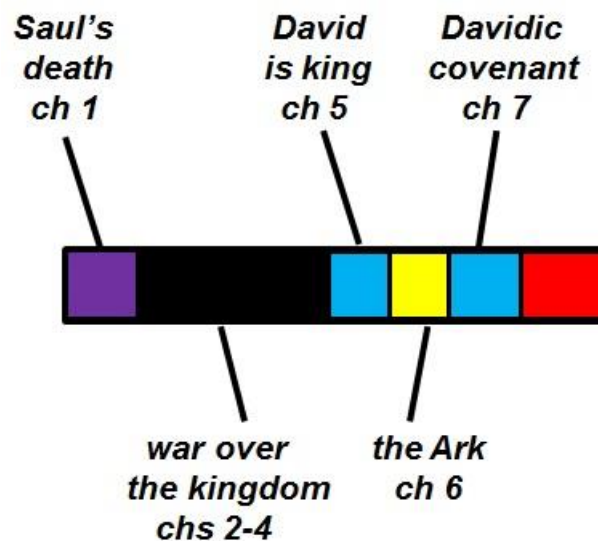
Getting started

- David's kingdom is a "pattern" of the coming kingdom of God. Given this, what aspects of the way David has become king are disturbing to us?



The story so far . . .

Saul's death opened the way for David to become king. Abner was the commander of Saul's army and Joab was the commander of David's army. After Saul's death Abner made Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth, king over Israel. The two armies went to war and when the dust settled David was king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). David defeated the Jebusites and made Jerusalem his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25). David brought the Ark to Jerusalem (ch 6) and God made an everlasting covenant with David and his family line that will succeed him (ch 7).



Bible

- Read 2 Sam ch 8.
 - How is this chapter related to the previous chapter?
 - What do you think of David's treatment of the defeated Moabites?
 - Is David being godly or politically astute?

The point of this account is to make sure that the readers notice that Israel is secure at last. Her boundaries are no longer threatened and she even has influence in surrounding lands. The fear and insecurity that had lasted from the initial conquest, throughout the time of the judges and even during the reign of Saul was now over. Now the promised land really was Israel's. . . . "The Lord gave David victory wherever he went (2 Sam 8:6). This final reference is probably an editorial addition making sure that the reader is fully aware of God's involvement in the successful establishment of the nation.

From The Message of Samuel pp 200-201 by Mary J. Evans.

3. Read 2 Sam 9.
(a) Why is David so generous to Mephibosheth?

Mephibosheth (2 Sam 4:4) was five years old when both his father and grandfather died at the Battle of Mount Gilboa. When the report about the deaths of Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, Mephibosheth's nurse took him and fled in panic. In her haste the child had fallen or been dropped upon fleeing. Since then, he was unable to walk (2 Sam 19:26). For some years thereafter, Mephibosheth lived in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel at Lo-debar in the land of Gilead. King David learned this from Ziba, a former servant in Saul's house. In order to fulfil his covenant with Jonathan David wished to exercise loving-kindness toward anyone "left over of the house of Saul" (1 Sam 20:12-17, 42).

After David had subdued all the adversaries of Israel Mephibosheth was brought before David, and when the king explained that it was his desire to exercise loving-kindness toward Mephibosheth by returning to him "all the field of Saul" and by having him "eat bread at my table constantly," Mephibosheth responded humbly: "What is your servant, that you have turned your face to the dead dog such as I am?" However, in keeping with David's determination in the matter, Ziba and all those dwelling in his house (including 15 sons and 20 servants) became servants to Mephibosheth, who was given Saul's property. He thereafter resided in Jerusalem and constantly ate at the table of the king.

When David fled from Jerusalem because of Absalom's conspiracy, he was met by Ziba, who provided him with supplies. Answering David's inquiries as to the whereabouts of Mephibosheth, Ziba claimed that Mephibosheth was in Jerusalem preparing to receive the kingship back. In response, David awarded Ziba all of Mephibosheth's estate (2 Sam. 16:1-4). When Mephibosheth came to meet David upon the king's return to Jerusalem, the account saying "he had not attended to his feet nor had he attended to his moustache nor had he washed his garments from the day that the king went away until the day that he came in peace." Mephibosheth explained that Ziba, his servant, had tricked him and then slandered him to the king. Mephibosheth sought that David would see the matter in its true light. David evidently recognized Mephibosheth's innocence and that he had remained loyal. David thus altered his first decree to give Mephibosheth and Ziba a share in the field. However, Mephibosheth was content with the king's return and suggested that Ziba just receive the whole lot (2 Sam 19:24-30).

When the Gibeonites sought the death of Saul's descendants to atone for that king's evil attempt against them David again showed kindness to Mephibosheth because of the oath of Jehovah between David and Jonathan. So he spared Mephibosheth's life by refusing to hand him over to the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21:7). Saul's family continued in existence to a later generation through Mephibosheth's son Mica (2 Sam 9:12).

From wikipedia.org.

- (b) What does the contrast between this chapter and the previous chapter tell you about David?

4. Read 2 Sam 10.
David sent a delegation to the Ammonites to express his sympathy for the death of their ruler who had shown kindness to David in the past. The Ammonites misinterpreted this as a mission to spy on them. They sent the delegation back to David after humiliating them by cutting off half their beards and half their pants (10:4). David took offence and when the Ammonites realised that they had offended David they got together 33,000 soldiers (mostly Aramean). David sent out his *entire* army and the Ammonites and their Aramean allies were defeated in battle.

In many cultures the beard is a sign of adulthood and masculinity; to be forced to shave was completely degrading. The public disgrace caused by this and the destruction of the garments . . . was not to be borne. . . .

Hanun's deeds could only be seen as a deliberate and unprovoked aggression: a clear declaration of hostile intentions.

From The Message of Samuel p 205 by Mary J. Evans.

(a) How did a misunderstanding lead to disaster?

(b) Compare Hanun's treatment of David's men (v4) with David's treatment of the Moabites (2 Sam 8:2). Which is better? Why?

To finish

5. (a) What part does pride play in these chapters?

