

# Through the Bible Book by Book

## Old Testament

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### Second Samuel

**Theme:** "The whole book centers around the figure of David; there is none other of sufficient importance to draw off the attention. It is GOD's portrait of His anointed to which our eyes are directed. It is the picture of the man after GOD's own heart that we are called upon to study. And we begin our study with the question: What is there about David to merit so honorable a title? He is not pointed out to us from a distance that we may gaze at the king set upon lofty eminence, surrounded by all the insignia of royalty, but we are invited to a close acquaintance with the man.

We see him, not only upon the throne but in the home. We watch him in his deepest sorrows, as well as in the hour of his greatest triumphs; we hear his prayers and his praises, his righteous indignation, his words of kindness, tenderness and generosity. We are witnesses of his sin and his repentance, of his moments of impatience, of his kingly dignity, and the whole picture, in spite of its occasional dark shadows, shows us a man in whose life GOD really was first, and to whom above an else he was a glorious reality - a man, in short, who was deeply conscious of his own weakness, failure and sin, but who knew GOD and trusted Him with his whole heart." - Markham.

**Author:** The events recorded in the book of II Samuel were probably added to Samuel's book (I Chronicles 29:29) by Nathan or Gad. In the Hebrew Bible, I and II Samuel formed one book. They were divided by the Septuagint translators (about 285 B. C.) when they translated the Old Testament into the Greek language.

**Scope:** From the death of Saul to the purchase of the temple site, covering a period of 31 years.

### CONTENTS

1. David's Rise (1-10).
2. David's Fall (11-20).
3. The Later Years of David (21-24).

#### I. David's Rise

1. The death of Saul (chapter 1).
2. David becomes king over all Israel (chaps. 2-5).

3. The ark brought to Jerusalem (chapter 6).
4. The Davidic covenant (chapter 7).
5. David's conquests (Chapters 8-10).

It is believed by scholars that the story of the Amalekite (II Samuel 1:4-10) was fabrication. His object in coming to David with the news of Saul's death was to find favor in his sight. He imagined that the king would be pleased at the news of the death of his enemy. David, seeing the evil motive of the young man, justly punished him. In thus doing, David acted on the principle that he had followed all through his dealings with Saul; namely, reverence for the Lord's anointed. He wished to avoid all appearances of being accessory to the death of Saul.

- Which was the first tribe to recognize David as king (2:1-4)?  
 How did the men of Jabesh-gilead show kindness to Saul (I Samuel 31:11-13; II Samuel 2:4-7)?  
 Who instigated war between Judah and the eleven tribes (2:8-11)?  
 What was the outcome of the war (3:1)?  
 Who made a league with David at this time (3:12-26)?  
 What is revealed concerning Joab's character in chapter 3?  
 What was David's attitude toward Joab's murder of Abner? Notice David's continued faithfulness to Saul and his house (chapter 4)  
 Where and when was David appointed king over all Israel (Chapter 5)?  
 What city became the capital of the kingdom at this time (5:6-9)?  
 Who built David a home at this time (5:11)?  
 What Psalm did David compose on that occasion (Psalm 30)?

The bringing up of the ark was a laudable act on David's part, but the manner of carrying it was in violation of the law of GOD. The ark, instead of being carried on a cart should have been borne by the priests (Numbers 4:14, 15; 7:9).

- Where was the ark taken after this (6:10, 11)?  
 What did its presence bring to that family?  
 Was David's conduct before the ark very dignified?  
 Who took exception to it? With what did she reproach David (verse 20)?  
 With what words did David justify his conduct (verse 21)?  
 What was the result of Michal's criticism of David (verse 23)?  
 What did David purpose to do (7:1-3)?  
 Who encouraged him in this? Was it however GOD's will that David should build the temple (I Chronicles 22:8)?

chapter 7:8-17 records GOD's making of a covenant with David, whereby He promises to him and his descendants the throne and kingdom forever. We quote from Dr. Scofield:

"This covenant, upon which the glorious kingdom of CHRIST "of the seed of David according to the flesh" is to be founded, secures:

- "1. A Davidic 'house'; i.e., posterity, family.
- "2. A 'throne'; i.e., royal authority.

