

## 2 Samuel

### 2 Samuel 1

- 1 David and his men returned to Ziklag on the southern boundary of Israel.
- 2 News travelled slowly. No Israelite soldiers who may have escaped went south.
- 8 It is unlikely that Amalekites were allied with Philistia, but possible. It is more likely that the Amalekites were there to collect some spoils of war before the Philistines broke off the battle.
- 9 It is unlikely that Saul would make such a request, since Saul previously had tried to exterminate the Amalekites.
- 10 The Amalekite supposed that he would get a much greater reward by bringing these articles than their value as precious metals and jewels. Still, he could not be too bright.
- 11 David prioritized well. He mourned the loss of Saul and Jonathan before suspecting the details of the story.
- 15 Having expressed grief (torn clothes, v11), David addressed the story simply rather than picking at the details and had the Amalekite executed for his claim without regard to its accuracy.
- 19 “How have the mighty fallen” is repeated in each section. The line has been quoted in several literary works, including Shakespeare. The song only praises Saul and Jonathan without mention of their shortcomings.

### 2 Samuel 2

- 1 David's habit of inquiring of the Lord for major decisions has happened several times before and will continue. Hebron became his capital.
- 3 “The cities of Hebron” – the walled city had several villages around it which were more convenient to the farming areas.
- 5 David's message to Jabesh Gilead (on the east side of the Jordan between Gad and Manasseh) was a solicitation to join with Judah.
- 8 Abner crowned Ishbosheth on the east side of the Jordan to lay claim to the region.
- 10 Ishbosheth lasted only two years whereas David was king of Judah 7½ years (v11), leaving a period of anarchy in the north. Such disorganization was more likely in those times because a monarchy meant taxes (at least 10% if not more). If no neighboring countries were threatening, anarchy was attractive. The anarchy probably was less than 5 years because it would take some time to conquer Jerusalem (chapter 5)
- 14 Single combat, multiplied by twelve, was chosen to settle the impending civil war. As with Goliath's challenge, the result did not settle it.
- 17 Civil war begins
- 18 Three of David's older brothers became generals.
- 23 Abner did not want to fight Asahel, David's brother, directly due to the future political ramifications.
- 25 Abner called on the good sense of Joab to stop before killing everyone and causing a permanent rift.
- 30 Remarkable difference between casualty figures (20 versus 360) perhaps because David's men were seasoned warriors who had not seen defeat, versus Abner's men who were the survivors of a terrible defeat at the hands of the Philistines.

### 2 Samuel 3

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- 5 Note that the first six sons were born to six different wives. The king was not to take many wives (Deuteronomy 17:17)
- 7 Claiming a king's concubine was a claim to the throne. David's sons will try the same tactic.
- 10 Abner swore to raise David to the throne over all Israel, so he knew about Samuel's promise.
- 13 Abner appeals to David for a place on his staff with the promise that he will bring the rest of Israel to David. David requires his first wife, Michal, who had been given to Palti, 1 Samuel 25:44 by Saul) as part of the deal.
- 14 David also appealed to Ishbosheth for Michal.
- 18 Abner appealed to the elders of the other tribes to align with David.
- 24 Joab was upset that David had not avenged the death of his brother (also David's brother).
- 27 Joab took it upon himself to avenge his brother by killing Abner himself.
- 29 David speaks a curse on Joab's family.
- 31 Abner was buried with full honors so as not to ruin the deals Abner had made.
- 36 David managed a difficult political situation profitably.

### 2 Samuel 4

- 1 The defection and death of Abner demoralized Ishbosheth.
- 4 Jonathan had a young son who was dropped by his nurse in the escape after the loss to Philistia, so the son, Mephibosheth was lame. Later in the story, David will seek out Mephibosheth to satisfy his promise to Jonathan.
- 6 Ishbosheth was assassinated by two captains, who also were Benjamites.
- 8 The assassins brought the head of Ishbosheth to David expecting a reward.
- 11 David had the assassins executed for their treachery.