(b) Were David's actions a result of his pride or a result of his concern for the name of the Lord?

(c) Can you think of other events in David's life where he was genuinely concerned for the name of the Lord?

(d) What are you proud of?

(e) When should you be proud and when should you be humble?

Study 7, 2 Sam chs 11-12

Getting started

We are going to read a chapter in 2 Sam where David commits some pretty bad sins – he has sex with a married woman, Bathsheba, and then organises the death of her husband, Uriah. It got me thinking about sin in general and I thought we could consider some questions about sin to begin with.

1. (a) Do people rate some sins as worse than others? Why/why not?

(b) If so, what are some less serious sins and what are some more serious sins?

Notes: - RC mortal sins = sins that can lead you to hell if you don't repent of them before death e.g. stealing a large amount, murder, abortion, euthanasia, rape, incest, adultery, masturbation, contraception, blasphemy, idolatry, deliberately missing Mass on Sunday without an excuse.

- RC venial sins = lesser sins that don't result in complete separation from God e.g. swearing.

- are breaking any of the 10 Cs (idolatry (1 & 2), blasphemy, keeping Sabbath, honour mother & father, murder, adultery, stealing, false testimony, coveting) classified as more serious sins?

- seven deadly sins: envy, gluttony, greed or avarice, lust, pride, sloth, and wrath.

- Prov 6:16-19 There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

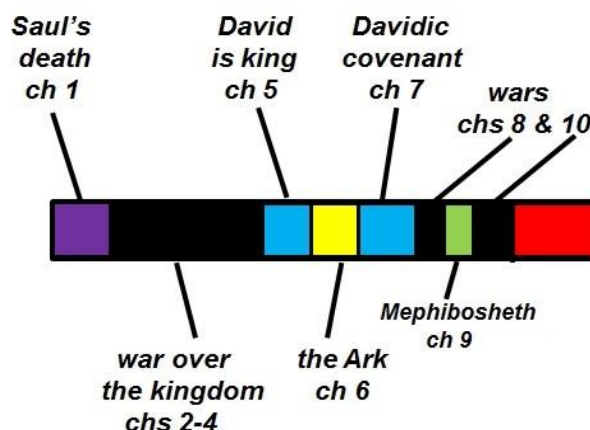
- Gal 5:19-21 The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

(c) Where do you rate sexual sins?

(d) *Should* we rate sins differently (aren't all sins equally bad)? Why/why not?

The story so far . . .

Ch 1: Saul's death opened the way for David to become king. Abner was the commander of Saul's army and Joab was the commander of David's army and the two armies went to war. When the dust settled David was king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). Then David defeated the Jebusites and made their city, Jerusalem, his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25). Ch 6 - David brought the Ark to Jerusalem and (ch 7) God made an everlasting covenant with David and his family line. Ch 8: with God going before them, David's army defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Babylonians, the Arameans, Hamath and the Edomites. Ch 9: David gave everything that belonged to Saul and his family to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth. Ch 10: the Ammonites mishandled diplomatic relations with David and they and their Aramean allies were defeated in battle.



God has made great promises to David. Promises that pick up his plans to bless the whole world through Abraham's descendants. In 2 Samuel 7, God promised David rest from his enemies, victory, security, peace – and a future (2 Samuel 7:16). And David has been presented to us as the model, godly king, ruling on God's behalf, for God's glory, displaying God's character. A picture of the 'Kingdom of God'. The narrator has led us to have great hopes. Read 2 Samuel 8:15 and 2 Samuel 10:19 to see examples of this. (2 Sam 10:19 Hadadezer was king of the Arameans.)

Bible

2. Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.
In what way does David abuse his power? Why does he do it?



3. Read 2 Samuel 11:6-13.
(a) What are David's actions and why does he do what he does?

(b) What are Uriah's actions and why does he do what he does?

(c) How do the actions of Uriah compare with those of David? What does this highlight about David?
4. Read 2 Samuel 11:14-25.
What actions does David take and why?
5. Read 2 Samuel 11:26-27.
David has tried to hide his actions from his people and from God. What indication is there that this has not worked?
6. Read 2 Sam 12.
(a) How does Nathan convince David?

(b) What is David's punishment?

(c) What are curses (see Gen 3:14-19, Deut ch 28)?

(d) Are 2 Sam 12:10-11, 14 curses, consequences or punishment? What's the difference?

(e) What about David's wives/concubines (2 Sam 12:11, 16:21-22) and the death of Bathsheba's baby are these "consequences" fair for them or is this co-lateral damage?

7. After the events of chapters 11 and 12 what do you think of David?

The picture of David as a gifted and attractive character but with a number of serious flaws is beginning to build up. It seems as if readers are being asked not so much to decide whether David should ultimately be classified as good or bad, but rather to accept the realistic picture of David, good and bad, as a man who God could use and did use.

From The Message of Samuel p 205 by Mary J. Evans.

To finish

At the beginning of the study we were talking about rating different sins. The next step is to think about how we feel about the sinners that do those sins.

(a) Do we rate some Christians as being better or worse than other Christians? Why/why not?

(b) How would you decide if someone was a good Christian?

(c) How would you rate David after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged to have her husband killed?

(d) How was Jesus punished for our sins?

(e) Does Jesus' punishment have a bearing on how we rate other Christians?

(f) Should we rate other sinners? Why/why not?

(g) What should we be doing rather than being so concerned about other sinners and their/our sin (see Gal 5:13-16)?

In the New Testament Christians are never called sinners. They are called saints. When we think about other Christians we should look on them as saints not sinners.

Study 8, 2 Sam 13, Amnon & Tamar

Getting started

1. (a) Do you stew on things? Why/why not?

(b) What if something worries you but you think it might be too silly to mention?

(i) What would you do?

