

2 Samuel

Why a 2 Samuel?	In the Hebrew Bible, 1-2 Samuel formed one book. However, in the Greek version of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, it's divided into 2 books for thematic reasons. Think of 1 Samuel as an introduction to the monarchy where "David is in waiting" and 2 Samuel as a chronicle of the kingship of David, both good and bad.
The Key to Both Books	In 2 Samuel 7:16, we read concerning David: "Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me forever; your throne shall be established forever." This is covenant language by God, similar to that of Abraham and Moses. Consequently, both books deal with the Davidic covenant in which God promised an eternal throne to the house of David. It's an unconditional covenant. Irrespective of what David does, God will not treat the house of David like he had treated Saul's. God will punish the house of David (later the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 1-2 Kings/Chronicles). But David's line will never be completely cut off as with Saul (most notably when Jonathan dies at the beginning of 2 Samuel).
A Psalm and NT Figure Helps With the Unconditional Covenant Idea	In Psalm 89, the Lord, speaking through David says: <i>"My covenant I will not violate, nor will I alter the utterance of my lips. Once I have sworn my holiness; I will not lie to David. His descendants shall endure forever and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established forever like the moon, and the witness in the sky is faithful" (Psalm 89:34-37).</i> This unconditional promise to David would be fulfilled in David's descendant, Jesus Christ.
After God's Own Heart	In 1 Samuel 13:14, we read that David is known as a "man after God's own heart." It's not a statement suggesting that David was created by God superior to the rest of humanity created in God's image. Instead, it is a statement regarding David's pursuit of God. He was after Him, always chasing him. That explains why David can repent after he sinned greatly. Even though his sin had consequences, David had great faith that God would forgive him. He sets the example for how repentance and faith work in the NT.
2 Samuel 1-10	2 Samuel is arranged in three sections. The first is 2 Samuel 1-10. In this section, the rise and success of David is highlighted. He becomes king, first of Judah and then of all Israel. One of his first actions is to take the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and even desires to build a temple for it. The Lord is also with David as he defeats many nations in battle. He's presented as a king who exercises wise judgment, one who governs his kingdom with justice and mercy.
2 Samuel 11-12	2 Samuel 11-12 introduces us to David's fallen nature. He lusts after Bathsheba and commits adultery with her. When Bathsheba conceives a child, David tries to make it appear as though Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, is the father. When that plan doesn't work, David arranges for Uriah to be killed in battle. The prophet Nathan confronts him and prophesies the tragedy and misery that will come upon David and his household.
2 Samuel 13-24	In 2 Samuel 13-24, what Nathan prophesies comes true. Absalom conspires against him and seeks to do away with him because he wants the throne for himself. Yet, it ends on a positive note, with David striving to reign uprightly and maintain control of the kingdom.

Lessons from Chapters 1-10

1. David's lament of Saul and Jonathan demonstrates his respect for God's anointing even though he would ultimately benefit from both of their deaths.

²³ Saul and Jonathan— in life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. ²⁴ "Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold. ²⁵ "How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. ²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. ²⁷ "How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!" (1:23-27)

2. When Joab (of the House of David) murders Abner (of the House of Saul), David's character is demonstrated in his response.

²⁸ Later, when David heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the Lord concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner.²⁹ May his blood fall on the head of Joab and on his whole family! May Joab's family never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy^[a] or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food." (3:28-29)

3. David knew he needed a central capitol if Israel was going to be great. That's the first thing he did after becoming king over all Israel. This demonstrated his wisdom.

⁴ David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. ⁵ In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years. ⁶ The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." ⁷ Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David. ⁸ On that day David had said,

“Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those ‘lame and blind’ who are David’s enemies.^[a]” That is why they say, “The ‘blind and lame’ will not enter the palace.”⁹ David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces^[b] inward.¹⁰ And he became more and more powerful, because the Lord God Almighty was with him. (5:4-10)

4. His defeat of the Philistines demonstrates his conquering of not only a major thorn in the side of Israel, but also a defeat of their idols.

¹⁸ Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; ¹⁹ so David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?” The Lord answered him, “Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands.” ²⁰ So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, “As waters break out, the Lord has broken out against my enemies before me.” So that place was called Baal Perazim.^[c] ²¹ The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off. (5:18-21)

5. David’s bringing of the ark to Jerusalem demonstrates his reverence.

¹⁷ They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. ¹⁸ After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. (6:17-18)

6. The covenant God makes with David demonstrates his uniqueness.

“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^[d]; your throne will be established forever.” (7:11-16)

7. His treatment of Mephibosheth is a parable of God’s mercy and the graceful inheritance we receive from him.

⁷ “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.” . . . ¹³ And Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he always ate at the king’s table; he was lame in both feet. (9:7-13)

Lessons from Chapters 11-12

1. Sin was the great threat to David’s kingdom, not external enemies.

² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” (11:2-3)

2. David’s relationship with Nathan shows how the prophet/king relationship worked the way God intended it to.

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, “There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. ⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.” ⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, “As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.” ⁷ Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! (12:1-6)

3. God forgave David’s sin. But he lived with the consequences of them.

¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’ (12:10)

Lessons from 13-24

1. In fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy, Amnon, David’s son, rapes, essentially, his sister.

2. In fulfillment of Nathan’s prophecy, Absalom tries to kill David because he wants the throne to himself.

3. Chaos ensues. But David’s throne has nevertheless been established by God. And it will endure.

“If my house were not right with God, surely he would not have made with me an everlasting covenant, arranged and secured in every part” (23:5)

