

The image features two weathered, ancient stone columns standing on a rocky, moss-covered ledge. The columns are made of light-colored stone with visible textures and some damage. The background is a vast, open landscape with distant mountains under a clear blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a high-altitude or coastal location.

2 SAMUEL

THE RISE AND FALL OF DAVID

Term 4 Sermon Series

About These Studies

Our Term 4 Bible Study series based on 2 Samuel 1-24 has eight pre-written studies. These studies are generally designed to be completed by your group after you have heard the passage preached on a Sunday. Each study consists of roughly seven to ten open-ended questions for your group to discuss.

It may help to think about these questions as “discussion starters” rather than a set of questions to answer one after another. You should allow about 30 to 60 minutes for this discussion. The studies do not aim to guide your group in detailed exegesis of each passage. Rather, they aim to:

- Revisit the exegesis that was presented in the Sunday sermon
- Help your group address remaining questions that you have about the passage
- Provide your group with ample opportunity to consider possible passage applications



This term we have again included some Head/Heart/Hand icons throughout the studies to help signal where a question is moving into application. The HEAD symbol indicates that the question is aimed at sharpening the way we THINK. The HEART symbol indicates a question more closely tied to our DESIRES/EMOTIONS/AFFECTIONS. The HAND symbol indicates that we are getting more PRACTICAL or moving toward TAKING ACTION.

It is recommended that each group member listens to the relevant sermons before the group meeting. Members may also wish to listen to the corresponding episode of Sermon Seasonings podcast (on the weeks when these are available).

Special thanks to Ross Hansen, Leigh Cartwright and Seb Lane who were involved in writing draft studies for this term. The studies have also been reviewed and given a final edit by Seb Lane. The study booklet has been designed by Justine Kim. The Bible verses throughout this study booklet are generally quoted from New International Version (NIV), Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.

Special Request from our Mission Team - '2 for 2'

This term in Growth Group we want to encourage group leaders and members to be thinking intentionally about those friends and family that you have that do not yet know Jesus. We believe that only God can change the hearts of those who are dead in their sins. So, we must bring them before God in prayer.

If you are a leader it would be fantastic if you could encourage each member of your group to choose two people in their life that they would particularly like to be praying for. Then share these names across the group and pray for them. It would be fantastic to spend some time early in the term praying together as a group for each member's 2 chosen people and then determine how you will keep praying together for these people ongoingly.

For example, our group (Braydon and Merryn's GG) will split in two's to pray for these people every second week as part of our normal group's time in prayer. This is just one way to keep these people in our prayers. Our Explore course will also be running again early next year and could be an awesome goal to bring along the friend you have been praying for!

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Introduction

“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you:

¹² 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.

¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.” 2 Samuel 7:11b-16 ¹

Author, Date & Title

We don't know who wrote the book of 1 and 2 Samuel or the exact date of its composition. Some scholars hold quite complex compositional theories and divide between an early date (towards the end of David's life and reign as King) or a very late date for its final form (during the Babylonian exile period or later). In Protestant tradition, the books are named after the prophet Samuel, but it's not likely that Samuel himself authored 2 Samuel, because we're also told in the narrative that Samuel dies at the beginning of 1 Samuel 25. In the LXX (the Greek version of the Old Testament) the books were also titled First and Second Kingdoms.

Purpose

One of the aims and purposes of 1-2 Samuel is to explain and defend the kingship of David (over Saul's house) and to also point us forward ultimately to the true King of Israel who would come later as the promised Son of David (cf. 2 Samuel 7) to finally establish the Kingdom of God in fulfilment of God's covenantal promises.

¹ The Bible verses throughout this brief are generally quoted from New International Version (NIV), Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.

Major Themes

In his commentary on 1-2 Samuel J. Robert Vannoy writes, "...[T]he major themes of 1-2 Samuel are highlighted in the three poetic accounts that frame the book (The Song of Hannah, 1 Sam 2:1-10; David's Son in Praise of God's Reign, 2 Sam 22; and David's Last Words about His Reign, 2 Sam 23:1-7). The most basic of these themes is divine sovereignty over all of human history. These three poems affirm that the Lord governs all the affairs of every individual life as well as those of the nation. It is the Lord who exalts, and it is the Lord who brings low. Closely linked with the theme of divine sovereignty is the theme of the rise of kingship in Israel. This is also the Lord's doing. Kingship is anticipated in the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:10) and celebrated in David's Song in Praise of God's Reign (2 Sam 22:51) and David's last Words about His Reign (2 Sam 23:1,5). David himself is presented as the "man anointed by the God of Jacob" (2 Sam 23:1). He is the one who says, "Is it not my family God has chosen? Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me. His agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every detail. He will ensure my safety and success" (2 Sam 23:5). These two themes are complemented by a third, related theme, that of the reversal of fortunes. It is customary for the Lord to bless the humble and raise them up, and to judge the proud and bring them down (1 Sam 2:5-10; 2 Sam 22:28; 23:1,6)."²

Structure

The Book of 2 Samuel		
The Rise of David (2 Sam. 1-10)	The Fall of David (2 Sam 11-20)	Epilogue (2 Sam 21-24)

2 Samuel begins in chapter 1 recording the death of King Saul, which picks up where 1 Samuel left off. Between 2 Samuel 2-5 we read about the LORD's consolidation of David's Kingdom at Hebron. Then from 2 Samuel 5:6-8:18 we read about the LORD establishing of David's throne at Jerusalem, including a very significant covenant the LORD makes with David in 2 Samuel 7. A key turning-point in David's reign occurs in 2 Samuel 11 with his adultery with Bathsheba and the organised murder of Uriah. The LORD sends Nathan the prophet to David in 2 Samuel 12 with a word of judgement, which begins a downward fall for David & his household. In the chapters that follow we see the working out of 2 Samuel 12:10-12 in the lives of David's sons: Amnon's rape of Tamar (2 Sam 13) and Absalom killing of Amnon (2 Sam 14). Things get even worse for David's kingship when his son Absalom leads a treasonous revolt against him (2 Sam 15-20). The book of 2 Samuel ends with an epilogue to the books of Samuel (2 Sam 21-24), which is thematically organised rather than chronological.