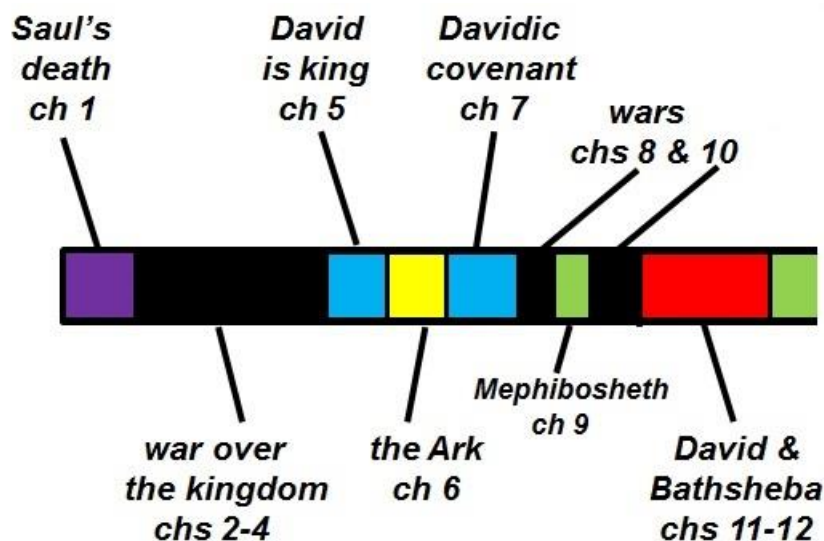
(ii) How would you feel?

(c) What could you do instead of stewing on things?



The story so far . . .

David has been made God's covenantal king. With God going before them David's army defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Babylonians, the Arameans, Hamath and the Edomites (ch 8). David gave everything that belonged to Saul and his family to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth (ch 9). The Ammonites mishandled diplomatic relations with David and they and their Aramean allies are defeated in battle (10:1-11:1). David had sex with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and married her after getting Uriah killed. Nathan convinced David of his sin but his son died as punishment (chs 11 & 12).



Bible

2. Read 2 Sam 13. (See also the family tree on p 10.)
- (a) Was Tamar naïve about Ammon's intentions (vv 7-10)? Why/why not?

 - (b) Was David at fault for not doing more than being furious (v21)?

 - (c) Did David's inaction deserve punishment?

 - (d) How do you think Absalom would feel about waiting for 2 years?

 - (e) Was Absalom right to take action because David did not?

Although David had taken no action in defence of his daughter, Absalom was not willing to risk lack of action in defence of his son, and so he flees. David, with typical wholeheartedness, mourns for his son every day. The ambiguity about which son he mourns for is almost certainly deliberate. Perhaps even David himself was not sure. . . . The drama of life in this dysfunctional family is clearly not yet over.

From The Message of Samuel p 224 by Mary J. Evans.

To finish

3. (a) Do you react to things quickly?
-
- (b) How can you be quick to think but slow to act?
-
- (c) Are you too slow to act?

Study 9, 2 Sam 14, Absalom and Forgiveness

Getting started

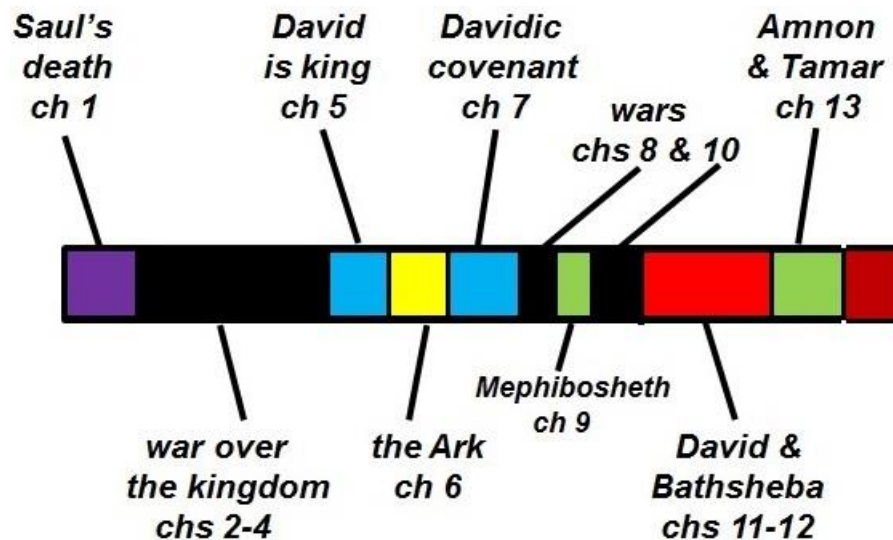
1. (a) Why is it hard to forgive?



- (b) What processes do you have to do through to forgive someone?

The story so far . . .

David was God's warrior king defeating all comers. He showed compassion towards the crippled Mephibosheth (ch 9) but had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13).



Bible

2. Read 2 Sam 14.

Joab was very different from David but he understood, perhaps more than anyone else, how David ticked. David might have had mixed emotions about Absalom, but the situation was tearing him apart. His attention was thus diverted from his job of running the country. Perhaps Joab felt that one way or another the situation had to be resolved before things went any further. He copied Nathan [2 Sam 12] in approaching David with an analogous case-study, but his illustration involved somewhat more guile and clearly displays Joab's ability in theatrical direction.

From The Message of Samuel pp 225-226 by Mary J. Evans.

- (a) How is everyone in the wrong here?

Joab

the woman from Tekoa

David

Absalom

(b) How would forgiveness have solved the situation?

Video

This Nooma video, #7, Luggage, by Rob Bell is about a number of subjects but I want to focus particularly on what it says about forgiveness. We will talk about the video after it has finished and if you have any questions we will deal with them too.

3. What do you think is the take home message from the video?



4. (a) How did you feel about the ending (the car gets hit by a truck)?

(b) What was the point he was making?

5. Rob Bell said that you haven't truly forgiven someone unless you can wish them well. Agree or disagree? Why/why not?

6. What problems does forgiveness solve?

"May you forgive as you've been forgiven.
May you give to others what's been given to you.
May you set someone free and find out it was you.
May you do it today because you might not have the chance tomorrow."

To finish

7. How do we forgive someone?

Willingness, ability, decision, action, overcoming, re-labelling, wishing them well.
From 6 Stages of Forgiving Others by Georg Karl.