"3. A kingdom; i.e., a sphere of rule.

"4. In perpetuity; 'forever.'

"5. And this fourfold covenant has but one condition; disobedience in the Davidic family is to be visited with chastisement but not to the abrogation of the covenant (II Samuel 7:15; Psalm 89:20-37; Isaiah 55:3).

Chastisement fell; first in the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam, and finally in the captivities (II Kings 25:1-7). Since that time but one king of the Davidic family has been crowned and He was crowned with thorns. But the Davidic covenant confirmed to David by the oath of the Lord and renewed to Mary by the angel Gabriel is immutable (Psalm 89:30-37), and the Lord GOD will yet give to that thorn-crowned One **'the throne of His father David'** (Luke 1:31-33; Acts 2:29-32)."

Notice David's beautiful prayer of thanksgiving after the making of this covenant (7:18-29).

How did David fully establish his kingdom (chapter 8)? Make a list of the nations he subdued. How does David again show his kindness to Saul's family (chapter 9)?

## **II. David's Fall**

1. David's great sin (11, 12).
2. Absalom's rebellion (13-20).

Read Psalm 51.

Nathan's saying that David had given occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme (12:14), has found fulfillment in the sneers of infidels who scoff at the fact of David's being called "**a man after God's own heart.**" That David was a man after GOD's own heart does not mean that he was faultless, but it does mean that he was a man in whose heart there was an earnest desire to do GOD's will and seek His righteousness, in contrast to Saul, who was always seeking his own way. David committed the foulest of sins yet, with a true sense of the Lord's righteousness and a sense of his own guilt, he repented in sackcloth and ashes. There are many important lessons we may learn from David's sin:

1. However strong and spiritual a man may be, if he gets his eyes off GOD, he is liable to fall.
2. The recording in plain terms of the sin of Israel's greatest hero without any attempt to whitewash it, is a strong proof of the divine origin of the Bible. The natural thing to have done would be to draw a veil over this unpleasant event (chapter 12:12).
3. GOD's grace can pardon the blackest of sins if there is true repentance (12:13).
4. Whatever a man sows that will he reap. The child of David's sinful union died. His two sons followed him in adultery and one committed murder.
5. GOD will not for a moment condone sin even on the part of His best beloved children.

It was not long after his incident that David continued to reap what he had sown. His son Amnon committed an act of immorality which led to his murder by Absalom (chapter 13). David loved his son, but a dread of public opinion had made him hesitate to recall him from the banishment to which he had been sentenced.

Joab, knowing the struggle that was taking place in the king's heart, between affection and duty, resorted to a stratagem described in chapter 14. The wise woman he employed, in a skillful speech, obtained a pledge from the king that her son, who had supposedly slain his brother, would be pardoned.

She then insinuated that in pardoning Absalom, he would be doing no more than he had done for her, and there could be no charge of partiality against him. The scheme was successful. However, subsequent events prove that David had acted unwisely in pardoning Absalom for his son rebelled against him.

David's prompt decision to leave Jerusalem and place the Jordan between him and the rebels, was the action of a skillful soldier. In connection with David's flight, Psalm 3 should be read.

Notice David's patience and humility in the face of Shimei's insult. He sees the hand of GOD in everything (16:5-12).

Ahithophel counsels Absalom to commit an act which would cut off all hope of reconciliation with his father, and which would compel everyone in Israel to show his colors (16:21-23). This act was a fulfillment of II Samuel 12:12.

Ahithophel then advises Absalom to take a small force and capture his father before he could gather a large army. Hushai defeated this counsel by suggesting that Absalom make a general mobilization of his whole army. This would give David time to pass over the Jordan and gather a large army. Ahithophel, foreseeing David's victory, and his own disgrace, committed suicide.