### 2 Samuel 5

- 3 Elders of all the tribes came and pledged allegiance to David. See 1 Chronicles 11 – 12.
- 5 The Jebusites had not been driven out after Joshua. David chose this as his capital, perhaps to be more neutral, rather than appearing to favor Judah.
- 6 The Jebusites were confident due to their fortifications.
- 8 David's men breached the city by climbing in through the water tunnel. The tunnel exists today. The purpose of the tunnel was to bring the spring under the cliff on which the city was built, then allowing water to be drawn up in buckets inside the city. This was not as sophisticated as Hezekiah's tunnel, 300 years later.
- 11 The king of Lebanon wanted to forge an alliance. Tyre was a great seaport. Hiram made his money from his merchant marine and needed to import food from Israel. See 1 Chronicles 14.
- 17 The Philistines knew that they needed to derail David before he could consolidate power.
- 19 David inquired of the Lord, as usual. Victory was promised.
- 23 This time, God said not to go to battle in the usual way, but to circle around and let God throw them into confusion.

### 2 Samuel 6

- 2 The ark had been left in Kirjath Jearim (1 Samuel 7:1) since its return by the Philistines, about 70 years previously.

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- 3 The prescribed method of transport (Numbers 4:5 – 6, 4:15, 4:20) was not followed. See the parallel story in 1 Chronicles 13
- 6 Touching the ark was forbidden (Numbers 4:15).
- 9 David was confused by the bad result of good intentions.
- 10 It is curious that David did not also move the tabernacle to Jerusalem so that everything could be reunited. However, there were two “high” priests, Zadok at Nob with the tabernacle and Abiathar who had escaped the slaughter at Nob by Doeg and had been traveling with David. David had a tent erected for the ark (1 Chronicles 15:1)
- 11 David parked the ark at a convenient place while he decided what to do next. Obed-Edom was of the clan of Kohath (Exodus 6:21, 18:16, 1 Chronicles 26:4), the proper movers of the ark. The good things that happened to Obed-Edom illustrated that David was on the right track.
- 13 1 Chronicles 15:2, 15:13 – 15 adds the detail that David revised his plans to match the Law. The text does not imply that David sacrificed every six paces, but only after the first six paces. The total distance from Kirjath Jearim to Jerusalem is about 12 miles. The location of Obed-Edom’s house is unknown. 1 Chronicles 15:26 adds that the Levites sacrificed seven
- 16 Michal, David’s first wife, daughter of Saul, thought David’s display in the procession was undignified (see also 6:20 – 23). As a result, David did not have any children with her..
- 19 David distributed food, probably the sacrificial meal.

## 2 Samuel 7

See also 1 Chronicles 17

- 1 David began thinking about building a Temple after the kingdom had reached its promised extent (Euphrates, desert, Brook of Egypt to Red Sea, Sea: Genesis 15:18, Exodus 23:31)
- 3 Nathan answered without checking.
- 6 Reason 1: God had always had a tent.
- 7 Reason 2: God did not ask for a Temple.  
Later (1 Chronicles 22:8, 28:3, David revealed a third reason.
- 13 David’s son to build Temple. The dynasty will be eternal.
- 14 The kingdom will be chastised as necessary.  
These promises were memorialized in Psalm 89, particularly verses 19 – 37.
- 18 David prays a big thank-you with appropriate humility.  
1 Chronicles 28:4 tells that David made the connection to Jacob’s prophecy about Judah producing the ruler (Genesis 49:10).

## 2 Samuel 8

See also 1 Chronicles 18. This lists the wars from which God gave David rest in 7:1.

- 1 The Philistines were subjugated but not destroyed. They continue to pop up occasionally until the Babylonian Captivity.
- 2 Two-thirds of the Moabites were executed. Their remnant also remains until Babylon.
- 4 Hamstrung horses were still good for breeding and for light riding.
- 7 David stockpiled the precious metals for the future Temple (see also verses 9 and 11).
- 8 The bronze was used later for the two front columns of the Temple and the bronze laver and Temple vessels (1 Chronicles 18:8).
- 12 Summary: Conquered Philistia, Moab, Syria, Ammon, Amalek, Edom (v14)

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17 Two High Priests: Zadok and Ahimelech.