Study 10, 2 Sam 15:1-19:14, Absalom and Power

Getting started

1. "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely."
From a letter by Lord Acton to Bishop Mandell Creighton, 1887.

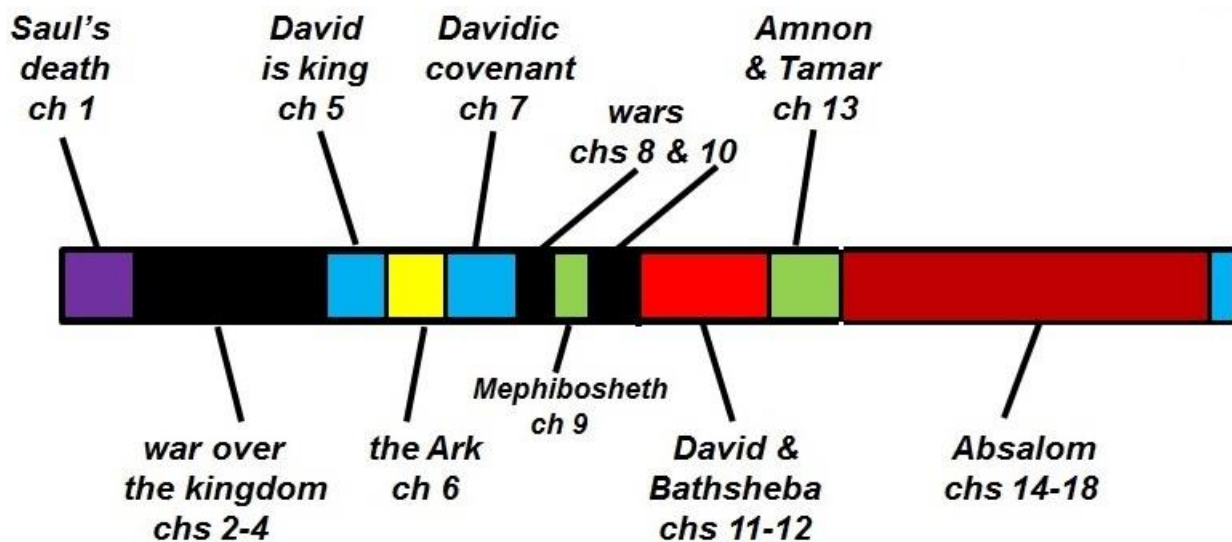
(a) How is leadership effected by power?



(b) From your own personal experience have you seen the corruption that comes with power?

The story so far . . .

David was God's warrior king defeating all comers. He showed compassion towards the crippled Mephibosheth (ch 9) but had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14).



Bible

2. Read 2 Sam 15.
What are the major movements in this power struggle?
3. Read 2 Sam 16.
Is David overly generous (vv 1-4)? What effect will this have on Mephibosheth?

4. Read 2 Sam chs 17-18.
Hushai is a double agent, secretly on David's side.
(a) What are the consequences of his advice?

(b) How do you decide which advice to take?

David's eventual victory was made possible by the work of two unnamed women and almost thwarted by the quick thinking of an unnamed young man. The use of the two women shows, as so often in the Old Testament narratives, both an awareness and a critique of the prevailing worldview. Women were unlikely to be suspected because of society's assumption that they were incapable of the sophisticated thinking required for subterfuge, but in fact they were more than capable of all that was involved in the task.

From The Message of Samuel p 244 by Mary J. Evans.

(c) Why does Absalom replace Joab with Amasa (2 Sam 17:25)?

(d) Is Joab a hero or a villain (2 Sam 18:5-17)?

(e) What do we learn from Joab?

5. Read 2 Sam 19:1-14
Rather than David spending so much time mourning Absalom, how could David have been a better father during Absalom's life?

To finish

6. (a) How good a king would Absalom have been, do you think?

(b) What are the qualities of a good leader?

Study 11, Shimei & Mephibosheth, 2 Sam chs 4, 9, 16 & 19

Getting started

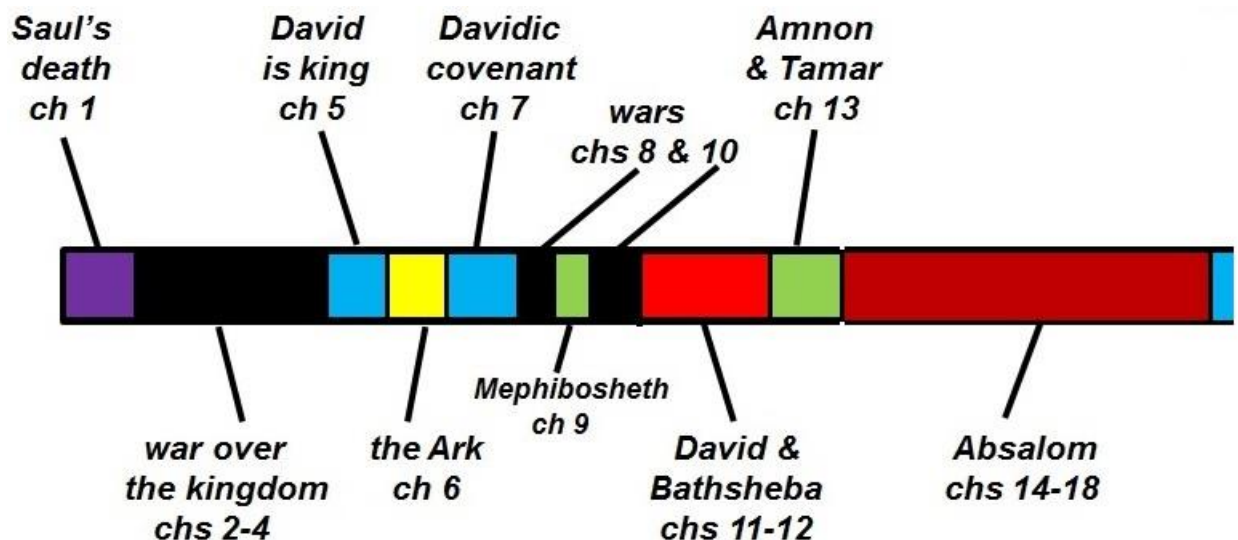
1. Think of a time when someone criticised you. What were the circumstances?



