

BIB104 OT2 Life & Literature of Israel

Unit 2b 2 Samuel: From Triumph to Trouble Through Sin

Presented by the



LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
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King Saul and Samuel are dead, but God has not left Israel without a leader. David, the man who killed Goliath, is a famous and mighty warrior of Israel. And the man God has chosen as Israel's new king, David, is a good king who serves the Lord and cares deeply for his people. God blesses David and the entire nation under his rule. More importantly, God makes a covenant, which is a solemn promise with David that he would establish his throne forever. However, David does disobey the Lord and he sleeps with Bathsheba who is married to one of David's soldiers, in fact, one of David's mighty men. David repents, but God still has to punish him with wars, betrayal, rebellions, and national upheaval. David still serves God throughout those difficult times, though he often, I'm sure, wanted to throw in the towel. And God is faithful still to his promise. David remains as the king over Israel.

Now, the thing with 2 Samuel is the great reign of King David. We see that in 2Sa 5:10-12. The entire book is really about his rule. There's more written within the Scriptures about David than any other Bible character, except for Christ himself. David was great because of his faith in God. David was not only Israel's greatest king, but he was a psalmist and he was a warrior and he was a prophet. David's great sins, though, were rebellion, adultery, murder, and even an unauthorized census. God forgave David's sins because David repented. God's promise to David was "Your throne will be established forever." (2Sa 7:16) I think it's important to note God forgave David because David was willing to repent of his sin. And God wants to do that same for you and I, but we have to come to a point where we acknowledge like David did, "I have sinned." That allows God's repentance to come into our life. That's what allows God's forgiveness, his redemption, and his restoration of us. But we have to take that responsibility. I am a sinner. You are a sinner who needs a savior. And even as someone who follows God, we still need to go to him when we sin and we need to make it right before our holy God so we can be in right relationship with him.

1 and 2 Samuel form one book of the Hebrew Bible. But the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of the Bible, divided these books up into really two parts. Now, although the book doesn't name a specific author, the material had to have been compiled from documents that were written in collective by the prophets Nathan, Gad, and Samuel. Samuel was the prophet of whom the book is named after, and we see it in 1 Chronicles 29:29. 2 Samuel is a narration of David as he becomes the king of Israel and during the time of his reign, and yet it follows also the course of his 40 years as the king of Israel from 1011 through 971 B.C. It also includes two psalms of hymns of praise in the final chapters. We see that the author is Samuel the prophet who wrote it at about 930 B.C. It was written to record the history of David's reign and to demonstrate the effective leadership underneath the submission of God.

Now, about half the book talks about King David's successes and the other half talks about his failures. The events span about 100 years, from 1100 B.C. to 1000 B.C. And the events cover about 40 years of that in this book in particular. The date of writing would be then right about 960 B.C. The book places the Davidic covenant in this historical context. And the genre of the book is a narrative and it's a prophetic oracle. The prophet who wrote it and declared it to us is one that we can embrace as the truth of God's word. And there were some key personalities who were here.

We not only see about David, but we also hear about Joab. We hear about Bathsheba and Nathan, Absalom, Amos, Amaziah, and Jeroboam II.

The key verses that we see in here are in 2Sa 7:16, which says this: “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.” What an amazing promise. “You, David, can be assured that your king will last forever.” And ultimately, Jesus Christ is born through the line of David. And believer, that’s our promise that God, who began a good work on us, will bring it to completion, that we are his children, and where eyes close in death, they will open up again in eternity where we will see God face to face. That’s a promise that we can hold on to throughout all of life.

2 Samuel 19:4 is another verse that is a key to this book. “The king covered his face and the king cried with a loud voice, ‘O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!’” You see as we go on down through this book, you’re going to find out that part of the challenge that David faced was children who were not only sinned against, but sinned. And one was Absalom. What would have changed his heart to go from being a loyal son of his dad to one who turned the kingdom against him? And David, his desire wasn’t for Absalom’s destruction, but for a reunification with him.

The last is 2Sa 22:2-4. “The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—from violent men you save me. I called to the Lord, who is worthy of all praise, and I’m saved from my enemies.” What a verse of promise. The protection that God gives, the security that God gives. He was David’s rock, but he’s your rock and he’s my rock. He was David’s shield. He is your shield. He is my shield. He was David’s comforter. He’s your comforter and he’s my comforter. Praise the Lord that we have God Jehovah as our God, the same God that David worshiped and followed and knew in a personal way.