² Vannoy, J.R. *1-2 Samuel*. Cornerstone Biblical Commentary. (Tyndale, 2009), 22.

Some Reader Guidance

One of the differences between studying 2 Samuel and where we have just been (ie, looking at in the second half of the Letter of Romans) is one of genre. 2 Samuel is Old Testament narrative whereas Romans is a New Testament epistle with very tight logic. This means that one of the reading strategies for understanding 2 Samuel better isn't in the first instance to slow-down our reading (like we might be used to doing in Paul's letter), but rather to speed-up our reading and instead read the book of 2 Samuel in large slabs. Secondly, remember that there is an overall big storyline in this book and then there are also mini-story episodes within this larger story too. So reading quickly the first time will help us to get our heads around the big picture storyline of the book before we get too bogged down in the details. It's a little bit like the first time you may have read the gospel accounts (or perhaps even the whole Bible). In the first reading – there is an unknown quality to the story. You get to just enjoy meeting the characters, following the plot line including the twists and the turns and all the surprises along the way. But, once you've read the whole book 2 Samuel through before, it's actually very helpful to start to go back over it again a second or third time– to see things you may have missed the first time through. Maybe there were details that perhaps you skipped over that now in light of knowing the whole picture help you to appreciate the way this narrative has been arranged? Thirdly, remember that ultimately this story isn't primarily about you and me. It's about God and his anointed King. So we need to be careful not to constantly be drawn to putting ourselves into the centre of this story, in the first instance. Instead we are getting to see how the Kingdom of David (in 2 Samuel) provides us with a model kingdom that itself points forward to an even greater fulfilment in the kingdom of God that Jesus Christ (the Son of David) announced and inaugurated when he came into the world (Mark 1:15).

Recommended Resources

Highly Accessible / Non - Technical

Sermon Seasonings



Apple iTunes, Spotify or, online via:
<https://anchor.fm/sermonseasonings/>

2 Samuel Intro Night



David Mears - Mon 14 October 2024 –
7:30pm @ Christ Church

Help Me Teach the Bible Podcast: Nancy Guthrie & John Woodhouse



Part 1: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/john-woodhouse-on-2-samuel-part-1/>

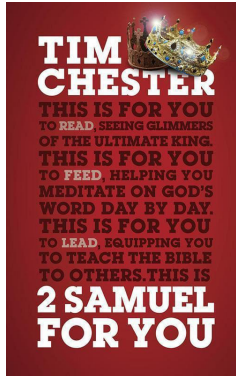
Part 2: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/podcasts/help-me-teach-the-bible/john-woodhouse-on-2-samuel-part-2/>

Big Picture Overview: 2 Samuel by the Bible Project

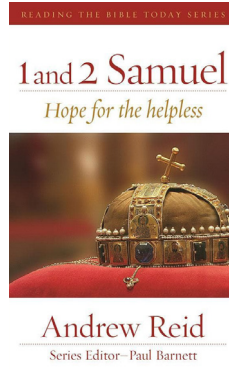


<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/2-samuel/>

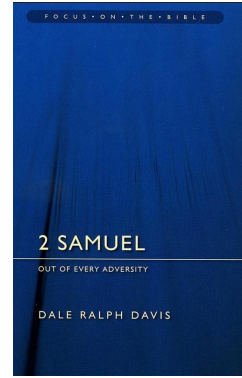
Low/Mid-Range Accessible / Semi-Technical



2 Samuel For You
by Tim Chester

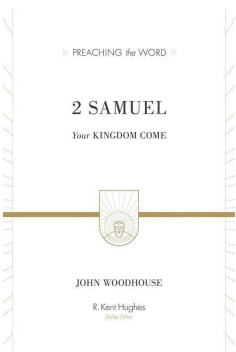


1 & 2 Samuel
by Andrew Reid

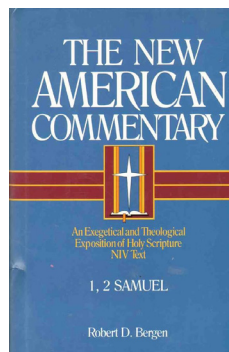


2 Samuel (FOTB)
by Dale Ralph Davis

More Advanced Preaching / Technical Commentaries



2 Samuel (PWS)
by John Woodhouse



2 Samuel (NAC)
by Robert Bergen

Study One | Mourning to Majesty: Part 1

2 Samuel 1-3

Study Big Idea

David grieves the death of Saul, but trusts God's plan for his kingship and is vindicated.

Discussion Question

Why do you think we rarely get the types of leaders we want?

“What is God doing in the world today? The central claim of Christianity is that Jesus is Lord. But that claim seems laughable. Where's the evidence? It doesn't seem as if anyone is in control, let alone Jesus. Maybe you long for friends to be saved, you long for the church to grow, you long for justice to be done, you long for the Christ to be honoured. But people continue to ignore the Christ. The media mocks Christianity. [...] The world is in a mess. Long ago God rescued his people Israel from slavery in Egypt through Moses. He gave them the promised land through Joshua. Then about 1,000 years BC they asked for a king. So Saul was chosen and became the king of Israel. His reign started well, but he decided to disobey God. So God told the prophet Samuel to anoint David as his successor. Saul got wind of this and so for many years David lived as a fugitive as Saul tried to hunt down the rival to his throne. The book of 1 Samuel ended with Saul, facing defeat in battle, committing suicide. 2 Samuel 1 – 5 tells the story of the transition from the end of Saul's reign to David's enthronement as king over all Israel. And frankly it's a mess. It's not a neat transfer of power. It's not even clear who are the good guys. It's the story of David and his army commander, Joab, and Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, and his army commander, Abner...”