2. How do you usually handle criticism e.g. ignore it, deny it, welcome it, take it to heart, blame someone else, argue about it, sulk, get angry or get depressed?

The story so far . . .

David was God's warrior king defeating all comers. He showed compassion towards the crippled Mephibosheth (ch 9) but had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14). Absalom tried to wrest power away from David but his army was defeated and he was killed by Joab (chs 15-18). Diversions from the main story involved Shimei and Mephibosheth.



Bible

3. Absalom was becoming more and more powerful so David who left Jerusalem in fear of Absalom. He met Shimei during his escape.

Read 2 Sam 16:5-14.

Saul had 4 sons by Ahinoam: Jonathan, Abinadab, Malki-Shua and Ish-Bosheth (see family tree on p 13). All but Ish-Bosheth were killed by the Philistines (1 Sam 31:1-6). The war between the house of David and the house of Saul is described in 2 Sam 2:8-4:12. Saul's Dynasty ended with Ish-Bosheth's death.

David's sister, Zeruiah, had 3 sons - Joab, Abishai and Asahel (see p 11). Joab was the commander in chief of David's army, Abishai was a general and Asahel was killed by Saul's general, Abner (2 Sam 2:18-32).

- (a) Is there any truth in Shimei's cursing?

(b) David kills a lot of people in 2 Sam, why doesn't he kill Shimei?

(c) Is Shimei a prophet or a ratbag? Give reasons.

The rest of ch 16 to the end of ch 18 is about the war between Absalom and his army and David and his army. Joab killed Absalom in stark violation of David's command to spare his life.

4. Read 2 Sam 19:15-23.

Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of the house of Saul, who lived at Bahurim When David and his suite were seen descending the long defile on his flight from Absalom (2 Samuel 16:5-13) the whole feeling of the clan of Benjamin burst forth without restraint in the person of Shimei. He ran along the ridge, cursing and throwing stones at the king and his companions. The next meeting was very different. The king was now returning from his successful campaign. Just as he was crossing the Jordan the first person to welcome him was Shimei who threw himself at David's feet in abject penitence (2 Samuel 19:18-23). But the king's suspicions were not set at rest by this submission and on his death-bed he recalled the whole scene to his son, Solomon (1 Kings 2:8-10). Solomon gave Shimei notice that from henceforth he must consider himself confined to the walls of Jerusalem, on pain of death. For three years the engagement was kept. At the end of that time for the purpose of capturing two slaves who had escaped to Gath, he went out and made his journey successfully. On his return the king took him at his word and he was slain by Benaiah (1 Kings 2:36-46).

From <http://biblehub.com>

Abishai and his brothers . . . thought that kingship meant domination and that power needed to be indicated by an aggressive display of strength. David in his better moments, one of which we see here, knew that he didn't need to take that kind of action to prove his kingship. It is a temptation, even within Christian circles, to feel that the best way for leaders to assert their authority is by a show of strength. It is to be hoped that we can be as strong as David in resisting such a temptation.

From The Message of Samuel p 254 by Mary J. Evans.

5. Read 2 Sam 4:4, ch 9, 16:1-4, 19:24-30.
Mephibosheth's fortunes fluctuate widely. Does he deserve what happens to him?

To finish

6. (a) When is criticism a good thing?

(b) Can criticism be encouraging? How?

7. David resists advice to kill Shimei.
(a) Can you think of examples when Jesus could have shown his power but did not?

(b) Why didn't Jesus use his power on these occasions?

(c) What is the place of strength and power in a Christian's life (see 2 Cor 12:7-10)?

Study 12, 2 Sam 19:31-20:26, Judah & Israel & motivation

Getting started

1. Different things motivate people e.g. love, fear, guilt, embarrassment, gratitude, duty, money, passion, pride, status, power, revenge, beauty, pleasure, intellectual interest.



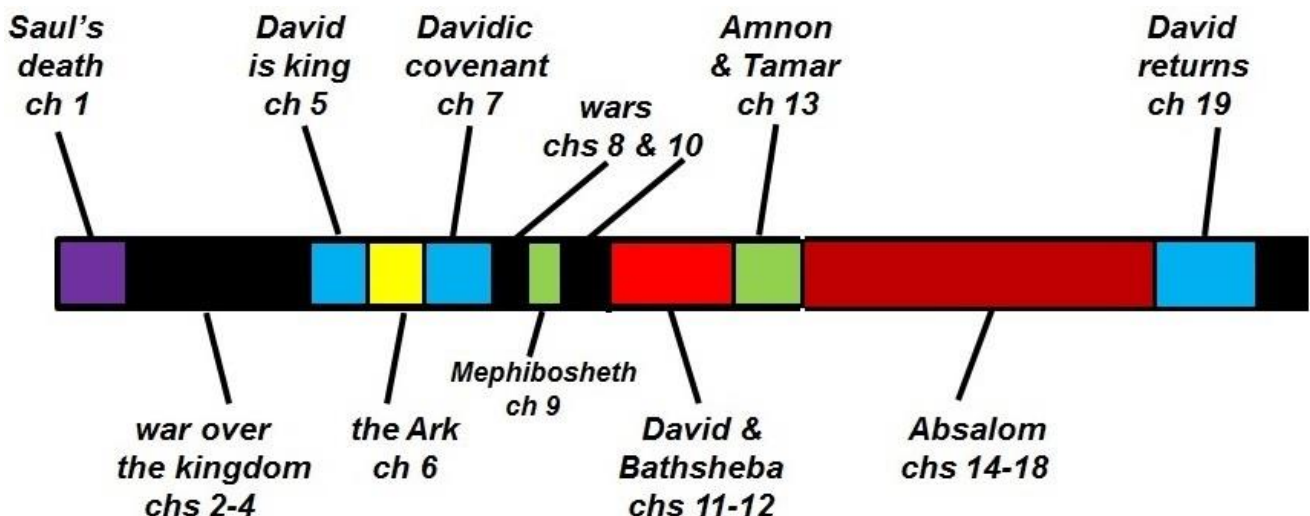
Can you think of something that you had great enthusiasm for?