Now, the Book of 2 Samuel, it shows the transition from God’s authority, from Saul’s irresponsible rule, to 2 Samuel’s documents that contain the transition of that God-honoring leadership that David had. Now, David was anointed king by Israel through God, which is a picture of the true messiah or God’s anointed one. In the New Testament, Jesus has revealed to be the fulfillment of a godly king. While David seeks to uphold the Law of Moses, Christ came to fulfill the Law of Moses. David is tempted and fails, but Jesus overcame the temptation in Matthew 4. God promises that David’s bloodline will have an everlasting kingdom and Christ would rule over Israel forever, the New Testament tells us.

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are really one story that has this major theme: God finds a man after his own heart who leads his people, David. Great, not because of who he was, but because of his deep faith in God, which we see several times listed in Samuel. He was truly God’s choice as king. He was a prophet from the day he was anointed king. It says that in 2Sa 16:3 and then also in 2Sa 23:1-2. He was the greatest of the psalmists. He inspired poets of Israel. And he was a great warrior. He ruled justly in the fear of God. His life and rule became a standard by which other later kings

followed after and were measured against. The pinnacle of Israel's greatness was reached as a result of the reign of King David and through the help and underpinning of the Lord. David was guilty of great sins, but he was forgiven because he repented. And God promised to set up the rule of David's house forever, perpetually, ongoing. This promise has been ultimately fulfilled in the reign of Jesus Christ, as we mentioned earlier, and the seat of David, which is listed in Matthew 1:1.

Saul is the king that didn't put God at the center of his life. David, however, was a man after God's own heart. Christ must not only become king in our lives but must also be at the center of our lives. The Israelites had clamored for a king. First, God gave them a king after their own heart. Then he gave them a king after his own heart, a man after his own heart who desired to be led by God. Jesus said, "Follow me, and if you obey him, he will make sure that our victories will take place." It's interesting to know what happened to both Saul and David at the same time. Saul, an unrepentant sinner, went down to death dragging his country and his family with him. David, however, was a repentant sinner and thus given glorious victory over his enemies and many were saved with him. Saul chose the way of a self-direction. David chose God's way. That's why God calls David a man after his own heart.

David's character forgave all that Saul had done against him, and it also remembered all that was favorable to Saul. It's a beautiful spirit of forgiveness that David shows, the spirit of Christ when he was nailed to the cross and now is able to live through us. The author of the book makes a beautiful truth in the outline of the story of David's struggle against Saul. Don't pray for an easy task. Pray to be stronger. The greatness of your spiritual power is the measure of your surrender. It's not a question of who you are or of what you are, but of whether God is in control of you or not, if you're allowing him to work in and through you. Saul was not a greater man than David. David was not a greater man than Saul. It was their response and attitude towards who God was and the part they were going to allow him to play in their life and the focus of what they did.

2 Samuel is set, as we mentioned, in the land of Israel during the reign of David. 1 Samuel, remember, introduced the monarchy of Israel, whereas 2 Samuel chronicles the establishment of the Davidic dynasty and the expansion of Israel under God's chosen leader. The book opens to David learning of Saul's death, his lament over the death of Saul and of Jonathan in 2Sa 1:19-27. And then David's unlikely best friend demonstrated David's personal grief over his demise. The word soon sent David over the tribe of Judah and then all over Israel as he's anointed king, uniting all 12 tribes into a tight-knit nation.

Yet biblical writers didn't overlook the flaws of our hero. And in chapters that follow, we see David's adultery followed by a series of tragedies: his son's death, his daughter Tamar is raped by his other son Amnon, Amnon is murdered, David's own political overthrow by his son Absalom, and Absalom's death. Despite the turmoil in his later years, David enjoyed the Lord's forgiveness and also his favor. His genuine sorrow and regret over his sins revealed his repentant heart with which the Lord was pleased. I love that David shows us the greatness of what can happen when we allow God to work through us and the devastation when we choose to go against God's principles and God's commands. When we

sin, there will be payment necessary. There will be repercussions. And when we obey God, there is blessings. If we could get that through our thick head, it would help us so much. Learn from David's life.