Joab's insolent reproof of David shows that he had no love for him (19:1-7). At heart he was a rebel. His having murdered Absalom had turned David completely against him (19:13, compare I Kings 2:5).

"This chapter (19) as a mirror, exhibits some sad facts. David seems to have forgotten the use and meaning of prayer. Amid the incessant movement of this chapter it is not once mentioned that: **David enquired of the Lord.**'

The result was that he allowed selfish and excessive affection for his rebellious son to smother the affection which he should have shown for his brave and faithful soldiers; he pardoned Shimei, swearing to him by the Lord - an oath which he should not have taken (I Kings 2:8, 9) - when he ought to have judged him; he condemned Mephibosheth when he should have done him justice; he rewarded Zeba when he should have punished him; and he hastened to Jerusalem without giving time for the chiefs and soldiers of the Northern tribes to assist in the restoration, thus occasioning the bloodshed and misery that followed in the next chapter."

What tribe should have been the first to welcome David back (19:11)?

Why (verse 12)?

Will the time ever come when Israel and Judah will welcome David's Son (Zechariah 12:10; Matthew 23:39)?

Who conducted David back to the city (19:40)?

What did David's preferment of the tribe of Judah cause (19:41-20:1,2)?

Of what was this division between Judah and Israel the beginning (I Kings 12:16-24)?

What crime did Joab add to his record at this time (chapter 20)?

### **III. David's Later Years**

1. The three years of famine (chapter 21).
2. David's song (chapter 22).
3. David's last words (chapter 23).
4. David's sin in numbering the people (chap. 24).

What was the cause of the famine mentioned in Chapter 21 (Compare Joshua chapter 9)?

What penalty did Saul's family pay for the violation of this oath?

Chapter 22 has been called by Spurgeon "The grateful retrospect." Toward the close of his life, David looks back on the vicissitudes and trials of the past and gratefully acknowledges the Lord's grace and faithfulness.

The first seven verses of chapter 23 record the last words of David. In this connection, Psalm 72 should be read, the last verse of which seems to indicate that it was David's last prayer.

What three things are said concerning David in (verse 1)?

What did David claim in verse 2?

Who bore witness to this (Matthew 22:43)?

What did David say was GOD's ideal of a ruler (verses 3, 4)?

Did David feel that he and his house had lived up to this standard (verse 5)?

Though David had experienced many troubles and failures, what fact comforted him (verse 5)?

What does he say concerning his enemies (verses 6, 7)?

The remainder of the chapter gives a list of David's mighty men and their exploits. (verse 16, 17 give us a glimpse of the devotion of these men toward David, and his appreciation of their valor.

Chapter 24 records David's sin in numbering the people. A comparison with I Chronicles 21:1-6 shows that it was Satan who instigated this.

"GOD, though He cannot tempt man (James 1:13), is frequently described in Scripture as doing what He merely permits to be done, and so, in this case, He permitted Satan to tempt David. Satan was the active mover, while GOD only withdrew His supporting grace, and the great tempter prevailed against the king.

"The order was given by Joab who, though not generally restrained by scruples, did not fail to represent in strong terms (I Chronicles 21:3) the sin and danger of this measure, and used every argument to dissuade the king from his purpose . . .

"The fact of numbering the people was not in itself sinful; for Moses did it by the express authority of GOD. But David acted not only independently of such order or sanction, but from motives unworthy of the delegated king of Israel; from pride and vainglory, from self-confidence and lack of trust in GOD, and above all, from ambitious designs of conquest, in furtherance of which he was determined to force the people into military service and to ascertain whether he could muster an army sufficient for the magnitude of the enterprise he contemplated.

"It was a breach of the constitution, an infringement of the liberties of the people, and opposed to that Divine policy which required that Israel should continue a separate nation."

- Jamieson, Fausset and Brown.

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