

2 Samuel 1

Here are some facts that's worth noting. . .

- David is mentioned about 1,140 times in the Bible.
- He is the most frequently mentioned person in the Old Testament, and second only to Jesus Christ in the entire biblical text.
- His name is explicitly written in 935 distinct verses.
- He is mentioned 54 times across the New Testament (including 35 times in the Gospels and 10 times in the Book of Acts).
- His life narrative and legacy are detailed or referenced across 54 biblical chapters.
- The vast majority of references occur in the historical books, especially [1 Samuel](#), 2 Samuel, and 1 Chronicles, which detail his rise from a shepherd boy to the King of Israel.
- His name appears 88 times in the Book of Psalms, with nearly half of the 150 psalms directly attributed to him.
- He is frequently referenced by later prophets and New Testament writers to establish the "Line of David," confirming Jesus's legal and royal lineage as the Messiah.
- There is only one person named David in the entire Bible.

With these facts in mind, I hope you can see why we are devoting so much time to study *"The Life of David."* Tonight we are going to cover the first two chapters of 2 Samuel. Before we jump into our study, let's review for just a moment. . .

- David had spent 16 months in Philistine territory out of the will of God.
- He and his 600-man army were drafted into the Philistine army.
- God intervened and David and his men were sent back to Ziklag.
- The Amalekites destroyed the city and took their families.
- David's men were ready to stone him as a result.

- David *"strengthened himself in the Lord"* (1 Samuel 30:6)
- He sought God's direction, led his men to attack the Amalekites, and brought everyone and everything back to Ziklag.

By this time, David had to know that the battle between the Philistines and Saul and his army was over. His anxious waiting for news ended when a messenger arrived to bring news (bad news) to David at Ziklag.

2 Samuel 1:1–4... Now it came about after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, that David remained two days in Ziklag. **2** On the third day, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul, with his clothes torn and dust on his head. And it came about when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself. **3** Then David said to him, "From where do you come?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." **4** David said to him, "How did things go? Please tell me." And he said, "The people have fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead; and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."

How would David respond to this news? Would he be overjoyed that his nemesis (King Saul) was dead and that he was now free from the constant pressure of being vigilant in looking out for his own safety and security? David asked probing questions of the young messenger. . .

2 Samuel 1:5–10... So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" **6** The young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and behold, Saul was leaning on his spear. And behold, the chariots and the horsemen pursued him closely. **7** "When he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I said, 'Here I am.' **8** "He said to me, 'Who are you?' And I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' **9** "Then he said to me, 'Please stand beside me and kill me, for agony has seized me because my life still lingers in me.' **10** "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that he

could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown which *was* on his head and the bracelet which *was* on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord."

Keep in mind that in **1 Samuel 31:4-6** there is an account that contradicts the Amalekite's testimony. His misjudgment of the situation was monumental. It certainly appears that he arrived on Mt. Gilboa to plunder the slain. It was then that he stumbled upon King Saul's crown and armband. So, he brought them to David and told this lie to ingratiate himself with the soon-to-be king. David's reaction was not what the young man assumed it would be. . .

2 Samuel 1:11–16... Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so also *did* all the men who *were* with him. 12 They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 13 David said to the young man who told him, "Where are you from?" And he answered, "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite." 14 Then David said to him, "How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 15 And David called one of the young men and said, "Go, cut him down." So he struck him and he died. 16 David said to him, "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.' "

The primary reason David mourned over Saul at his death was for the simple fact that he was God's anointed king over Israel. David refused to go against God's will (**1 Samuel 26:10–11**). Despite the fact that Saul hunted David down like an animal, David chose to be a *better man* instead of a *bitter man*. David's men had every right to hate Saul and to long for his demise. Yet they tore their clothes and mourned for Saul and his sons. This demonstrates the powerful influence of a leader like David!