The book begins, as I mentioned, with David receiving the death of Saul and his sons, and he proclaims a time of national mourning for the nation. Soon afterwards, we know that he was crowned as king over Judah while Ish-bosheth, one of Saul's surviving sons, is crowned king over Israel. That's in chapter 2. A civil war comes to be and Ish-bosheth is murdered. The Israelites ask David to reign over them then as well. The first 10 chapters show David as victorious in battle, praised by the people, compassionate to the sick and poor, and righteous in God's eyes. We see David dance before the Lord in the streets of Jerusalem as his men brought the Ark of the Covenant back home again in chapter 6. We also meet Mephibosheth, the crippled son of Jonathan to whom David extended grace for the sake of his father Jonathan.

David moves the country's capital from Hebron to Jerusalem and later moves the Ark of the Covenant. David's plan to build a temple in Jerusalem is vetoed by God who then promises David the following things. Number one, David would have a son to rule after him. Number two, David's son would be the one to build the temple. And number three, the throne occupied by David's lineage would be established forever and ever. God would never take his mercy from David's house. David leads Israel to victory over many of their enemy nations which surrounded them. He also shows kindness to the family of Jonathan by taking in Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son. Then David falls. He lusts for a beautiful woman named Bathsheba, commits adultery with her. And then her husband is murdered, Uriah.

I always find it interesting to note that David's greatest sins happened after Jonathan's death. To have a good friend in our life. In David's case, he called Jonathan a friend that was basically a brother, a knit heart. To have a friend to go to us and speak to us in truth to remind us about things we should be doing. They're obedient to God and also correcting us when we're doing things that are disobedient to God. How would David's life have been different if he would have had Jonathan there to say "David, you don't stand on the rooftop and look out across the city and spot a beautiful woman bathing. You go to war because now is the time that you need to be out in the battlefield, not on the rooftop."? We don't know. But Jonathan wasn't there and David looked, he lusted, he took, and then there was a series of sins that took place, and also punishments. Interesting for us to make note of and to pay attention to.

Trouble comes with his firstborn son, as I mentioned about the repercussions, and he dies. Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar. In retaliation to that, Tamar's brother Absalom kills Amnon. And then Absalom flees Jerusalem rather than face his father's anger. Later, Absalom leads a revolt against David, and some of David's former associates join the rebellion in chapters 15 and 16. David is forced out of Jerusalem, and Absalom sets himself up as king for a short time. But that usurper is overthrown and, again, David's wishes through God is that he be the king again. But in the course of it, his son is also killed by David's general, and David mourns his son's death. There was an

unrest that settled at that time that plagued the remainder of David's reign. The men of Israel threatened to split from Judah. David had to suppress another uprising in chapter 20. And the book's appendix includes information concerning a three-year famine in the land, a song of David, a record of the exploits of David's bravest and David's sinful senses and ensuing plague. Those are all from chapter 21 to chapter 24.

There's one other thing that we see that's important to note as we look at this book. Jesus is seen in the song of David at the end of his life in chapter 22. He sings of his rock, fortress, and deliverer (we mentioned that verse earlier), his refuge and his savior. Jesus is our rock (1 Corinthians 10:4 and 1 Peter 2:7-9). He's our deliverer, as he was the deliverer of Israel (Romans 11:25-27), the fortress to whom we have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope that's set before us (Hebrews 6:18), and our only savior (Luke 11 and 2 Timothy 1:10).

Interestingly, even though 2 Samuel only covers four years, there's a lot packed in as we see David's reign played out, as we see a reminder of our own lives and what can happen when we choose to follow and obey God and when we choose to disobey and go away from God. We see that David, at the end of his life, sings a song that should be resonating in our own life, that at the end of it all, the important thing is that our foundation is on God, that Christ is our savior, that our eyes are fixed on him. David who could have gotten bitter against God's judgment on him, David who could have gotten angry against God and forsook him, instead, through his difficulties, through his ups, through his downs, maintained a steadfast, focused perspective on God and God alone. I'm not sure what difficulty you're facing or what victories, but I encourage you, as you learn from the life of David, that you too embrace Christ for who he is. Through the good and through the bad, know that he is enough, just as David showed us as we looked over 2 Samuel.