

# OpenTheo

## 1 & 2 Samuel Overview



### **Bible Book Overviews** - Steve Gregg

In this overview, Steve Gregg covers the book of 1 & 2 Samuel, which was written by three prophets: Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. The book covers 140 years of Israel's history, including the reigns of Saul and David. Samuel played a significant role in the history of Israel, anointing both Saul and David as kings. Although David was regarded as a great king, he also faced challenges, including personal and political conflicts with other rulers and factions within Israel. Overall, the book of Samuel provides a multidimensional understanding of the characters and events that shaped Israel's history.

### **Transcript**

We're going to begin tonight, not only begin, but begin and end, an introduction and survey of the books of Samuel. We've been taking one book of the Bible each evening that we've been having this series. We've gone through all the books up to this point.

Of course, we just finished Judges two months ago. We do this once a month, and Ruth last time. So we come to Samuel.

You might think just 1 Samuel would be what we'd take, but 1 and 2 Samuel are actually one book. They were written as one book. The author of the first is the author of the second.

In fact, you'll see as you read through these books that chapter one of 2 Samuel just continues the story. That's at the end of 1 Samuel, as if it's not another book because it isn't. The writer of these books wrote only one book, which we call the book of Samuel.

But these books have had different names, and they were divided into two books, not by the Hebrew authorities, but by the Septuagint. Now, the Septuagint was a translation of the Hebrew scriptures into Greek made in the 3rd century BC by Jewish people. But they translated the Old Testament into Greek, and the Greek language has bigger words in writing than the Hebrew language has.

In fact, in the Hebrew scriptures, they didn't even use vowels. They just used consonants, which made the words much more compressed than in Greek, where the

words can be really long. So when they translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, the one book of Samuel became two books.

Just because of the size of scrolls and the limitations and so forth, they made it part one and part two of what had been a single volume before. Now, when the Septuagint did this, it named these books first and second kingdoms. And then the next two books, which are in our Bible first and second kings, the Septuagint called third and fourth kingdoms.

So the books that we call first and second Samuel and first and second kings in the Septuagint became first, second, third, and fourth kingdoms. And then, of course, eventually in the Vulgate, I believe it was, the Latin translation changed them to kings. Or, excuse me, let me see here.

The Vulgate was the one that changed them into kings from kingdoms. And then I think it's the English version changed it to first and second Samuel and first and second kings. So these four books in our Old Testament really were actually two books in the Hebrew scriptures.

Samuel and what we would call kings. Now each of those are divided into two. So we're going to look at first and second Samuel because they are one book.

They're not really two books at all. And the time frame of these books is the time frame after the period of the judges and up through the reign of David. Actually, first kings, as these books have now been divided, first kings begins with the birth of Samuel.

And it goes through the reign of King Saul and it ends with the death of Saul. And then David became king. And second Samuel, then, is the book about the reign of David from him becoming the ruler till his death.

So the first book covers about 100 years from 1155 to 1055, about 100 years covered in the first book. Then the second book, which covers only the 40 year reign of David, it covers from 1055 to 1015. So this is the period of time that they cover, about 140 years in these two books.

And the book begins with the end of the book of Judges. And the judges are still around when it begins. In fact, it's almost certain that Samuel grew up during the time when Samson was doing his thing.

The book of Judges talks about Samson's life, gives several chapters about it. And Samson never really delivered his people fully from the Philistine threat. The Philistines had conquered Israel and had ruled them for about 40 years.

In fact, they had even disarmed them. It says in 1 Samuel, chapter 13, verse 4, that the Philistines didn't let the Israelites have any blacksmiths. Now, obviously, a blacksmith is

somebody who makes and sharpens metal tools.

And farmers need metal tools, plows and threshing and harvesting instruments that have to be made of metal and have to be sharp. And so the Israelites, for their farming implements to be sharpened, had to go to Philistine blacksmiths. And the reason the Philistines didn't let the Israelites have their own blacksmiths is because if you can make and sharpen tools, you can do the same thing with weapons.

So the Philistines didn't allow Israel to have any weapons. Now, when the Israelites revolted, they actually managed to get some weapons somewhere. We don't know where.

Maybe they started out using their farming tools as weapons and then confiscated the weapons of the people they killed. Very possibly. We're not really told where Israel eventually got weapons to fight these wars that we read about.

But there's a good chance they took the weapons from the Philistines that they killed. After all, David, when he killed Goliath, took Goliath's sword. It may well have been what they did since they didn't have weapons of their own.

But when Samuel was born, it was during the time when Samson was attacking the Philistines. But unlike the judges before him, Samson never really defeated the Philistines or delivered his people from them. If you read the book of Judges, you find that these judges usually delivered Israel from bondage to foreign powers that controlled them.

Samson was an exception. Samson did not manage to deliver his people from the Philistines. He killed a thousand of them on one occasion with the jawbone of an ass, and he also killed three thousand of them in his death.

But he left the Philistine oppression intact when he died. And no doubt that's because he probably failed where other judges succeeded because he was so compromised himself. Samson compromised his vows to God.

He compromised his moral life. Of the judges of Israel, he was the one most compromised morally and who seemed to take his vows to God very lightly. And because he took God lightly, God didn't really use Samson to deliver the people from the Philistines.

But when Samson died, it's probably around the same time that Samuel, as an adult now, began to become a leader in Israel. Now, Samuel was a judge. In fact, he's regarded to be the last of the judges because he guided the nation of Israel from the time of the judges to the time of the monarchy.