Chester, Tim. 2 Samuel For You: The Triumphs and Tragedies of God's King. God's Word For You. (The Good Book Company, 2017). 9-10. Kindle Edition.

Brief Recap

Think back to 1 Samuel, what are some of the major events that happened in the book?

Read 2 Samuel 1:1-16

1. What report does David receive at the beginning of 2 Samuel? Who brings the report?

2. How does this report compare to what we've been told previously in 1 Samuel 31:1-6?

3. Read 1 Samuel 15:7-9, 13-19; 27-28, 28:18. Why might some of this context be important background to better understand how 2 Samuel begins?

4. How does David respond to the young man's report? Why does he respond this way? (see also, 1 Samuel 26:9-11)

5. Split into 4 groups, assign a passage to each group and complete the table below.

Passages	What happens in the passage?	Who are the key characters? What do we learn about David?	What do we learn about some of the problems currently going on in Israel?	Are there any ways we can see God at work in the passage?
2 Sam 1:17-2:7				
2 Sam 2:8-3:5				
2 Sam 3:6-21				
2 Sam 3:22-39				

Share back with the rest of your Growth Group what you've found.

“AS WE HEAR THE BIBLE’S ACCOUNT of the reign of King David, we must not forget its purpose. We could easily enjoy the narrative for the engaging story that it is. Here is a rich mixture of dramatic action, personal conflict, corrupt behaviour, and exemplary conduct with complex, intriguing characters and enthralling, page-turning plots. We could, more particularly, focus on the biographical interest of the story. In David we have one of the most interesting characters in world literature—brilliant but also submissive to God; ruthless but also merciful and kind; capable of costly integrity but also (as we will see) of astonishingly self-serving wickedness. We could take an interest in the historical significance of the persons and events here recorded. Here is one of the greatest figures in world history, whose influence is arguably still felt. Each of these interests is valid, but none is adequate. [...] Any interest in David that falls short of understanding him as God’s king is inadequate. David and his reign revealed the kingdom that God will finally establish. The kingdom that Jesus came to announce (Matthew 4:17), inaugurate (Colossians 1:13), and finally establish (1 Corinthians 15:24–28) is the kingdom that David’s kingdom was introducing to the world...”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 69-70. (Accordance)



6. What are some similarities and differences in how the gospel accounts present Jesus as a ‘king in waiting’ like David? (see also, Mark 1:15, Luke 9:18-20, John 18:36, 19:14-16)

7. When do you find it most challenging to remember that God is sovereignly working out his good purposes in his own way? What helps you remember that he’s still in control?



8. (Optional) Read 1 Timothy 2:1-4. How can we pray at this time for those in leadership and authority today, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness?

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Two | Mourning to Majesty – Part 2

2 Samuel 4-5

Study Big Idea

David continues to trust God's plan for his kingship & he is established as king over all Israel.

Discussion Question

Who is a leader, politician or celebrity who you associate with bringing people together?

“AS WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING the tangled story of David and the coming of his kingdom, I have been suggesting that the story is a striking display of the ineptitude of various human efforts to establish, secure, or even advance the kingdom of God. [...] We have seen that political and military effort (like that of Abner and Joab in 2:12–32), clever grasping of opportunity (like that of Abner in 3:1–21), and strong decisive action (like that of Joab in 3:22–39) were not the keys of the kingdom of David. Repeatedly men had proven to be neither good, wise, nor powerful enough to secure (or to overthrow) David's kingdom. That is because the kingdom of David was God's kingdom. Human effort will never secure or destroy God's kingdom. God is at work. Despite human wickedness, folly, and weakness, “David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul became weaker and weaker” (3:1).

We have reached the final stage in the story of the house of Saul growing weaker and weaker while the house of David was growing stronger and stronger.”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 127. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

Who are the key characters in 2 Samuel 3 and what happened in that chapter?

Read 2 Samuel 4:1-12

1. How might you summarize what happens in this passage?

2. What does the chapter teach us about David's character?

3. What does it teach us about the state of affairs in Israel and the rival kingdom of Saul at this point in David's life?



4. a) David (God's King) justly punishes Rekab and Baanah. Why should it matter to us that God's King takes wickedness seriously? (See also, Ps 72:1-2, 99:4, Isa. 9:6-7).

b) Why is it important for Christians to remember that in God's kingdom the end doesn't justify the means?

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-12

5. What stands out to you about David's kingship and kingdom in this passage?

6. How can we see a partial fulfilment of God's Kingdom (e.g. the theme of people / place / rule) in the first half of 2 Samuel 5?



7. In this passage David establishes his throne at Jerusalem. What are a few ways Jerusalem is also significant throughout the storyline of the Bible? (see also, Gen 14:18-20; Matt 23:37, Gal 4:25-26, Heb 12:22, Rev 21:1-3)

“However, the greatness of David’s kingdom (and therefore of David’s city) needs to be qualified. The frank honesty of the Bible’s account is often astonishing. Here, at the very point where we have been shown the greatness of David, we are given indications of weaknesses that will one day undermine David’s kingdom. The foreign relations represented by Hiram may already have hinted at trouble ahead. But the first words of verse 13 are alarming. “And David took...”

In the context of the newly established king of all Israel, these words must remind us of the stern warning of Samuel years earlier about “the ways of the king who will reign over you”: “he will take...he will take...he will take” (see 1 Samuel 8:11–17). [...]