### 2 Samuel 9

- 1 David had promised to show kindness to the house of Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:3, 20:14 – 16).
- 7 Finally finding Mephibosheth, David promised to restore all of his inheritance plus to eat at David's table (a part of the court).
- 10 Ziba, former servant of Saul, was charged with managing Mephibosheth's holdings and serving Mephibosheth's descendants.

This occurred in the middle of David's reign, as mephibosheth was five years old when Saul died (4:4) and at this time has a son (9:12).

### 2 Samuel 10

- 2 The occasion of this kindness is unknown, perhaps during his flights from Saul.
- 3 David had subjugated Ammon in (8:12), so this even happened before or during chapter 8. Note the reference to Zobah. Assuming that David was in process of conquering other neighbors, suspicion was normal.
- 4 Fixing their clothing would not be too difficult, but the beards were another story.
- 6 Realizing they had erred, the Ammonites made military alliances.
- 12 Joab shows his faith by fighting from between two enemies.
- 18 David defeated a re-organized Syrian army, ending the threat from that region.

### 2 Samuel 11

See also 1 Chronicles 20.

- 1 The events with Bathsheba occurred in the middle of the war reported in 8:12 and 10:1 – 14.
- 2 Houses has flat roofs and were used as patios, sometimes with coverings. The king's house, being taller, allowed a vantage point to look down on other roofs. It is more likely that Bathsheba bathed on her rooftop as garden (courtyard) space was limited in a walled city.
- 4 Whether Bathsheba was complicit is not given. Monarchs were assumed to have such rights. Translators disagree whether her uncleanness was from menstruation (Leviticus 15:19) or intercourse (Leviticus 15:18). Some parts of the Law were followed, some were not.
- 5 The punishment for adultery was death (Leviticus 20:10).
- 9 Because the king's activities were observed by many servants, Uriah may have had some knowledge of the affair and chose this method to defeat the cover-up. Or, Uriah was such a great commander that he refused benefits his men did not have.
- 13 Second try – David got Uriah drunk, hoping he would forget his previous statement and go home.
- 17 David succeeded in killing Uriah by ordering Joab to fall back and leave Uriah at the front, alone. Joab chose the location where he knew the best warriors of Ammon were stationed.
- 21 Perhaps the story of Abimelech (Judges 9:50 – 56) was a code story between David and Joab, or Joab was just preparing the messenger for the worst. Interestingly, Abimelech died in this way because he had killed his 70 brothers to become king after Gideon died.
- 25 But, David did not get upset (or feign anger) at the setback in Ammon, but rather encouraged Joab.
- 26 Wife number eight for David.

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27 The standard period of mourning is unknown. But, by the time she married David, Bathsheba was at least two month along, if not three or four.

### 2 Samuel 12

- 1 Nathan was asked (7:1) by David whether he should build a temple. God sent Nathan after Bathsheba's baby was born (12:15).
- 5 The Law did not classify sheep-stealing as a capital crime. David was just upset, and the king could assign the penalty of his choice.
- 6 Restoring four-fold is the Law (Exodus 22:1).
- 9 Nathan delivered God's message that He was greatly displeased by David's behavior.
- 10 Punishment 1: The sword will never depart from your house.
- 11 Punishment 2: Adversity from within David's own house. Three sons will die violently.
- 12 Punishment 3: Some of David's wives will be given to another publically. (Absalom)
- 13 Promise: David would not die for this.
- 14 Punishment 4: The child will die.  
David's feelings of this period were recorded in Psalms 32 and 51.
- 16 David fasted and prayed for the child.
- 20 When the child died, David washed, changed clothes, worshipped at the tent (probably the one with the ark in it), and ate.
- 22 When asked about his behavior, David said that he fasted and prayed just in case God would change His mind. But, once the child died, David could only look forward to seeing the child in heaven.
- 24 Solomon (man of peace) was the second child of David and Bathsheba.
- 25 Solomon's other name was Jедidiah (beloved of the Lord). So, despite its shaky beginning, God endorsed the marriage of David and Bathsheba.
- 28 The war with Ammon continued (sieges take a long time). As the main part of the capital was about to be taken, Joab called for David so that David could get the credit.
- 30 The crown of the king of Ammon weighed about 70 pounds. Many ancient thrones had a built-in crown holder to take most of the strain off the king's neck.
- 31 Such mass executions were common in many civilizations of the time. Ammon had offered to the men of Jabesh-Gilead losing one eye each if they would surrender (11:2). Later, the men of Ammon were reported (Amos 1:13) to focus their cruelty on pregnant women.