That is the time of having kings. In the book of Judges, it says repeatedly, in those days

there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in his own eyes. This is the way God had set things up in Israel.

God was the king. They didn't need an earthly king. They were a unique nation.

When God had established his covenant with them and made a nation of them after they came out of Egypt, he said, If you'll keep my covenant and obey my voice, you'll be a special nation to me, a holy nation, separate to me, my own people. And so they didn't need an earthly king because they had God as their king and they were the only nation on the planet that had God as their king. And that was their boast and that was their glory, that God was their king.

And the fact that they didn't have an earthly king was really their privilege. They didn't need an earthly king because they had God. But there were times when they wanted to have an earthly king because I guess they were just enthusiastic about having a hero.

So when Gideon, one of the judges, actually defeated the Midianites and drove them out and liberated his people, the people asked Gideon to become their king and he refused. He said, I'm not going to reign over you. My son's not going to reign over you.

The Lord will reign over you. In the time of Samuel, however, the reason he's the last of the judges is because the people came to Samuel also. And this is after about 300 and something years of the judges.

And they said in chapter eight of First Samuel, give us a king to rule over us like all the nations have. Now, Gideon had been offered the same thing. He'd actually been offered the kingship and he said, no way.

God is your king. At this point, however, Samuel consulted God and God said, go ahead and give them what they want. But warn them, it's not going to go well for them having a king.

He's going to oppress them. And they haven't rejected you, Samuel. They've rejected me.

They were, in fact, turning down the whole system of having judges in favor of having a king. And Samuel was the last of the judges. So it could seem as if they were rejecting Samuel and his personal leadership.

In fact, it was Samuel's personal leadership that actually delivered them from the Philistines, at least in measure. It was later that David finally ended the Philistine threat completely. But there was a major battle between Israel and the Philistines in the seventh chapter of First Samuel, where it was Samuel's spiritual leadership.

That caused Israel to have a great victory over the Philistines and deliver a lot of the

Jewish towns from the oppression of the Philistines. So Samuel was a great deliverer, like the other judges were before, though he wasn't a military leader. In fact, Samuel, when he delivered them, he was offering a sacrifice on a mountain to God.

And the nations were fighting it out. Israel and Philistines' armies were fighting. But God sent loud thunders and lightnings, apparently a terrible thunderstorm that frightened and probably killed some of the Philistines.

So this gave Israel the advantage, and they were delivered at that time. So Samuel was a deliverer of his people like other judges. But he was the last of the judges.

And he was the last because it was he that God used to establish the monarchy, which it was not God's idea to establish. It was the people's idea, and it wasn't a good idea either. But God allowed them to have what they wanted.

Now, in addition to being a judge then, Samuel was a prophet. When the monarchy was established, that would mean that the kings would be human kings. Instead of having God as their king in heaven, they would have a human king.

But the human kings were still to be subject to God. Israel was still supposed to be God's nation. And therefore Israel's kings had to answer to God and obey God.

And this meant they needed to not only follow the law of God, which was written by Moses, they also had to follow the instructions God would give through the prophets. Now, before this time, Israel didn't have a series of prophets. There were some people who prophesied now and again.

But the office of a prophet, which was somebody who heard from God and gave counsel to the king and told the king of Israel what God wanted him to do, began with Samuel. And so Samuel is treated in the Bible as the last of the judges and also the first of the prophets. Let me just show you some scriptures to back that up if you don't mind.

If you look at chapter 7, 1 Samuel 7, and verses 15 through 17, it says, And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. But he always returned to Ramah, for his home was there.

There he judged Israel, and there he built an altar of the Lord. So he was a judge. And the fact that he was the last of the judges seems clear from Acts chapter 13.

If you look at Acts chapter 13 and verse 20, Paul is preaching in Pisidia, Antioch. He says he's summarizing Israel's history. And after the Exodus, it says in verse 20, After that, he gave them judges for about 450 years until Samuel the prophet.

Okay, so he gave them judges until Samuel the prophet. Samuel is the last of them.

Why? Because the system of judges ended when a king was appointed instead of a judge.

So he was the last of the judges. But he's also regarded throughout scripture as the first of the prophets. Although Moses prophesied before him, and so did others, he was the first to hold what later became the office of a prophet, again, counseling the kings of Israel and so forth.

If you look at Acts chapter 3, Acts 3, 24, Peter says, Yes, and all the prophets from Samuel and those who follow after, as many of us have spoken, have foretold these days. So now for all the prophets, beginning with Samuel, recognizing Samuel as the beginning of that order of prophets, of which Isaiah and Jeremiah and Elijah and Elisha later were recognized as representatives of that order, too. Samuel was the first of them to be called in that capacity.

Also in Hebrews chapter 11 and verse 32, it says, And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson. These are judges, of course, from the book of Judges. And Jephthah, also of David, and Samuel and the prophets.

Now, Samuel and the prophets in this connection, in Jewish thought, would mean Samuel and those prophets who followed after him. He was the first of the prophets. And so the last of the judges, the first of the prophets.

Now, as a prophet of God, he would give counsel to the kings. And that's why Saul, the first king, was anointed by the prophet Samuel. And so was David, the second king.

It was Samuel's anointing of them that made them official, because Samuel was God's representative. And then after they were anointed and became kings, at least in the case of Saul, Samuel informed Saul from time to time that God had a campaign for him to go on, something to do. It was actually Saul's failure to obey the words of Samuel, which were called the words of the Lord, that caused the Lord to reject Saul from being king and to seek another, a man after his own heart, in David.