What David took adds to the disturbing nature of this report: “more concubines and wives” (v. 13). We noticed in 3:2–5 (the list of six sons born to David in the Hebron years) that there was more than a hint of trouble in the multiplication of David’s wives. Now the problem is magnified considerably. Although once again the narrator makes no explicit judgment concerning this, the requirement of Deuteronomy 17:17 cannot be forgotten. Already we are beginning to see that great David will fail to be everything that God’s king must be. [...] [David] taking these women “from Jerusalem” (v. 13) may indicate that they (or some of them) were Jebusite. It is likely that some of these arrangements had a political dimension, possibly in forging David’s relationship with the previous inhabitants of Jerusalem. The seeds of Solomon’s downfall (1 Kings 11:1–11) can therefore be seen in David’s reign.”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 162-63. (Accordance)

8. The second half of 2 Samuel 5 finishes with an account of David defeating the Philistines. What enemies do Christians have today? How has Jesus defeated them?



9. Read Psalm 2. What comfort and confidence can Christians take in how Jesus fulfils this psalm? (see also, Revelation 2:27, 19:15-16)

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Three | The King of Kings

2 Samuel 6

Study Big Idea

David is learning to be God's humble and joyful king with the ark now in Jerusalem.

Discussion Question

Share a memorable time when: *things didn't quite go to plan.*

“Part of the preparation that enables us to take Jesus as seriously as we must was the appointment of David as king over God's people Israel about 1,000 years before Jesus came into the world. What happened in 2 Samuel 6 shook David to the core but taught him the terrifying yet wonderful truth that the Lord God is above and beyond human comprehension, evaluation, or control. The most important thing about David's kingdom was that the Lord God was King.

Second Samuel 6 is about the ark of the covenant being brought by David into his city, Jerusalem. This (as we will see) was momentous in significance, but it requires careful attention from us if we are to learn the lessons of this event. Why did David bring up the ark from the place where it had been left for years? We will see that David's first attempt to do this failed in most distressing and tragic circumstances. Why was that? We will subsequently see that when David did joyfully bring the ark into Jerusalem, the rejoicing led to a bitter row. What was that about?”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 174. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

What are a few things we are told about David's kingship and kingdom in 2 Samuel 5?

Read 2 Samuel 6:1-11

1. What is the ark of God? What does the ark represent and why is it so important? (See also, Exodus 25:10-22; Leviticus 16:1-2, 15-16; Numbers 10:35-36)?
2. Why might David be wanting to move the ark to Jerusalem at this time?

3. Look up: Exodus 25:13-15, Numbers 4:6, 15, 20; 7:9; Deuteronomy 10:8. How might these instructions better prepare us for what happens next in 2 Samuel 6:3-7?

4. a) How does David respond to Uzzah's sudden death in verses 7-11?

b) What's your own instinctive response when reading verses 6-7? Why?



5. a) What's something this episode teaches us about God and his character?

b) In what ways is it a mistake to think that the God of the New Testament is different to the God of the Old Testament? (see also, Acts 5:1-11; 1 Cor 10:30-31; Heb 10:26-31)

“Why was the Lord’s anger kindled? Why did the poor priest have to die? All we are told is “because of his error” (v. 7). What error?

We (the readers) find ourselves in a situation similar to that of the witnesses on that terrible day. Our questions are not answered. Our objections are not satisfied. No doubt we should remember the instructions that God had given to Moses concerning the handling of the ark. These had been largely ignored. However, the text of Scripture at this point does not attempt to justify God’s actions to us. There was a reason for what happened (“because of his error,” v. 7), but we are not given a fuller explanation.


It is difficult for many people to accept that God does not have to explain himself to us. He is not answerable to us. The reasons for his actions are often hidden from us (see Deuteronomy 29:29). He is not obliged to win our approval. Our reaction to what happened to Uzzah (like the reaction of those who were there) is an excellent indication of whether we believe this.”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 181. (Accordance)

Read 2 Samuel 6:12-23

6. a) What prompts David to revisit his decision about where to leave the ark of God?

b) What differences do we notice in the second transportation effort of the ark? Look up: 1 Chronicles 15:1-5, and 15:11-15. What additional details are we told?

c) What do these changes teach us about David's character? What are we also learning about how God is at work in David's life (& his people) throughout this episode?
7. What are some of the ways David and Michal are contrasted in verses 16-23? Where do their respective loyalties seem to lie and what difference does this ultimately make?
-  8. Why is it important for Christians to have a big view of God and a comparatively small view of human opinion?
9. Look up Philippians 2:3-8. How is Jesus' humility (as God's ultimate servant-king) meant to re-shape our own hearts and attitudes?

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Four | The Eternal Throne

2 Samuel 7

Study Big Idea

God promised to David a future king and an eternal kingdom pointing us ahead to Jesus.

Discussion Question

What is one of your favourite promises of God in the Bible?

“Imagine for a moment that you were asked to develop a series of no more than a dozen Bible readings that would summarise the message of the Bible. What passages would you include? Genesis 1–3 would certainly come into contention. Perhaps you might then think about the call of Abraham in Genesis 12 followed by the giving of the law in Exodus 19 to 20. Toward the end of the Old Testament the new covenant passage in Jeremiah 31 would have to be a possibility. In the New Testament, consideration would be given to one of the birth narratives of Jesus along with a passion narrative and perhaps the call of Paul and the coming of the gospel to the Gentiles in Acts 9 to 11. Each of these are big moments in God’s story. They represent pivotal points where God defines who he is and where he is going in his plans for his world. Any collection of such passages that did not include 2 Samuel 7 would be sorely lacking since this passage looks back to what God has done, reshapes it, and then looks forward to where God is going and gives his future form and direction.”

Reid, A. 1 & 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless, Reading the Bible Today
(Aquila Press, 2008), 179. (Kindle)

Brief Recap

What are some ways we have seen ‘the rise of David’ in 2 Samuel 1-6 so far?

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-7

1. What does David want to do for the LORD? What concern does he show?
2. How does the LORD initially respond to David’s plan in verses 4-7? What does His response reveal about himself and his character? (see also, 1 Kings 8:27, Isa. 66:1-2a)



3. Are you ever tempted to think that you are the one giving to God in your relationship with Him? What might cause this thinking? (see also, Acts 17:24-25; Rom 11:34-35)

Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17


4. What does the LORD promise to do for David instead?

Question 5 – can be completed more easily using Appendix 2 where the passage is printed.