David's sorrow was first for Saul, but it was also for his close friend, Jonathan. More than that, it was for the people of God as a whole, who were in a

dangerous place in light of the death of the king and the defeat by the Philistines.

Look at David's response to the young man. . .

"How is it you were not afraid to stretch out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed? "Your blood is on your head, for your mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.' "

David knew that since God put Saul on the throne, it was God's job to remove him from the throne. David wrote a beautiful song that would serve as a lament for the death of Saul and Jonathan (**1:17-27**).

- **The book of Jashar was evidently a book of Hebrew poetry.**
- **In this song David showed great love and respect for Saul.**
- **He praised Saul as a mighty warrior.**
- **He praised the good Saul did for Israel.**
- **David's mourning and respect for Jonathan was evident.**

Look at verse 26 . . .

"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women."

I want to share a couple of thoughts with you. First, the LGBTQ community has hijacked this verse to underscore their perverted view of homosexuality.

The Bible clearly and consistently denounces homosexuality (Genesis 1:26–27; Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:18–25). Extolling a homosexual love between David and Jonathan would be contradicting the prohibitions of it found throughout the Bible.

Second, for David, Jonathan was the peer, friend, and confidant that no wife could ever have been in that society; and his untimely death left a gaping

hole in David's soul.¹ These two men had made a covenant of friendship and lifelong loyalty to each other (**see 1 Sam 20:14–17, 42; 23:15–18**). And their bond was not broken by death, as David would soon go to great lengths to care for and protect Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth (see 2 Sam 9).

2 Samuel 2

David becomes king of Judah. You might call it the southern kingdom.

2 Samuel 2:1–7... Then it came about afterwards that David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the LORD said to him, "Go up." So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron." 2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And David brought up his men who were with him, each with his household; and they lived in the cities of Hebron. 4 Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul." 5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed of the LORD because you have shown this kindness to Saul your lord, and have buried him. 6 "Now may the LORD show lovingkindness and truth to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing. 7 "Now therefore, let your hands be strong and be valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

David inquired of the LORD— This becomes a regular part of David's life after he experiences revival. Certainly, this was a key to success in his life. David wanted more than God's blessing on *his* plans; he wanted to be right in the middle of *God's* plan.

¹ Robert D. Bergen, [*1, 2 Samuel*](#), vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 293.

"Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?"— Since David had just come out of a period of spiritual decline, God could have put him on *"in a spiritual time out"* and given him the silent treatment. However, the LORD spoke to David and gave him specific directions. God told him to go to Hebron in Judah.

Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah— This is the second of David's three anointings.

- **15 years between the first and second anointing**
- **7 years between the second and third anointing**
- **From the time Samuel anointed David till he ruled all Israel was 22 years.**

David didn't seize the throne. He waited on God! This anointing couldn't come when David still lived among the Philistines. He had to get things right with God!

It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul— As a leader, he was establishing some core values that would be the cornerstone of his kingdom. He showed appropriate gratitude to the men who risked their lives to honor the memory of Saul and Jonathan (1 Samuel 31:11-13). This kind of leadership establishes a culture that leads to success.

- **What kind of culture are you creating in your family, at work?**

Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, becomes king of Israel—*the northern kingdom*.

2 Samuel 2:8–11... But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel. 10 Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was king for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. 11 The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Abner the son of Ner— Abner was the commander of Saul's armies for many years. David once challenged Abner when he had the opportunity to kill Saul but did not. David pointed out that Abner failed to protect his king.

Here's a question that I've been pondering. How did Abner survive the beatdown that Saul and his army experienced at the hand of the Philistines? He was tasked with protecting his king, yet Saul is dead and here we find Abner seeking to establish Ish-bosheth as Israel's new king.

Ish-bosheth the son of Saul— Saul had three sons who died with him in battle (1 Samuel 31:6). There is no previous mention of him among the sons of Saul, so it is possible that he was an illegitimate son or the son of a concubine.