Now, so Samuel's this transitional character. He didn't want to, but he did shepherd the nation through the transition from judges to being a monarchy. He's the kingmaker.

Israel had no king at the beginning until Samuel, under God's direction, anointed the first king and the second one. The first king was Saul. The second was David.

And their careers are found in first and second Samuel, respectively. David is introduced in first Samuel, but that's while Saul is still king. Saul dies at the end of first Samuel and David's reign begins and ends in the book of second Samuel.

The time of writing or who wrote it, it seems to be written by someone contemporary with the events. Now, Samuel himself died in the book of first Samuel. So it's clear that

the rest of the book was not written by him.

The Jews believe that he was the primary author of the book, but that would only be possible up to the point where his own death is mentioned. But there is in first Chronicles chapter 29, some indicator of two other prophets besides Samuel who may have had a hand in it. First Chronicles, by the way, is a book that parallels the books of Samuel.

Second Chronicles parallels the books of Kings. I don't know if you knew that, but when you read first and second Samuel, then you read first Chronicles. It's sort of like reading Matthew than reading Mark.

You know, they're parallel accounts. But in first Chronicles, which is the parallel of the books of Samuel in chapter 29 and verse 29. It says now the acts of King David first and last.

Indeed, they are written in the book of Samuel, the seer in the book of Nathan, the prophet, and in the book of Gad, the seer. Now we find in first Samuel that the word seer is just an older word for a prophet. It says in first Samuel, those that are now called prophets used to be called seers.

So we've got Samuel, Nathan, and Gad. All of them are prophets. They all were contemporary with David, by the way.

Samuel, as I mentioned, was on the scene before David became visible, probably before David was even born. But he did live into David's lifetime and he did anoint David as king. Later, when David became king, it was Nathan and Gad were the two prophets that consulted with him and basically counseled him concerning what God had in mind.

So these are three prophets. Nathan, I should say Samuel, and Nathan and Gad. No doubt the material that is following the death of Samuel must have been written by Nathan and Gad.

But nonetheless, there are prophets. And these prophets wrote under inspiration, which is why these books are considered to be scripture, because they were written by inspired writers, these three prophets. So I want to take you through this whole story.

It is the history of about 140 years of Israel's Old Testament history. But it's not just history. When we come to books like Samuel and Kings, we're reading just historical narrative, really.

But we have other historical narrative of the Jewish people from Old Testament times, like the books of Maccabees, for example. Now, we don't include the books of Maccabees in our Bible, though the Roman Catholic Church includes first and second Maccabees. There are more books of Maccabees than that, that the Jews wrote.

But first and second Maccabees are historical information about the Jews in the Old Testament, but they're not in our Bible. Why aren't they? Because they were written by prophets. Samuel and Kings were written by prophets, at least that's what the Jews believed.

And that's why they are in the Bible, and Maccabees is not. Maccabees is written by a historian, but not by a prophet. And for something to be the word of God, it has to be written by an inspired writer.

And an inspired writer is a prophet, someone who receives inspired words from God. Yet, much of what's in the books of Samuel don't need inspiration. They don't need to be revealed by inspiration in order to be known.

Because anyone who lived through the events would be familiar with them. You wouldn't need to be inspired by God to write a history of your own times. As long as you did good research, you could write an accurate history of your times.

So, why have a prophet write history? Well, it's because whenever history is written by a human writer, that writer has to decide what he thinks about what's important. He's going to have to exclude many things and include only a few things. I mean, if you're writing 140 years of history, let's just say you were writing the last 140 years of American history.

How big a book could you write? You could write a set of books bigger than the Encyclopedia Britannica and still not include everything that happened in that 140 years of recent history. You'd have to be selective. Even if you're writing the biography of a single president, you couldn't write everything he said and did.

You'd have to decide what things are worth reporting, what are not. Now, every historian has to make that kind of editorial decisions. But it is assumed that if a prophet of God is writing, then the editorial decisions he's making and the opinions he expresses about the historical events are those which are revealed to him by God.

He's an inspired writer. Therefore, we're writing history from a prophetic point of view, not a mere historical point of view. The events are historically true, but their selection and any commentary on them comes from an inspired writer, and that's why they are in the Bible, as opposed to other historical books that might have been written at the same time, but not by inspired writers.

The books included in the Bible are included because they are believed to be the word of God. And if they're the word of God, they must have been written by somebody who is hearing from God and inspired by God, and that's what prophets are. All right? So, it has been observed that the stories in Samuel are among the most engaging and interesting stories in the Old Testament.



The narrative draws you in. The characters are obviously historical. You're not reading about mythological characters like Ulysses or somebody like that.

The characters are multidimensional. Is Saul a good guy or a bad guy? Well, as you read through his story, it's kind of hard to tell. He's obviously in the end treated as a bad guy, though he was a pretty attractive character in the early chapters, and he even had his moments later, even when he was being a very wicked man, and when he was tormented by an evil spirit and trying to kill David, you still find him having his moments of humility, his moments of repentance, apparently, or half-hearted repentance.

He's not painted only in dark colors. He's multidimensional. David also.

David is clearly a heroic figure, but he makes some terrible mistakes and some terrible sins. It's obvious that these characters are real people because they are such a mixture like real people are, of good and bad, wisdom and folly. You know, it's clear that this is true history about real people because we don't have one-dimensional characters here.