### 2 Samuel 13

- 1 Absalom was the third son of David (3:3); Amnon was the first born (3:2)
- 13 The Law prohibited marriage between step-siblings (Leviticus 18:9, 18:11, 20:17). Perhaps this was a ploy to delay Amnon for the moment, or perhaps not.
- 14 The penalty, if they were not half-siblings, would be 50 shekels of silver (Deuteronomy 22:28 – 29) paid to the father, plus they must marry and may not divorce. The reference in Exodus 22:16 – 17 describes seduction, not rape.
- 15 After the rape, Amnon hated Tamar and sent her away forcibly.
- 20 Absalom tried to smooth it over, but hated Amnon for what he did (22)
- 21 David was angry but did nothing.
- 22 After two years, Absalom saw an opportunity for revenge and set it up.
- 29 When Absalom's servants killed Amnon, the other sons fled, perhaps fearing a coup. Note that the mule was the ride of royalty.

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- 32 Initially, the report was that all the sons had been killed. But, Jonadab (nephew of David) reported the facts.
- 37 Absalom took refuge in Geshur (NW of the Sea of Galilee) with his maternal grandfather for three years.

### **2 Samuel 14**

- 2 Joab finds a “wise” woman (probably just a good actress) and has her play out a story as if one of her sons killed the other, so the avenger of blood sought her only remaining child.
- 8 David consented to order that the murderer not be harmed.
- 13 The woman draws a comparison with the case of Absalom – which has some holes.
- 19 David detects the hand of Joab in the ploy. The woman confesses.
- 21 David tells Joab to bring back Absalom.
- 24 But, Absalom was not permitted to see the king (a measure of punishment) which went on for two years (28).
- 26 Absalom was very handsome, and his annual haircut produced five pounds of clippings.
- 29 Absalom sent for Joab to act as intermediary. When Joab balked, Absalom had Joab’s fields burned.
- 33 So, Joab went to David and negotiated a reconciliation based on the argument that half-forgiveness was no forgiveness at all.

### **2 Samuel 15**

- 1 Absalom began a political campaign to win the favor of the people in preparation for a coup.
- 10 Using a pretense of offering a sacrifice at Hebron, Absalom set the coup in motion.
- 13 The political shift was reported to David.
- 14 David elected to flee rather than risk defeat or at least severe damage to Jerusalem.
- 16 But David left 10 concubines to tend to the palace.
- 22 600 warriors from Gath (Philistines) remained loyal to David and fled with him.
- 24 Zadok wanted to bring the ark with David, but David told him to return it and let God decide.
- 28 The number of Israelites with David is unknown, but certainly the number was large. The group waited it out in the wilderness, during which time David wrote Psalms 3 and 61 – 63.
- 30 The group left Jerusalem as if mourning.
- 31 David learned of the treachery of his advisor Ahithophel. David prays that Ahithophel’s counsel be turned to foolishness.
- 32 David sets up counter-intelligence by sending his advisor Hushai as a double agent, pretending to defect to Absalom. David told Hushai to send reports via the high priests’ sons.

### **2 Samuel 16**

- 1 As the story unfolds, several wealthy people will bring supplies for David’s men. This was customary in those days (see 17:27 – 29).
- 3 As will be related in chapter 19, Mephibosheth has a different story.
- 4 Shimei will apologize in chapter 19, hoping that his life will be spared.
- 8 Shimei blamed David for the deaths of Saul’s relatives although David had nothing to do with them.