What motivated you?

2. What is your strongest motivation
 - at home?
 - at work?
 - at church?

The story so far . . .

David was God's warrior king defeating all comers. He showed compassion towards the crippled Mephibosheth (ch 9) but had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14). Reconciliation did not go smoothly and Absalom tried to wrest power away from David. David and his followers left Jerusalem and fled from Absalom. David's forces re-gathered and defeated Absalom's army. Against David's directions Absalom was killed by Joab (chs 15-18). Diversions from the main story involved Shimei and Mephibosheth. After much mourning for Absalom David is persuaded to return to Jerusalem. This study picks up the story in 2 Sam 19 with David and his army returning to Jerusalem and efforts being made to re-unite the north and the south of the country i.e. Israel and Judah.



Bible

Sheba, a "son of Bichri," of the family of Becher, the son of Benjamin, and thus of the stem from which Saul was descended (2 Sam. 20:1-22). When David was returning to Jerusalem after the defeat of Absalom, strife arose between the ten tribes and the tribe of Judah, because the latter took the lead in bringing back the

king. Sheba took advantage of this state of things, and raised the standard of revolt, proclaiming, "We have no part in David." With his followers he proceeded northward. David seeing it necessary to check this revolt, ordered Abishai to take the "mighty men," and the body-guard and such troops as he could gather, and pursue Sheba. Joab joined the expedition, and having treacherously put Amasa to death, assumed the command of the army. Sheba took refuge in Abel-Bethmaachah, a fortified town some miles north of Lake Merom. While Joab was engaged in laying siege to this city, Sheba's head was, at the instigation of a "wise woman" who had held a parley with him from the city walls, thrown over the wall to the besiegers, and thus the revolt came to an end.

From www.aboutbibleprophecy.com.

Remember back in 1 Sam when Saul was king but he wasn't that good a king so God told Samuel to find a king after his own heart. Samuel was directed to Jesse who brought out each of his sons but Samuel said none of these were the one so then they got the youngest son, David, who was out herding sheep, and he was the one. Besides having 7 brothers David also had 2 sisters (2 sisters are mentioned in the Bible, David may have had more sisters that didn't get a mention). One sister was Zeruiah and the other was Abigail. **Zeruiah** had 3 sons - Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Joab was the commander in chief of David's army, Abishai was a general who was prominent in the last study because he wanted to kill Shimei for slanging off at David, and Asahel who was killed by Saul's general, Abner way back in 2 Sam 2. The other sister, **Abigail**, had a son called **Amasa**.

When Absalom was trying to wrest power away from David he appointed Amasa as the commander of his rebel army. David's army defeated Absalom's army and Absalom was killed by Joab in spite of David's directions. David demoted Joab and appointed Amasa as commander of his army.

3. Read 2 Sam 19:40-20:26.

(a) How did the men of Judah treat the men of Israel with contempt (2 Sam 19:43)?

(b) Why did Joab kill Amasa?

Joab had apparently never wanted to be king and probably therefore did not see himself as a power-seeker. However, his driving ambition was such that he was completely unable to accept anything other than a place as David's chief general. To maintain that place he had ruthlessly murdered Abner [2 Sam 3:27] and now he did the same to Amasa. Uriah's death had been at David's command; Abner's could be justified in Joab's mind at least as revenge for the death of his brother; Absalom's death was perhaps justified on political grounds; but for the death of Amasa there is no excuse whatsoever. . . . David knew of Joab's violent tendencies and had, even though it was rather late in the day, made an attempt, by replacing him with Amasa, to put some kind of sanction on him. Joab was having nothing of it and it is interesting that David makes no further attempt to rein in Joab's activities. Instead he gives up and leaves him to Solomon to deal with [1 Kings 1:5-6]. The consequences of David's failure to deal with Joab in the beginning, and of the hold Joab gained over him when Uriah was murdered, were tragic, not least for Amasa. Any refusal to make tough decisions or carry out difficult actions because of a desire not to offend someone of significance within the community or because of a wish for certain things not to be revealed, is likely to end up causing more trouble than is saved.

From The Message of Samuel p 259 by Mary J. Evans.

(c) Do Judah and Israel become united? How?

(i) What role does David play?

(ii) How are the men motivated?

4. Read 2 Sam 19:31-39.

The description of David's meeting with Barzillai adds little to our understanding of Israel's history, but it is a fascinating cameo nevertheless. David knew he was beholden to Barzillai and he wanted it to be known that he was not stinting in the expression of his gratitude to those who had helped him. Barzillai understood that. He was rich and he was old and he had neither the need nor the desire for any help from David, but just as he was generous in material things he was generous in allowing David his chance to distribute largesse. It is indeed more blessed to give than to receive and sometimes, as in Barzillai's case, the gift to others of the opportunity to give to us is a real demonstration of such blessedness. The apparently generous approach that always wants to give to others can in fact mask an inherent selfishness. In this instance, Kimham, perhaps a younger son or grandson of Barzillai was more than happy to emigrate across into Israel under David's sponsorship and to take up a role in the court. Kimham's presence as a kind of envoy would provide diplomatic advantages to both parties as well as evidence of David's generosity to his allies.

To finish

5. (a) What motivates you to go to church?

(b) What motivates you to read the Bible?

(c) What motivates you to pray?

(d) What motivates you to live?

(e) Is there something about Jesus' personality that motivates you?

(f) How do you motivate others?

Study 13, 2 Sam 21, endings

Getting started

1. What is your - favourite book?

- favourite movie?



2. What sort of endings to books or movies do you like e.g. happy endings or sad endings or endings that leave you wondering?

3. If it was up to you, how would you end 2 Samuel?

The story so far . . .