So let's just kind of survey the books of Samuel. I will not at this point go into 1 Chronicles, which parallels them. We'll wait a few more sessions, and we'll do the books of Chronicles separately, but we're going to find much of the same material is in Chronicles that we're going to cover here, especially 1 Chronicles.

Let me divide the book into parts for you. I've done that on the notes that I've handed out. The first major section is the first seven chapters, and this is before the monarchy.

This is the birth and ministry of Samuel as a judge of Israel. So it's his service as a judge before the judges ceased to exist, before a king came to power to replace the judges. Then, of course, in chapters 8 through 15, we can say these chapters deal with Samuel and Saul.

Samuel anoints Saul to be king, and then he gives counsel to Saul. He has confrontations with Saul. Even though Saul later became murderous and killed lots of innocent people, including priests, and tried to kill David and so forth, he never tried to kill Samuel.

I believe that Saul was truly intimidated by Samuel. He knew that Samuel was God's man, and Samuel had such stature that Saul feared him. And when Samuel said, God has rejected you, Saul practically broke down in tears and said, Oh, please, please pray for me that I won't be rejected.

But Saul said no. I mean, Samuel said, no, God's not going to change his mind about this. So we have Samuel and Saul are the focus of chapters 7 through 15.

Then David comes into the picture in chapter 16, and the rest of 1 Samuel, really, is about Saul and David. So we've got just Samuel in the first section. Then we've got Samuel and Saul in the second.

Then we've got David and Saul in the third segment. And that segment goes from 1 Samuel chapter 16 to 2 Samuel chapter 1 with the death of Saul. Now then, in 2 Samuel, the rest of that is, of course, David's life.

And 2 Samuel chapters 2 through 8 are kind of the early part of David's reign as king, the good part. When David was a good king, and some of the conquests he made, and conquering Jerusalem, and bringing the Ark to Jerusalem, and things like that, 2 Samuel chapters 2 through 8 talk about David's early reign. But then 2 Samuel chapters 9 through 20 talk about his later reign.

And in the midst of this section, or very early on in this section, of course, he sins with Bathsheba. Now he commits acts that are worthy of death. But the prophet Nathan says, well, you're not going to be put to death for this.

But you're going to have trouble in your household for the rest of your life. The sword will not depart from your household all the days of your life, he said. And so the rest of this material from about chapter 11 to chapter 20 is about the problems that David incurred in his family.

His own son tried to kill him. And his son Absalom, well, one son raped one of the daughters. And then Absalom killed that son.

And then Absalom tried to kill David. Messed up family. After David sinned with Bathsheba, though he survived it, and he wasn't put to death for it, which he should have been, could have been.

Nonetheless, he suffered terribly. His kingdom was never the same again after his sin. And those chapters, especially from chapter 11 on, are about those problems in his kingdom.

And the last of them chronologically is in 2 Samuel chapter 20, a rebellion of a man named Sheba who tried to overthrow David after Absalom had been dealt with. When Absalom was no longer a problem to David, there was another revolt of the northern ten tribes under a man named Sheba. And chapter 20 talks about that and how that got settled.

We'll talk about this more. I'm just giving you the broad outline first. We're going to go into more detail soon.

The last chapters of 2 Samuel, chapters 21 through 24, are like appendices. Now, what I mean by that is they, it's like the appendix of a book where an author may be in the main body of his book, introduces a subject, but doesn't want to go into it too much. And so he says, see appendix A, and you'll see I go into a separate discussion of this whole subject that I didn't want to interrupt my main body of work to go off on that tangent.

An appendix is sort of like a tangent or something that's placed in there that could have been mentioned earlier, but it didn't fit the plan of the book to go into it in that kind of detail earlier. And so it's like the story chronologically ends in chapter 20. But then there's four more chapters.

And in those chapters, there are things that are discussed which actually occurred chronologically earlier. We saw this same phenomenon actually in Deuteronomy and also, well, not so much Deuteronomy, I suppose, but certainly in Judges. The last five chapters of Judges, or several chapters, are an appendix.

After the story of Samson, then you have the last chapters of Judges go back to earlier incidents and some things that were done, two main stories at the end of Judges that really belonged to an earlier part of the story, but the story was not interrupted to tell them. And so there's like appendices at the end of Judges. We have that at the end of Samuel too.

The appendices at the end of 2 Samuel have to do with, for example, a problem that came on Israel because Saul had earlier afflicted the Gibeonites and Israel had made in the time of Joshua a mutual non-aggressions treaty with the Gibeonites. And so Saul had violated that treaty and a plague came on Israel because of it. And when David learned of it, he had to make peace with the Gibeonites and he actually had to surrender some of Saul's descendants to them to be dealt with and punished.

It's not something to go into right now in detail. It's rather unpleasant, actually, but it's something that did have to be dealt with. Also, in chapter 21, there's a discussion about a variety of giants that were killed by David and his men.

Not only Goliath, but Goliath had four brothers and a dad who were all giants. And the discussion about the killing of these giants is all there. Now, they weren't all killed at the end of the story.

They're just not mentioned until the end of the story because there was no really good place to interrupt the narrative to tell about these other giants. The killing of Goliath is a famous and important story in the narrative because it's about David, but that some of the other giants that were related to Goliath were killed probably around the same time has been a matter delayed until the end of the book to be placed in an appendix. Likewise, Psalm 22, excuse me, chapter 22 of 2 Samuel is a psalm, a psalm of David's, just a long psalm that you also find in the Psalter.