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- 12 Perhaps David was recalling the curses God pronounce on him from chapter 12, the punishment for taking Bathsheba. By accepting the consequences, David hoped that God would relent.
- 21 Ahithophel's advice was appropriate in that culture. Taking the king's concubines permanently severed any relationship between David and Absalom. Absalom's followers would have no options left.

### 2 Samuel 17

- 1 Ahithophel's second recommendation was equally good. David stopped on the west side of the Jordan (15:28), so would be trapped if attacked. Further, David had fewer men at this time and they were tired. Finally, David's retreat signaled weakness, so the "momentum" was on Absalom's side.
- 2 Hushai, David's double agent, was convincing in his portrayal of David as the more experienced general, so Absalom should wait until he had overwhelmingly superior numbers. The skill of David was exaggerated and the loyalty of the rest of the nation to Absalom was overstated, but both appealed to the ego of Absalom.
- 16 The high priests' sons ran to tell David to get across the Jordan immediately just in case Absalom changed his mind and took Ahithophel's advice.
- 18 The sons of the high priests were seen and followed. A sympathizer hid them until the coast was clear. The high priests would be in danger if Absalom won.
- 23 Ahithophel understood both that Hushai's advice would fail and that his own career was over, no matter who won. So, he set his affairs in order and killed himself.
- 24 Mahanaim, a walled city, was about 20 miles east of the Jordan, about half way between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. This would be David's headquarters in the was that followed.
- 25 The generals had all gone with David, so Absalom appointed a new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Amasa. Amasa was an illegitimate cousin of Joab (Abigail was Joab's grandmother).
- 26 Absalom foolishly encamped his army on the plains on the east side of the Jordan. David had walled city into which to retreat. Absalom would be trapped against the river if he retreated.

### 2 Samuel 18

- 3 David wanted to go out to battle, but the people persuaded him not to do so because the enemy would concentrate on him.
- 5 David ordered everyone to keep Absalom safe.
- 6 Considerable maneuvering must have taken place since the two armies did not meet until they had all crossed the Jordan into Ephraim, which was mostly an oak forest.
- 8 More retreating soldiers were killed by fleeing in a mountainous forest than by direct combat.
- 14 Absalom's head (hair?) got caught in a tree. This information was relayed to Joab because no one wanted to kill Absalom after David ordered them to keep him safe. Joab, however, had no such qualms.
- 15 Joab had no desire to annihilate fellow Israelites, so called off the chase.

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- 19 Ahimahaz, son of Zadok the high priest, wanted the glory of telling the king of the victory. Joab was smarter and sent an Ethiopian mercenary. But, Ahimahaz outran the Ethiopian – illustrating his immaturity.
- 33 David's concern was for Absalom rather than the kingdom, illustrating another of David's glaring flaws.

### 2 Samuel 19

- 6 Joab lectured David about David's attitude and set him straight.
- 9 Those who had sided with Absalom decided that escorting David back to Jerusalem might be politically expedient.
- 11 David send the two high priests to talk to the elders of Judah to shame them into escorting David back to Jerusalem so that the country would be reunited.
- 13 Perhaps out of hurt feelings about the lecture, or perhaps because Joab killed Absalom, David appointed Amasa, Absalom's general, to take Joab's place.
- 16 Shimei, who had cursed David during his retreat (16:5) came to apologize and was forgiven.
- 22 David did not want to execute all those who had opposed him, so all was forgiven.
- 24 Mephibosheth claimed that Ziba had abandoned him, that he was unable to come to David due to his disability.
- 29 David did not want to create discord by taking sides in the Ziba-Mephibosheth matter, so he split the land between them.
- 43 The men of Judah and the men of Israel have words over which is the more important, indicating that unity was not complete.