5. Split into triplets. With 3 different colours, highlight (or underline/circle):
 - a) What the LORD *has done* in the past
 - b) What the LORD *will do* in the future
 - c) Anything that reminds you of the *LORD's promises to Abraham* (cf. Genesis 12:1-3, 15:4-5, 17:4-9)

Share-Back Together


6.
 - a) Why does God remind David about what He's *done* previously before telling him what He *will do* in the future?
 - b) How do the links/allusions back to the LORD's covenant with Abraham remind us about who God is and how He works?

-  7. How do God's promises with David remind us that salvation comes through God's own grace, and grace alone? What comfort and confidence can we draw from this?

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29

8. How would you characterise David's response to God's word?

9. What are some ways God's promises to David are fulfilled through Jesus in the New Testament? (see also, Matt 1:1, Luke 1:31-33, Heb 3:3-6, 1 Pet 2:5, Rev 22:16)

-  10. (Optional): Read 2 Samuel 7:25-26 again and then together close by praying the Lord's Prayer with your group.

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Five | The King's Kindness

2 Samuel 8-10

Study Big Idea

God's victorious king does what is just and right and shows loving-kindness even to enemies

Discussion Question

When do you remember someone showing you great kindness?

"IN 2 SAMUEL 7 we have heard some of the most important words ever heard in the history of the world—God's promise about his coming kingdom. In 2 Samuel 8 we will see a sketch of David's remarkable kingdom that in many ways anticipated the promised kingdom. [...] The problem with establishing God's kingdom is that this kingdom has enemies. In the case of David there were enemies in all directions. However, the Lord gave David victory over them all [...] It was remarkable. The Philistines to the west (v. 1), the Moabites to the east (v. 2), Zobar to the far north (vv. 3, 4), the people of Damascus to the nearer north (vv. 5, 6), and the Edomites to the south (8:14) were all soundly "defeated" by David. In each case the narrator records the victory and describes the consequences that followed. We need to pause and appreciate that each of these victories was an extraordinary act of God's goodness. The enemies of God's king were enemies of God's good purposes. Their defeat was necessary if God's kingdom of righteousness was to be established. It was a demonstration that God is able to save his king and his people from every enemy that threatens them."

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 255-6. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

What do you remember about God's big promise to David in 2 Samuel 7?

Read 2 Samuel 8:1-18 (Note you may find the 'Appendix 3 - Map' helpful as you read)

1. What hints are given in the text, context and even the map locations of David's victories over Israel's enemies that it is the LORD doing this work?



2. How do David's victories compare with what the kingdom was like under Saul? (see also, 1 Samuel 15:1-10, 28:16-18, 31:1-3)





3. How is David's reign summarised in verse 15? (see also, Gen 18:18-19). What are some ways David's kingdom anticipates the 'now and not yet' kingdom of Jesus in this chapter?

Read 2 Samuel 9:1-13

4. a) What aspects of David's character are we being shown in this chapter?
- b) Why does David show kindness to Mephibosheth? (see also, 1 Samuel 20:12-17)
- c) How does Mephibosheth benefit from David's kindness?

"The closest New Testament word to 'kindness' that appears in Chapter 9 is the word 'grace'. It is what is surprisingly given when there is no necessary obligation to give. In God's case, it is his overwhelming and somewhat surprising grace shown in Jesus Christ. The actions of David in Chapter 9 are those of a person who has seen or experienced God's grace directly, or who has seen someone else exercising that God-like grace toward him, and who decides to demonstrate it concretely toward others. He loves because he has been loved. When Paul is urging the Corinthian Christians to be generous in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 he offers them two examples that they might observe. First, he reminds them of the 'grace' that God has given the Macedonian Christians in making them generous. He then goes on to say that it is this grace that is seen in God's actions toward them in Jesus. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. (2 Corinthians 8:9) As Christians, our motivations rightly flow from what God has done for us. He has shown grace toward us and we should rightly respond to others with grace. We accept all because we have experienced the grace of God's forgiveness. We forgive because we have been extraordinarily forgiven by God. We love because he first loved us. We exercise kindness because we have experienced overwhelming kindness from God. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)!"

Reid, A. 1 & 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless, Reading the Bible Today
(Aquila Press, 2008), 195-6. (Kindle)

-  5. a) Who are some memorable characters in the gospel accounts who themselves were shown great kindness by God's King (Christ Jesus) and have moved you personally?
- b) How does the New Testament picture of being invited to eat at the King's table through Jesus—warm your own heart? (see also, Luke 14:15-24)
-  6. (Optional) How can we continue to use our own tables (and meal-times) as Christians to welcome and show the kindness of our King to others?

Read 2 Samuel 10:1-19

7. Why is David motivated to show kindness to Hanun and how is His kindness received?
8. What do we learn from this story about how God's anointed King will respond when his kindness has been treated with contempt? (vss. 7, 17-19. See also, Psalm 2 and Romans 2:4)

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Six | The Fall of King David

2 Samuel 11-12

Study Big Idea

King David falls in a big way with adultery, murder and cover-up, but his failure isn't final.

Discussion Question

Who is a memorable person in public life who fell from great heights through moral failure?

"In 2 Samuel 11 we hear the devastating news that even King David failed. His failure was spectacular and terrible. All that we have heard of David, since he first appeared in the pages of this history in 1 Samuel 16, has been impressive. He was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest and best men ever to have lived. Occasionally we have seen hints that he was (as we say) "only human" (see, for example, the fact of his multiple wives in 3:2-5; 5:13 or his possible experiment with chariots in 8:4). However, these rare blemishes have hardly dimmed the glowing picture we have been given of a man and a king who was righteous and faithful (see 1 Samuel 26:23), kind and good (see 2:6; 9:3; 10:2), as well as successful in all he did (8:15). The goodness and the success of this king were inseparable because David was God's king, and David's kingdom was God's kingdom.