And it's a psalm that is said to be written after God had delivered David from all his enemies and from Saul. Exactly when he wrote it could be early in his reign, but we don't have it recorded until this point. Then chapter 23 for the most part is a summary of the exploits of David's mighty men.

David had some exceptional warriors on his side, and many of them were men who went with him when he fled from Saul. And they made David their captain and they fled and endangered their lives with him. But they also fought battles for him, probably mostly after he was king.

But we don't know when they did this. There's just a list of great exploits that David's mighty men did without placing them in any particular chronological setting. And that's what chapter 23 is mostly about.

And then the final chapter is about David taking the census. Again, we don't know exactly when chronologically this happened, but it was the wrong thing for him to do it. It brought a plague on Israel because he shouldn't have done it.

Now, there's many questions associated with this chapter in this census, and especially when you compare it with the parallel in 1 Chronicles. One of the problems is there's a lot of differences between the story in 1 Samuel 24 and the parallel in Chronicles. Different census numbers are given, different details of the story are given, even a different name for the guy who sold the threshing floor to David and all that.

Some of this probably has to do with textual corruption, that is to say people who copied one or the other of the books must have gotten some things wrong, it would seem. But the point is, the biggest problem with the census question is why was it even wrong to take a census? I mean, God told Moses to take a census of the people right after they came out of Egypt and then again 40 years later. And yet it was wrong for David to take a census.

We're never told why it was wrong, but we do know that David and Joab both knew it was wrong. So there must have been something about it that we are not told. That was obvious to them, and less obvious to us that this was a wrong decision to make, and it displeased God and brought trouble on Israel.

And that's how the book of Samuel ends. Now, when you get to the next book, Kings, David is still alive, but old. In First Kings, chapter one, David is sick.

He's mostly bedridden, and it's time for him to appoint one of his sons to be a successor, and he appoints Solomon. That's how the book of Kings begins. But we'll save that for another time.

David dies in the beginning of First Kings, and then we have his successor, Solomon, and the rest after him. So this is how First and Second Samuel go. It divides into major sections.

First is about Samuel alone. The second is about Samuel and Saul during Saul's reign, and the third is about Saul and David, and the fourth is about David's reign. So these are the major divisions of the books, and the last of them is simply the book of Second

Samuel, talking about David's reign.

But the First Samuel has the first three segments, and so the first seven chapters are about Samuel. Now Samuel was apparently a Levite, descended from Korah. We get this from Chronicles.

We're not told that here. His family was from the mountains of Ephraim. He was a son of a polygamous marriage.

His father, Elkanah, had two wives, Hannah and Penanah. Now Penanah had a number of children, but Hannah was barren. We're not told this, but it's almost certain that the reason this man had two wives is because Hannah was barren.

In biblical times, polygamy was not forbidden, but most people didn't practice it. For one thing, mostly they couldn't afford to. It's expensive enough to have one family to support, and most people were not wealthy enough to have two or three families to support, and so most men were monogamous.

But we do have a number of cases in the Bible of men whose first wives were barren. Abraham, for example, had a barren wife, Sarah, and it was Sarah herself who suggested to take Hagar to be another wife, a concubine, to have children by her. Now having children was extremely important to the Jewish people, and therefore if a man had a barren wife, a lot of times not because he loved another woman or didn't love his wife, but because she couldn't give him children, he'd just take another wife.

Jacob had four wives. He didn't want four wives. He only wanted one.

He only wanted Rachel, but he got Leah by chicanery from his father-in-law, so he ended up with two. And then it was when his two wives both experienced periods of barrenness that they insisted that he sleep with their maids and take them on as concubines so they could have children there. This is something we don't have any ability to relate with emotionally.

No woman today would ask her husband to have a child by another woman, but the truth is that having children was more important to them than it is to us, even to the wives. The idea of having a family was so that when you died, someone would be left behind to carry on your family name and take on the family estate and so forth. They didn't have any developed theology about the afterlife.

They didn't know about heaven or hell. There was no revelation about this in the Old Testament at all. And therefore, their idea of living on after you die is you live on through your children.

You live on. You have immortality through having many generations of children after you. The more children you had, the more likely it is that some of them would survive to

give you grandchildren and great-grandchildren and so forth.

So having a large family and especially having a family was very important to people who knew no other form of immortality than to be immortalized through your offspring. Therefore, if somebody had a wife who couldn't give him any children, it was a great disaster. And in all likelihood, Elkanah married Hannah first.

We can tell from the story that he loved Hannah. He treated her nicely. He loved her.

And we don't read that he had a great affection for Peninnah. But he may have taken Peninnah because Hannah was barren. We are told she was.

And then Peninnah gave him children. But he still seemed to have more affection for Hannah. I think she was his first choice.

And she was barren and she was mocked by Peninnah because Peninnah had children and Hannah didn't. You might remember when Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham and Hagar became pregnant. She suddenly felt superior to Sarah.

Although she was the slave, she was the maid of Sarah because she was able to give Abraham children and Sarah wasn't. That made Hagar feel superior. And that became intolerable in the home and Hagar had to be asked to leave.

And likewise, here, there was an intolerable situation. One wife could give her husband children and the other could not. And that being so, it was hard on Hannah because she got mocked.

So she prayed and asked God to give her a son. And she said, if you give me a son, I'll give him back to you. In other words, I'll dedicate him to you.

The law of Moses made it possible to dedicate anything you wanted to God, including your offspring. And this would mean that her child would then belong to God to serve in the tabernacle. He'd be in full-time ministry.