Ch 1: Saul's death opened the way for David to become king. Abner was the commander of Saul's army and Joab was the commander of David's army and the two armies went to war. When the dust settled David was king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). Then David defeated the Jebusites and made their city, Jerusalem, his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25). Ch 6 - David brought the Ark to Jerusalem and (ch 7) God made an everlasting covenant with David and his family line. Ch 8: with God going before them, David's army defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Babylonians, the Arameans, Hamath and the Edomites. Ch 9: David gave everything that belonged to Saul and his family to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth. Ch 10: the Ammonites mishandled diplomatic relations with David and they and their Aramean allies were defeated in battle. David had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14). Absalom tried to wrest power away from David but his army was defeated and he was killed by Joab (chs 15-18). Diversions from the main story involved Shimei and Mephibosheth. After much mourning for Absalom David is persuaded to return to Jerusalem (ch 19). Sheba tried to take the kingdom from David but failed and is killed (ch 20).

Bible

1 Kings 1 picks up the story where 2 Sam 20 leaves off and continues the ongoing story of the kingdom of Israel. 2 Sam 21-24 is slightly different. It is as if the editors found a number of other documents or incidents that were important enough to include but that didn't quite fit in with the structure of the other narratives. The six sections [see below] are thus largely independent of each other and their timing is not always easy to determine. However, they very helpfully shed further light on the life and times of David.

From The Message of Samuel p 262 by Mary J. Evans.

1. 2 Sam 21:1-14	consequences of a violated covenant
2. 2 Sam 21:15-22	battleground heroics
3. 2 Sam ch 22	a psalm of thanksgiving
4. 2 Sam 23:1-7	David's 'last will and testament'
5. 2 Sam 23:8-39	the honours list
6. 2 Sam ch 24	consequences of a foolish action

4. Read 2 Sam 21:1-2.
Comment on the wisdom of God for bringing the famine.

The problem was that Saul, in some otherwise unrecorded incident, had apparently included the Gibeonites in his attempt to rid the nation of foreign opposition. Saul's motives had been good. Out of *zeal for Israel and Judah* (verse 2) he had tried to clear the land of non-Israelites, as he had been commissioned to do. But it is not acceptable, even in completing worthwhile tasks, to set aside other principles. The Gibeonites had, way back in the time of Joshua, negotiated an alliance with Israel. A covenant was made under which Gibeon was guaranteed freedom from attack and were made bonded labourers. The implication here is that the Gibeonites remained in a subservient position within Israel and assumed that the covenant of peace was still in force. The breaking of any kind of covenant was always seen as a serious matter. God is a God of faithfulness and truth and it mattered that his people illustrated his character by their own trustworthiness. Israel, through Saul, had committed a grave offence against the Gibeonites and they deserved to be avenged.

One wonders why it took so long before the judgment was instituted. It would also be interesting to know more details of what Saul did, and indeed what was happening amongst the Gibeonites currently that perhaps brought the old covenant into focus. But as in so many cases, in these narratives we are given only the details that enable the writer's point to come across. The point in this case seems to be, first, that it is very important to keep promises and, secondly, that God takes seriously the rights of all members of society, even those who are normally considered as insignificant.

From The Message of Samuel pp 263-264 by Mary J. Evans.

5. Read 2 Sam 21:3-14.
Think back on all the killing in 2 Sam. How will the killing of 7 of Saul's descendants make things right?

David gladly agreed to their suggestion in spite of the fact that the Old Testament forbids the punishment of children for crimes committed by their parents [Deut 24:16 cf. Eze 18], and that David had himself made an oath to Saul that his descendants would not be killed [1 Sam 24:21-22]. David does not come out entirely well from this incident. It is ironic that his method of absolving the nation from the guilt caused by the breaking of a promise was to break another promise.

From The Message of Samuel p 265 by Mary J. Evans.

6. Read 2 Sam 21:15-22.
(a) How does this introduce David's retirement?

(b) The Philistines seem to have always been the arch enemies of Israel.
What do we learn about having enemies?

To finish

7. In today's world how do you/we handle enemies - personally?

- politically?

Study 14, 2 Sam 22, A psalm of David

Getting started

1. In remembering your parents what event or aspect of their lives made the biggest impression on you?

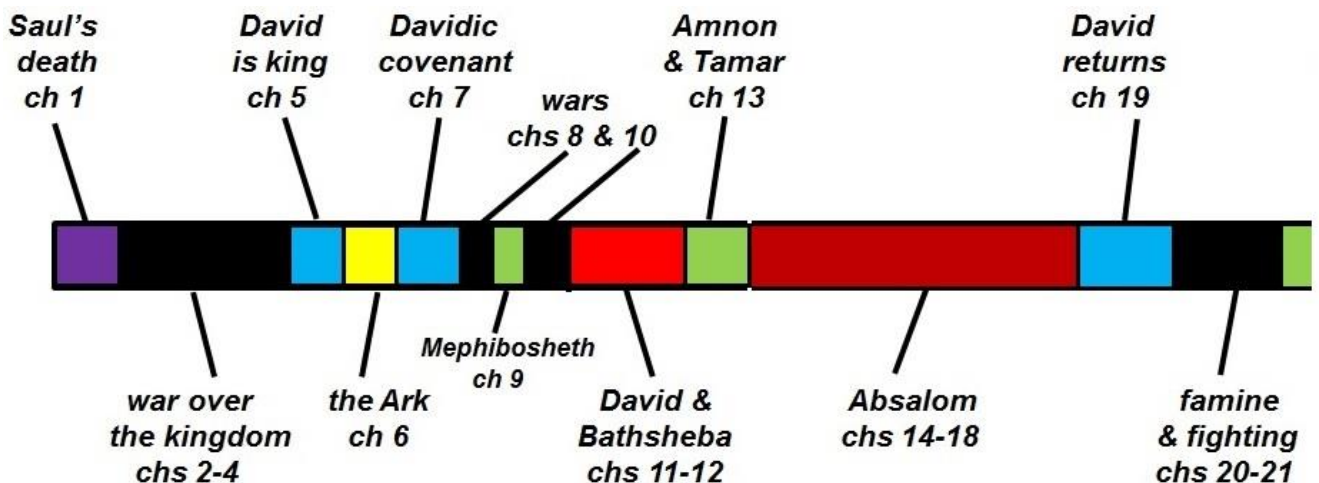


2. In remembering David what event or aspect of his life has made the biggest impression on you?

The story so far . . .