The problem was that David, despite all that God gave him and did for him, was a flawed human being, like all of us. The shock of his fall is intensified by the genuine greatness that we have seen in him. In Biblical history 2 Samuel 11 is comparable to Genesis 3—the fall of Adam. In the disaster of King David we see the damaged and weak human nature we share with him. We are not up to the task of ruling the world for the same reason that David proved inadequate to rule God's kingdom.

Second Samuel 11 is the turning point of the story of David and his kingdom, just as Genesis 3 was the turning point for the human race. Things will never be the same again..."

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 282-3. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

What are five words you would use to describe King David up to this point in 2 Samuel?

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-12:14

(Note: You might consider dramatizing this reading in your group by assigning characters: the Narrator, David, Bathsheba, Messengers, Joab, Uriah, Nathan)

1. What are a few of the key 'turning-points' in the way this story is told?
2. What are some of the different sins David commits in 2 Samuel 11? How is David contrasted with Uriah the Hittite throughout the chapter?
3. Why is the narrator's comment in 2 Samuel 11:27b so significant? What difference does it make knowing that God's eyes are all-seeing and nothing ever escapes his notice?
4. How would you summarise the LORD's message to David through his prophet Nathan? What will the judgement be? How is mercy also shown here?
5. a) How does David respond to being rebuked?

b) How is it possible for the LORD to have 'taken away' David's sin? (see also, Isa. 53:4-6, Matthew 1:21 and Galatians 3:7-9)

c) In what sense does sin always have a Godward-dimension? (see, 2 Sam 11:27b, 12:9)

6. What are some ways 2 Samuel 11-12 points us forward to our own need for Jesus?

“This is one of the beauties of 2 Samuel. In many ways it is a book of snapshots of a king, father, adulterer, murderer, and man of God. However, above all it gives us snapshots of a human being. This David is one we can identify with for he is so like us. He is not a cardboard cut-out of a man or a plaster saint, but someone like us and the books of Samuel tell us that God can love such people and use such people without restricting his purposes. Fortunately his purposes and his kingdom are not dependent on our failings, blunders or mistakes. Fortunately, our God is sovereign.”

Reid, A. 1 & 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless, Reading the Bible Today
(Aquila Press, 2008), 209. (Kindle)



7. What is the difference between feeling worldly sorrow (or mere regret) for sin compared to godly sorrow that leads to repentance? (see also, 2 Corinthians 7:8-10)

8. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18. What is unique about sexual sins? How was this true in David's life and experience? How should we respond as Christians when we are tempted to sin? (see also, Matt 5:27-30, 6:13; 1 Cor 10:13)

9. David experienced both grace and consequences for his sin. Why is it important for us to recognize both that all sin can be forgiven and also that our sin can still have consequences?



10. a) (Optional): Read Psalm 51. How can David's example help us to respond in godly sorrow and repentance when we sin or fall ourselves? (see also, 1 Tim 1:15, 1 Jn 1:9-2:2)

b) (Optional): Is there an area of sin in your own life that you've felt convicted about as we've studied this passage that you want to confess or ask for specific prayer for?

Pray in Response

Study Seven | Chips off the Old Block

2 Samuel 13-14

Study Big Idea

David was forgiven, but his sin has ongoing consequences just as the LORD had said.

Discussion Question

What's a positive or negative trait or habit you have inherited from your parents?

“HERE’S A TERRIFYING THOUGHT: the faults and failings of parents are often reproduced in their children. Good looks and intelligence are not the only things that are passed on from one generation to the next. We who are parents shape our children in many ways, in our own image. Sometimes we take pride in that. But it is a terrifying thought. [...]

As one wise Christian teacher put it many years ago (so allow for the quaintness of the English to our ears), “Godly parents have often been afflicted with wicked children; grace does not run in the blood, but corruption does.” Whatever qualifications you might like to put on a statement like that, there is truth in it. Of course, it is not mechanical. It is not inevitable that my children will display all my faults. But it is highly likely that they will be affected by them. And it is not an excuse. I cannot blame my parents for my own faults. However, it is not too much to say that it is terrible to realize that the flaws in my character, the failures of my discipline, and the foibles of my bad habits can easily appear in my children—it takes no effort or planning. Like father, like son can be a terrifying thought.

In 13:1-22 we find one of the most disturbing stories in the whole Bible. It is a story that will affect some readers deeply. One of its most disturbing aspects (more disturbing than might at first appear) is that it is a story of like father, like son.”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 339. (Accordance)

Brief Recap

What were some ways David failed morally in 2 Samuel 11-12? Re-read: 2 Sam 12:10-12.

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22

1. Who are the key characters in this section? Briefly describe each of them.

2. How might listening to Tamar's voice in this passage be intended by the narrator to stir us emotionally and help with our viewpoint? (See vss12-13, 16)

3. a) What was David's role in this episode? Did he act appropriately?

b) What do we expect might happen next?



4. Why has God included stories like this one in the Bible? (see also, 2 Timothy 3:15-16)

The Perspective We Ought To Keep

"We have come all the way through 2 Samuel 13, where disaster follows disaster, and life in David's kingdom rushes along, driven by lust, conniving, weakness, and hatred. A shattered woman remains ignored by justice and unrestored by murder. And God is never mentioned in the whole affair. What is Yahweh doing in all this? Has the kingdom he established lurched out of control, its course subject only to the whims and sins of men? [...] [Our world can seem] like a macrocosm of 2 Samuel 13, with everything bashing and bouncing along and God seemingly not in residence. But, of course, that is not true of 2 Samuel 13. We have already been given the clue for this chapter in 12:10-12. Yahweh had told David that 'the sword would not depart from your house' and that he was 'raising up disaster against you from your own house' (12:10, 11). Is this not what has begun to happen in chapter 13? Many have pointed out the appropriateness of the disaster: Amnon's sexual escapade with Tamar corresponding to David's with Bathsheba and Absalom's contrived murder of Amnon paralleling David's of Uriah. In this sordid episode then, Yahweh is fulfilling his word of judgement against the house of David. Humanly speaking everything seems to be going aruck; yet Yahweh is fulfilling his word. Not that it is pleasant — anything but. Yet Yahweh has not hung out a vacancy sign over his universe or his people. He is there, bringing his word to pass. Sometimes only that assurance keeps his people sane."