So God gave her a child. And then she rejoices in this. She weans the child and she takes him and leaves him at the tabernacle.

Now, at that point, the priest, the oldest priest, the high priest at the time was a man named Eli. And he had some sons that were scoundrels. And they got themselves killed in battle under God's judgment.

While Samuel was a child, God spoke to Samuel in the night and told him that Eli was going to come under judgment with his evil sons. Actually, Samuel wasn't the first to be told this. A prophet came to Eli in chapter 2 and verse 30 and told Eli that his family was going to be under judgment because of the wickedness that they were doing in the tabernacle.

And then he confirmed it when he appeared to Samuel. When Samuel was a little boy, we all know the story about how he woke him up in the night and said Samuel. And at first Samuel thought it was Eli calling him.

And then Eli figured it out. It's really God. So next time he says your name, say, speak, Lord, your servant hears.

And so he did. And then God told Samuel, you know, I'm going to perform the act of judgment against Eli that I said I would. And then Samuel reluctantly under interrogation the next day told Eli about it.

And so Samuel then grew up in the tabernacle. And it says the word of the Lord began to be spoken through Samuel as a prophet. And the Lord let nothing he spoke fall to the ground.

That means he let none of his prophecies fail to come true. And it became well known in Israel that Samuel as a boy was already established to be a prophet in Israel. Well, in the next chapters, we find that Eli and his sons all die in the context of a battle with the Philistines.

Now, remember, the Philistines had been oppressors of Israel for 40 years at this time. And they and they still fought battles with Israel. And Israel didn't do very well in these battles.

In fact, the first battle they really lost badly. And so they thought, well, if we bring the Ark of the Covenant with us, we'll win next time. Let's go fight the Philistines again.

We'll bring out the Ark and then God will be with us. You might remember if you saw the crazy movie In Search of the Lost Ark. That was called Raiders of the Lost Ark.

Raiders of the Lost Ark, the first Indiana Jones movie that they claimed there wasn't anything about that was historically accurate, even about the Ark. But they claimed that the Ark had supernatural powers. Anyone who had possession of the Ark was undefeatable in battle.

This is what Harrison Ford was telling these government agents when they were trying to figure out what the Ark is that the Nazis were after. It gives you unlimited power. If you have the Ark, you can't be defeated in battle.

That's what the Jews thought. They found out otherwise. It never was the case that having the Ark among you made you undefeated in battle.

They were defeated. They brought the Ark out and they were defeated. And the Ark was even taken into captivity.

The Philistines had it for a while. Now, it didn't do the Philistines much good because

wherever they stored it, it caused problems. They first put it in the temple of their god, Dagon, and the idol fell down, face down in front of the Ark.

So they set it back up again. And the next day it had fallen down again and its head and hands were removed from the idol and on the threshold of the temple of Dagon. And so they figured we better send it somewhere else.

They found that wherever they tried to store the Ark, people got hemorrhoids. And they took it to two or three different Philistine towns and everyone broke out with hemorrhoids. And they soon figured out it's because of this Ark.

We're not supposed to have it. So they sent it back to Israel on an ox cart. Now, the Ark is not supposed to be moved on an ox cart, but the Philistines didn't know that.

And so it came back to Israel. But apparently when the Philistines had captured the Ark, they'd also destroyed the tabernacle in Shiloh. Shiloh was where the Ark and the tabernacle had been.

But now that the Ark came home, there was no Shiloh tabernacle. The Philistines apparently had destroyed it. And so they put it into a private home of a man who was no doubt a Levite.

And it was there for 20 years, the Bible says. And it was kind of ignored. The Ark of the Covenant was in Israel's hands now, but it was not really being used for anything.

There wasn't a tabernacle. They eventually did build another tabernacle, but the Ark wasn't taken to it immediately. In fact, the Ark didn't move again until David had captured Jerusalem and decided to bring it to Jerusalem.

That's later in the story, much later. That's in 2 Samuel. So the Ark is simply kept in a private home for many, many years.

And then when the Ark was actually captured, the two sons of Eli, the priests who were wicked, were killed in battle. And when news of it came back to Eli and that the Ark was captured, he fell over backward and broke his neck. The Bible says he was very fat.

He was very obese. And apparently when he fell over backward, the weight of his own body, when he hit his head, snapped his neck. So he died too.

And so both Eli and his two sons were dead. Samuel, by this time, must have been mature enough to begin to take over spiritual leadership in the nation. He did have Levitical lineage, so he could be functioning like a priest, more or less.

There wasn't anyone who could be the high priest because the high priest and his two sons were dead. So Samuel became sort of the de facto priest. So he's not only the last judge and the first prophet, he's also a priest.



He fills all the roles of leadership in the nation. He's a Renaissance man, and he does it all really well. He's a very faithful leader and very respected by the nation.

And so we have in chapter 7, he gathers Israel to come together and to repent. Now, we're not really told what they had to repent of, but we have to assume there was something they were doing wrong because they were defeated in battle and the ark was taken. You see, there must have been some sin in the camp, as there so often was during the period of the judges, that caused God to not fight with them in their battles and allow the ark to be taken.

It is not specified. We don't know what the specific offense was, but we can know that God was not pleased with them. So Samuel called them together as a nation to offer a sacrifice and to call them to repentance, and they did repent.