He made him king— Abner made him king, probably so that he could be the real power behind the throne of a weak king.

He reigned two years— Ish-bosheth was not the LORD's anointed like Saul. David seemed to have every right to crush this man who stood in the way of his calling. Yet he trusted the LORD and respected Saul's memory. David waited on the Lord!

The time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months— This describes the period of time David had his headquarters in Hebron. For the first two years of this time, he ruled over Judah alone and Ishbosheth (propped up by Abner) ruled the rest of Israel.

2 Samuel 2:12–17... Now Abner the son of Ner, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon with the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul. 13 And Joab the son of Zeruiah and the servants of David went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon; and they sat down, one on the one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. 14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Now let the young men arise and hold a contest before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." 15 So they arose and went over by count, twelve for Benjamin and Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. 16 Each

one of them seized his opponent by the head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon. **17** That day the battle was very severe, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

Joab the son of Zeruiah—Joab was apparently one of the 400 men who joined David at the cave of Adullam.

- He had two notable brothers: Abishai and Asahel.
- Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were David's nephews, the sons of David's sister Zeruiah (1 Chronicles 2:16).
- Joab had a long and checkered career as the leader of David's army.

David's men, under the command of Joab, prevailed in the very fierce battle against Abner and his men.

2 Samuel 2:18–23... Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there, Joab and Abishai and Asahel; and Asahel *was as* swift-footed as one of the gazelles which is in the field. **19** Asahel pursued Abner and did not turn to the right or to the left from following Abner. **20** Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Is that you, Asahel?" And he answered, "It is I." **21** So Abner said to him, "Turn to your right or to your left, and take hold of one of the young men for yourself, and take for yourself his spoil." But Asahel was not willing to turn aside from following him. **22** Abner repeated again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I lift up my face to your brother Joab?" **23** However, he refused to turn aside; therefore Abner struck him in the belly with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back. And he fell there and died on the spot. And it came about that all who came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died, stood still.

Asahel pursued Abner— In the pressure and confusion of battle, Asahel got close to Abner, the commander of Ishbosheth's armies. It came down to a simple chase, and if Asahel caught up to Abner, he would surely kill him. Asahel was single-minded in his determination to kill Abner and crush the armies opposing David.

Abner struck him in the belly with the butt end of the spear, so that the spear came out at his back and he fell there and died on the spot— Clearly, Abner killed Asahel in self-defense – it was the only thing he could do. Yet his concern about facing Joab was entirely justified, and Joab will make it his goal to avenge his brother's death.

2 Samuel 2:24–29... But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and when the sun was going down, they came to the hill of Ammah, which is in front of Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon. 25 The sons of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became one band, and they stood on the top of a certain hill. 26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the end? How long will you refrain from telling the people to turn back from following their brothers?" 27 Joab said, "As God lives, if you had not spoken, surely then the people would have gone away in the morning, each from following his brother." 28 So Joab blew the trumpet; and all the people halted and pursued Israel no longer, nor did they continue to fight anymore. 29 Abner and his men then went through the Arabah all that night; so they crossed the Jordan, walked all morning, and came to Mahanaim.

Shall the sword devour forever?— When the army of Israel was in full retreat and ready for a final do-or-die stand and when two angry brothers wanted blood revenge Abner found it easy to make the plea for peace. It was certainly to his advantage to give peace a chance.

Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people halted and pursued Israel no longer— Joab agreed to this cease-fire, probably to both rest his exhausted army and to avoid a long, bloody civil war.

2 Samuel 2:30–32... Then Joab returned from following Abner; when he had gathered all the people together, nineteen of David's servants besides Asahel were missing. **31** But the servants of David had struck down many of Benjamin and Abner's men, *so that* three hundred and sixty men died. **32** And they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb which was in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men went all night until the day dawned at Hebron.

Nineteen of David's servants besides Asahel were missing—Abner and the army of Israel lost 360 men to 20 in the army of David. This was a full-fledged civil war!