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David had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David's dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar's brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14). Absalom tried to wrest power away from David but his army was defeated and he was killed by Joab (chs 15-18). Diversions from the main story involved Shimei and Mephibosheth. After much mourning for Absalom David is persuaded to return to Jerusalem (ch 19). Sheba tried to take the kingdom from David but failed and is killed (ch 20). An old feud between Saul and the Gibeonites resulted in God causing a famine in the land (ch 21).



Bible

3. Read 2 Sam 21:15-17.

Chapters 11 to 21 of 2 Samuel have recounted David's sin and its consequences – disastrous – for his family and for Israel. His son Absalom has been killed (Chapter 18), the tribes are at war (“civil war”) and while the Philistines have reappeared and been defeated, what “ominous note” is sounded in Chapter 21:15-17?

4. Read 2 Sam 22:1-20.

(a) From verse 1 it seems that this song was composed either after the incident recorded in 1 Sam ch 24 (where Saul is out to kill David but David finds Saul and spares his life), or after his victories over the Philistines etc., but before David's adultery. Why then, do you think the writer of 1 and 2 Samuel puts it here toward the end of his account of David?

(b) What has God repeatedly done that David celebrates?

(c) What does this passage say about the character of God?

5. Read 2 Samuel 22:21-32.

(a) What does this passage say about the character of God (pause after each verse from vv 25-32)?

(b) From verses 21-28, what does David claim about himself?

(c) What is your reaction to these claims?

6. Read verses 33 to 51.

What is David's response to God's goodness to him?

To finish

7. In what ways can we share David's confidence in God?

8. Why is Jesus' “righteousness” important for us?

Study 15, 2 Sam 23-24, Last words of David and a census

Getting started

1. Much of 2 Sam 23 is devoted to “David’s mighty men” or heroes. To get us in the mood I’m going to play some music and you have to guess which hero the music reminds you of.
 - (a) Theme to James Bond 007 movies (1st movie “Dr No” 1962).
 - (b) Theme to the Superman movies (first one in 1978).
 - (c) “It’s Time” theme to Labor’s election campaign, 1972, (lead singer Alison McCallum).
 - (d) “Candle in the Wind” song by Elton John and Bernie Taupin (1973 – Marilyn Monroe who died 1962, 1997 – Princess Diana).
 - (e) “Our Don Bradman” song by Art Leonard 1930. Don Bradman 1908-2001, test career 1928-1948.
 - (f) “Killing me Softly” sung by Roberta Flack 1973 about Don Mclean (“American Pie”, “Vincent”, “Empty Chairs”).
 - (g) “Jumping Jack Flash” by The Rolling Stones 1968 – Mick Jagger.
 - (h) Opening theme to the movie “Chariots of Fire” by Vangelis 1981 about 2 athletes in the 1924 Olympics in Paris, Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams.
 - (i) “My Way” written by Paul Anka and sung by Frank Sinatra 1969. Reminds me of John Gorton (PM 1968-1971).

2. (a) Besides people from the Bible, who are (or were) your heroes?



- (b) Why are/were they your heroes?

The story so far . . .

Ch 1: Saul’s death opened the way for David to become king. Abner was the commander of Saul’s army and Joab was the commander of David’s army and the two armies went to war. When the dust settled David was king over both Israel and Judah (2:1-5:5). Then David defeated the Jebusites and made their city, Jerusalem, his city calling it the City of David. The Philistines mounted an attack but were defeated (5:6-25). Ch 6 - David brought the Ark to Jerusalem and (ch 7) God made an everlasting covenant with David and his family line. Ch 8: with God going before them, David’s army defeated the Philistines, the Moabites, the Babylonians, the Arameans, Hamath and the Edomites. Ch 9: David gave everything that belonged to Saul and his family to Saul’s grandson, Mephibosheth. Ch 10: the Ammonites mishandled diplomatic relations with David and they and their Aramean allies were defeated in battle.

David had Uriah killed after seducing his wife, Bathsheba (ch 11). The prophet, Nathan, convinced David of his sin (ch 12). David’s dysfunctional family saw his son, Amnon, rape his half-sister, Tamar, and Tamar’s brother, Absalom, killed Amnon in revenge (ch 13). David has mixed feelings about Absalom so Joab manipulates things to re-unite Absalom with his father (ch 14). Absalom tried to wrest power away from David but his army was defeated and he was killed by Joab (chs 15-18). Diversions from the main story involved Shimei and Mephibosheth. After much mourning for Absalom David is persuaded to return to Jerusalem (ch 19). Sheba tried to take the kingdom from David but failed and is killed (ch 20). An old feud between Saul and the Gibeonites resulted in God causing a famine in the land (ch 21). Ch 22 gives us a psalm of David.

Bible

3. From what you have read in 2 Sam and the story of David from 1 Sam (see p 6), how would you describe David's life?

4. Read 2 Sam 23:1-7.
 - (a) How does David describe his life?

 - (b) Why is this different from your answer to question 3?

5. Read 2 Sam 23:8-39.
 - (a) The "three mighty men" risk their lives because David is thirsty.
 - (i) Who is in the right here - the three mighty men for being brave and helping their king?
 - David for wasting the water because they risked their lives for it?

 - (ii) What is the point of this story?

 - (b) Are there appropriate ways to recognise today's heroes/heroines?

6. Read 2 Sam 24.
 - (a)
 - (i) Does God incite his people to commit offences? Why/why not?

 - (ii) What would be the equivalent today of taking a census of the fighting men?

 - (b) Can being 'incited', whether by God or Satan, ever be seen as a reason for refusing to take responsibility for our own actions?

 - (c) In what ways might God's displeasure with our behaviour be revealed today?

To finish

7. Look over 2 Sam.
- What are the main themes?
 - What did you like about 2 Sam?
 - What did you not like about 2 Sam?