David, D.R. 2 Samuel – Out Of Every Adversity, Focus on the Bible
(Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 174-75

Read 2 Samuel 13:23-39

5. What do we learn about Absalom and his character in the second half of 2 Samuel 13? What do we discover about David's attitude to his sons?



6. Why should Christians care about injustice? What is wrong with taking matters of personal vengeance into our own hands? (see also, Romans 12:19, 13:4; Matt 6:10)

Read 2 Samuel 13:23-14:33

(Note: You might consider dramatizing this reading in your group by assigning characters: the Narrator, Absalom, King David, Jonadab, Wise woman)

7. What was clever about Joab's scheme in 14:1-20? In what way was his plan both successful and also unsuccessful in 14:21-24?

8. What do we learn about Absalom's appearance and his character in 2 Samuel 14:25-33?



9. What are some traits the world looks for in its leaders? Read 1 Tim 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. What stands out to you about God's expectations for church leaders by contrast?

Pray in Response



Extra Notes

Study Eight | The Rejected King

2 Samuel 15:1-18:18

Study Big Idea

Absalom's uprising threatens David's kingship, but David stays secure in the LORD.

Discussion Question

Can you recall a time in your life when God sustained you through a very difficult time?

"Although they have interest of their own, Chapters 13 and 14 also serve another function. They explain how it is that Amnon is no longer the crown prince and the factors that might bring Israel to such a place where the next in line for the throne might preemptively attempt to seize that throne. These chapters also move this family out of the largely private world that we have witnessed since Chapter 11 (although you can bet that there was no shortage of public gossip!) and thrust it into the public world where all Israel is forced to engage with it. [...] If the preceding chapters have given us the background in the private life of the family, the first six verses of Chapter 15 prepare us for the story to come by introducing us again to the man Absalom by describing some of his characteristic actions under the nose of his father in Jerusalem over a four year period (verse 7)."

Reid, A. 1 & 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless, Reading the Bible Today
(Aquila Press, 2008), 220. (Kindle)

Brief Recap

What have been some of David's weaknesses that we have seen in recent chapters?

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-18

1. What are some of the strategies Absalom uses to increase his own power and political standing in verses 1-12? Why do you think so many people gave allegiance to Absalom?
2. How does David respond to Absalom's conspiracy against him in verses 13-18? (see also, Psalm 3)



3. Read Luke 22:24-27. What sort of king is Jesus in God's kingdom? How does he teach his disciples to think and behave differently to the world's ways? (see also, Ps 20:7, Mk 10:45)

In 2 Samuel 15:13-17:29 – David flees and goes into exile beyond the Jordan River. During this section David encounters a series of people who must decide where their loyalties lie.

4. Split into 3 groups, assign a passage to each group and complete the table below before sharing-back together.

Passages	Who does David meet along the way?	How did King David deal with them?	How did they respond to the king?	Did anything else stand out to you?
2 Sam 15:19-22 & 15:24-29				
2 Sam 15:32-37 & 16:1-4				
2 Sam 16:5-14				

Share back with the rest of your Growth Group what you've found.

“The kingdom of David and the kingdom of Jesus Christ had friends and traitors. As we watch the conduct of Hushai, David’s friend, and Ahithophel, who betrayed him, we should examine our own hearts and behavior. Are we friends of the King?”

We have followed David and those with him as they went out from Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley, up the Mount of Olives, and on toward the wilderness east of the Jordan River. At the summit of the Mount of Olives David had met Hushai and sent him back into Jerusalem in order to “defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel” (15:34). Hushai reached the city “just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem” (15:37). The narrative followed David on his eastward journey in 16:1–14, but in verse 15 takes us back to Jerusalem, shortly after Hushai had arrived.”

Woodhouse, J. 2 Samuel – Your Kingdom Come, Preaching the Word
(Crossway, 2015), 412. (Accordance)

Read 2 Samuel 16:15-17:23

5. a) What contrasting advice is given by Ahithophel and Hushai to Absalom?

b) How was Ahithophel's wicked advice (16:21) a means of fulfilling Nathan's prophecy in 2 Samuel 12:11-12?

c) What reason does the narrator give to us in verse 14 for why Hushai's advice was ultimately accepted, rather than Ahithophel's?



6. (Optional): Ahithophel's betrayal of David reminds us that sometimes Satan's evil work can even be the means of fulfilling God's own purposes. What does this teach us about God's sovereignty? (see also, 2 Cor 12:7-10; Luke 22:3; Acts 4:27-28; Col 2:15)



7. What are some seasons in your own life / work / family / church experience when you have found it hard to believe that God is sovereign?

“As we have moved through this story there is one thing that stands out within it. Here, in what is probably the darkest hour of his reign, we see the David we came to love in 1 Samuel. This is David at his best. In weakness he trusts God and shows himself to be like the man who marches out to face a giant with nothing but faith and five pebbles. He is like Hannah again. For his part, God shows that it is not by strength that one prevails but that the Lord gives strength to his anointed. This motif does not only occur here in the Bible but everywhere within it. Over and over again God reduces Israel to weakness in order to show that it is him and not Israel that is responsible for any victory. The same is true for us. We are at our strongest spiritually when we are at our lowest. We are God’s mature saints when we are like helpless and dependent children (cf. Matthew 18:1–4). The apostle Paul noted this when afflicted with something he calls a ‘thorn in the flesh’ (2 Corinthians 12:7). He records how when he asked for it to be removed that God said to him, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul’s reaction was therefore not to despise weakness but to boast in it ‘so that Christ’s power may rest on me’. For this reason he delighted in weakness, in hardships, in persecutions, and in difficulties. For when he was weak, then he was strong. These things should be remembered closely in our world of power and pragmatics. It is not personal power or charisma or plans and strategies that will win the day but prayerful, submissive, meek disciples who are God’s agents for demolishing the strongholds of the evil one and whom God will use as his powerful weapons in a world caught in the bonds of sin.”