Now, when they were gathering to renew their vows to God, the Philistines heard they were there and decided this was an act of war, an act of rebellion against Philistines. So the Philistines sent their troops along the border and were ready to invade. And that's when lightning broke out and thunder and scared the Philistines.

It may have more than scared them, probably killed some of them. And they began to scatter and the Israelites pursued them and defeated them. And this was basically considered a time of Samuel delivering Israel, just like the previous judges had delivered Israel.

Remember Samson, who was contemporary with Samuel when Samuel was growing up. Samson had defeated some Philistines, but had not delivered the people of Israel. This was more like a complete deliverance, although the Philistines reasserted their power again when Saul was king.

And they were a problem again until David finally wiped out the Philistine threat later on. But Samuel delivered them and the people, you know, he was a national hero. And it was in chapter 8, when we come to the next section, which is about Samuel and Saul, that the people came to Samuel and said, let's have a king now from now on.

Give us a king like all the nations. Samuel didn't like it. He consulted the Lord.

The Lord said, give them what they want. And so, although God was not pleased with it, so he told the people, you're going to have a king just like you wanted. But God's not pleased with you and he wants you to know it's going to not be good for you.

Your king will oppress you. He'll take your sons and your daughters and make them his servants. He'll charge you 10 percent taxes on top of the 10 percent you owe the priests for a time.

By the way, we'd be very happy to have 10 percent taxes, wouldn't we? If our income

tax were 10 percent, we thought we'd die and go to heaven. But that was considered oppressive. The idea was, warn them.

If they have a king, he's going to take 10 percent in income tax. Wow. What oppression.

Well, it was oppression. You see, income tax. It's not moral.

In fact, until the 16th Amendment, it wasn't even constitutional. We will not get into that. The truth is, 10 percent was considered to be something to be afraid of.

A 10 percent tax. And that's what he warned them they'd have. Now, they didn't have a king yet, but they did decide they wanted to have a king.

And so in Chapter 9 and following, we find we're introduced to Saul. Saul is not a royal man, but he's regal in standing. He's taller than everybody.

The Bible says he stood head and shoulders above everybody else. The tallest man in the country, just about. It may have been a slight exaggeration.

There may have been other tall men in the country, but he stood out in a crowd. Head and shoulders above the average, at least. He was also very handsome.

So in terms of stature and good looks, just the kind of guy who's good on TV, you know, good to have for your national leader. Better than what we have now. But truth is that he wasn't very good as a leader.

He didn't want to be a leader. It wasn't his idea to be a leader at all. He was simply the son of a wealthy rancher.

And his father lost some of his donkeys. They got away and were out somewhere to be found. And he sent Saul, his sons out to find him.

So Saul and a servant of his went out looking for them and didn't find them readily. They were gone several days. And now Saul said to his servant, I think we better head home because otherwise, you know, dad's going to be not worried about the donkey.

He'll be worried about us. And his servant said, you know, there's a seer, a prophet in this town. Maybe he can help us find the donkeys.

It happened. It was Samuel. And they showed up just as Samuel's having a feast and doing a sacrifice and so forth.

And Samuel was expecting them because he was a prophet. He knew they'd be coming. And he kept them over overnight.

And he told them that that God has chosen Saul to be king. He also says, by the way, your donkeys have been found. Don't worry about that.

They hadn't mentioned the donkeys, but Samuel knew that because he's a prophet. Anyway, he told Saul, when you go home, you're going to find a group of prophets. And when you walk among them, the spirit of God is going to come upon you.

You're going to become another man, which he did. And that did happen. However, he didn't make himself king right away.

In fact, he went back to farming with his dad. What's the king of Israel going to do? What do you need to do when you've got God as your king? Israel had been going on for hundreds of years without a king. Just mostly fine.

They had their bad low spots, but they they endured as a nation without a king for centuries. What's it? It's like there's no job description for a king of Israel. Remember when it was Gideon's son, Avimelek, wanted to make himself king over Israel back in the period of the judges in Judges, chapter nine.

He killed his brothers and installed himself as king over Shechem and tried to make himself king of the country. It didn't work out well for him. But his only surviving brother told this parable to the people of Israel, who are the people of Shechem, really, who are accepting this scoundrel as their king.

He said the trees went out looking for a king and they invited. I don't remember which tree, the olive tree to be their king. And the olive tree said, why should I be your king? I have something better to do.

I make olives. And they asked another tree, the fig tree, to be their king. And the fig tree said, why should I be your king? I make figs.

That's something of value. What what is there a value for a king of the trees to do? How do you rule over trees? What do they trees don't do anything? You don't need a ruler for trees. It's like a totally nonsense position.

I already do something of value. Only someone who has nothing of value to offer would agree to do something like that. That's what the parable is saying.

Then they went to the vine and the vine said, I produce grapes. Why should I be king of the trees? They're really lowering the bar. The trees want trees.

And then they go to a grapevine. Then they say, he said, then the trees went to the bramble bush, a thorn bush that doesn't produce anything. And they said, you be the king over us.

And the thorn bush said, OK. Thorn bush didn't have anything else to do. Thorn bush had no value.

It had no value. So it might as well be the king of the trees. And basically the parable is

saying, my brother Bimelech wants to be the king over Israel.

A position of no value. Israel already has a king. What do you need a king for? Only a person who has nothing of value to offer would take the position.

And really, although that wasn't entirely true of Saul, because he had been duly anointed to be king or proved to be king by God, there still was no job description. They didn't have a constitution that outlined what the king does. And so he went back to farming and he became a national hero when certain Israelites on the east of the Jordan were attacked by pagans who were going to destroy them.