### 2 Samuel 20

- 1 After Absalom's attempted coup and the disagreement between the tribes about bringing David back to Jerusalem, a revolt was started by Sheba of Benjamin.
- 2 Only Judah remained loyal to David.
- 3 The ten concubines taken by Absalom were sequestered the rest of their lives.
- 4 Amasa, Absalom's general, was retained by David. David told him to assemble the loyal troops in three days. But, he was late.
- 10 Abishai and Joab were sent to capture Sheba before he could take over walled cities and become a more difficult enemy. When Amasa showed up, Joab killed him.
- 13 Amasa's corpse caused confused loyalties, so it was dragged off and covered.
- 15 Joab besieged Sheba at Abel in Ephraim.
- 22 Apparently, the people were not that loyal to Sheba. Rather than suffer in a siege, they tossed Sheba's head over the wall.

### 2 Samuel 21

- 1 This famine likely happened earlier in David's reign (but after taking care of Mephibosheth in chapter 9) as it is unlikely that God would let this problem continue for more than 20 years. However, it is likely that David knew of the problem and had not taken care of it.
- 2 The treaty with Gibeon was established by deceit in Joshua 9. This is the only information about Saul and Gibeon.
- 6 The Gibeonites set as their settlement price that they hang seven men of Saul's house. This was normal in that time.
- 7 David did not include Mephibosheth because of his oath to Jonathan.

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- 8 The condemned were two sons of Saul's concubine and five sons of Merab (Michal is a long-standing copying error), Saul's older daughter.
- 10 The concubine mourned for all the dead and kept the bodies from being eaten by scavengers.
- 14 Upon hearing of the concubine, David sent to Jabesh Gilead for the bones of Saul and Jonathan, and buried the seven plus Saul and Jonathan's bones in Saul's father's tomb, which would be customary, honoring the family.
- 15 The wars with the Philistines happened back in 8:1. Note that, during the Absalom coup, Philistines fought with David.
- 17 Abishai made a rule that the king could no longer fight personally.
- 19 Goliath's brother is killed. Many giants were among the Philistines, including at least one with twelve fingers and twelve toes.

### 2 Samuel 22

Psalm 18 is reproduced here

- (4) Popular hymn
- (21 – 25) The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness...I was also blameless.
- (32 – 33) Some rabbis found reference to the miracles of the Messiah.
- (50) Cited in Romans 15:9 with three other passages to remind Christians that, in the Messiah, the Gentiles were predicted to rejoice. Gentiles are mentioned several times in 44 – 50, but no famous rabbis caught it.
- (51) The Messiah would be of David.

### 2 Samuel 23

- 2 David claimed to be a prophet – mostly through his psalms.
- 5 David acknowledged that his house was not entirely faithful, but that, despite this, the promise of an everlasting covenant will happen.
- 8 The following are anecdotes from David's early military career.
- 16 A touching story in which David utters a wish (not an order) that he could drink again from the well of Bethlehem, currently held by the Philistines. Three of David's men risked their lives to get the drink. David could not bear to drink it due to its cost, so poured it out.

### 2 Samuel 24

- 1 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that Satan influenced David to take a census. 2 Samuel says God. So, like with Job, God used Satan to present the option. David fell for it.
- 3 Joab is skeptical that the census is a good idea.
- 8 The census of the fighting men took almost 10 months to complete.
- 9 800,000 warriors in Israel, 500,000 in Judah (probably includes Simeon).
- 10 David recognized his error as soon as it was too late.
- 13 Gad, a seer, brought David his choice of punishments: 3 years of famine, 3 months of military reversal, 3 days of plague.
- 14 David picked the one that left him in the hands of God. Famine and war left him in the hands of his enemies. God was more likely to relent.
- 15 70,000 died the first day.
- 16 God relented after one day.

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- 18 David was instructed to build an altar where he had seen the angel. This later became the site of the Temple.
- 23 Arunah, the owner of the threshing floor, offered the site and the animals for sacrifice as a gift.
- 24 David said, “I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing.” 1 Chronicles 21:25 says the price was 600 shekels of gold, which would be 7200 shekels of silver. Since Abraham had paid 400 shekels of silver for his family tomb (Genesis 23:15), the bigger numbers are probably right. 1 Chronicles 21:30 adds the detail that David did not go to the tabernacle at Gilgal to inquire of the Lord due to the angels and his sword (probably in the way). So the number in 2 Samuel is probably a copying error.