Reid, A. 1 & 2 Samuel: Hope for the Helpless, Reading the Bible Today
(Aquila Press, 2008), 228-29. (Kindle)

Read 2 Samuel 17:24-19:8 (if you have time)

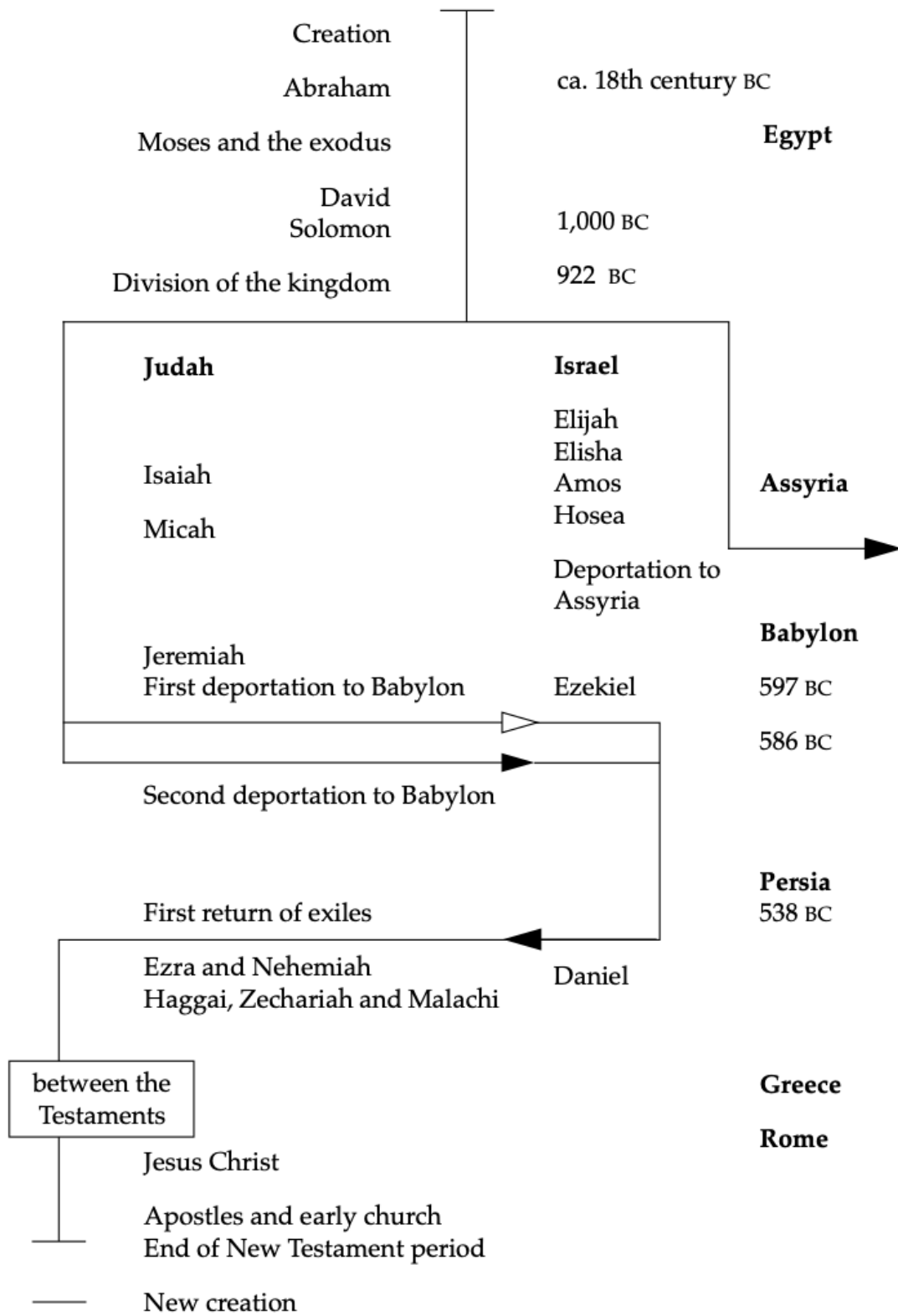
8. Looking back over the events of Absalom’s rebellion, how can you summarise God’s hand at work in David’s life? In what ways has God remained faithful to his word and promises?

9. How have you been personally encouraged or challenged as we’ve worked through our Bible Study series on 2 Samuel?

Pray in Response

Appendix 1: Bible Timeline*

Outline of biblical history



*A Gospel Coalition Resource: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/goldsworthy-outline-of-biblical-history/> - Timeline Credit: with permission from According to Plan: The Unfolding Revelation of God in the Bible by Graeme Goldsworthy. Copyright(c) Graeme Goldsworthy 1991.

Appendix 2: 2 Samuel 7:8-17 (NIV, 2011)*

⁸ “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. ⁹ I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning ¹¹ and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

“The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: ¹² 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. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

¹⁷ Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

*New International Version (NIV), Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV® Copyright© 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica Inc.

Appendix 3: Map of Israel in the time of 1 & 2 Samuel*



*Source Credit: Appendix: Map of Israel in the time of 1 & 2 Samuel - Chester, Tim. 2 Samuel For You: The Triumphs and Tragedies of God's King. God's Word For You. (The Good Book Company, 2017). 199. Kindle Edition.



Extra Notes



Extra Notes



Extra Notes