And they they said, let us surrender to you. And their oppressors said, we'll let you surrender if we can poke out your right eye of every male. Those are not very desirable terms of surrender.

I mean, I thought we're being nice by surrendering, you know. Yeah, well, but we don't want you to be able to shoot bows and arrows. We don't want you to be able to aim.

We got to take out your eyes so that you don't become a threat to us. You can't rise up against us. And they said, give us a few days to think about it.

You know, and they sent messages to Saul. When Saul was farming, he's actually plowing behind some oxen. The news came to him that these Israelites were under this threat.

It said the spirit of God came upon him. He became angry. He he killed the oxen, cut them into pieces and sent the piece of the oxen throughout.

Israel said, so shall the oxen of any man who doesn't show up to battle be cut into pieces. And so the people rallied and under Saul's leadership, they went and they delivered the Israelites were under this threat and he became a national hero. Then the people began to clamor for him to be king.

He already had been officially king, but they had a ceremony where he was anointed by Samuel and everyone hailed him king and so forth. But he still never had very much of a governmental machine going on. He really didn't have a big government.

He had what amounted pretty much to a group of soldiers who were like a personal bodyguard. He didn't even have offices. He met under a tree with his soldiers and his fellow leaders.

He was it was again, there wasn't much to do as a king of Israel. There wasn't a big governmental system to run or even a standing army prior to him. But he nonetheless became the leader.

And then we have, of course, introduced the problem with Goliath. And we are. Well, not

quite yet.

There's one thing earlier, and that is that Samuel told Saul that he was that God wanted him to go and kill off all the Amalekites and Saul didn't do it. He killed most of them, but he left some of the livestock and the king alive. And this was a disobedience to the instructions.

And Samuel said, because you've rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel. He said, when you were little in your own eyes, the Lord brought you to be king. But now, you know, he's rejected you.

He sought a man after his own heart to replace you. And so Samuel then went to Bethlehem and found Jesse's household and anointed David in a private ceremony, secret ceremony. David became king, but no one knew it.

The Bible says when Samuel anointed him, the spirit of God came on David as it had previously come on Saul. And it says the spirit of God departed from Saul and an evil spirit from the Lord came on Saul instead. So now Saul was a demon possessed king, the only one that the nation recognized.

And David was the spirit filled king, the real king, anointed and appointed by the same prophet who had appointed Saul earlier. He was God's choice of a king, but only a few people knew it. And even Saul didn't know that David had been anointed.

And then Saul became acquainted with David through the Goliath incident, which I won't go into detail about because everyone knows the story. David kills Goliath and then he becomes nationally prominent. He was just a shepherd of his father's flocks until then, but now he becomes a war hero.

He gets to marry Saul's daughter, Michal, and he becomes a leader in the military. Saul loves David, but Saul is a troubled man. He's got this evil spirit that troubles him regularly.

And David is brought in to play the harp and to sing psalms for him to ease his spirit. Actually, David's psalms were effective in driving away the evil spirit from Saul. And so Saul particularly loved David for that.

David was not only a military hero. He was also the court musician, and Saul needed that very badly because of this demonic torment he was under. Well, eventually, Saul became jealous of David because the people liked David and admired David more than they admired Saul.

They were saying Saul has slain his thousands, but David has slain his tens of thousands. And Saul said, they're attributing to me only thousands. And David, they're attributing ten thousands to what can he have other than this, but the kingdom.

And so Saul began to be suspicious of David and hate him from that point on and several times tried to kill him. Now, David had an ally at court in Jonathan, the son of Saul. And Jonathan at first didn't believe that his father would be so crazy and evil as to try to kill David because Jonathan and David were good friends.

And Jonathan was loyal to death to David. But when Jonathan found out that his dad did want to kill David, he warned David and David fled and ran off into the wilderness. And there were 400 men that followed David into the wilderness and Saul pursued them with his armies when he could.

He had other things he had to do, too. He couldn't pursue David all the time. He had to fight wars with the Philistines and do things like that.

But when he had time, he pursued David and wanted to kill him. And David had to flee from his home. He had to leave Michael behind his wife.

Actually, Saul gave her a divorce from David and gave her to another man in Palteel who married her. So David lost a wife. He lost his home.

He lost his position in the military, his position in court and his security because he was fleeing for his life. And it's a story we can go over rather rapidly. For several years, Saul pursued David and David had to hide in caves and hide behind mountains.

At one point, Saul's armies were on one side of the mountain. David and his men were on the other side. They were very close to being caught on that particular occasion.

Saul would have captured David, but a war broke out on one of Israel's frontiers and Saul had to retreat and go fight that war. So David escaped. God kept David alive, but never with a great deal of security.

Twice, David had the opportunity to kill Saul during this time because once in pursuing David, Saul actually went into a cave to relieve himself. He didn't know that David and his mighty men were in there. So while he was preoccupied, David actually got close enough to kill Saul.

Instead of killing him, he cut off a part of his robe. And when Saul went back out into the sunlight, David appeared at the mouth of the cave and waved this thing and said, Saul, check out what I've got. I've got your robe.

I could have killed you. And that was one of those times that Saul seemed to be repentant and humble and said, Oh, I'm evil. You're good.

I'm not going to pursue you anymore. But Saul did. Saul never could be counted on to keep his word.

And so he pursued David some more. Another time it happened almost supernaturally.

This must have been because once when Saul and his whole armies around him were sleeping, David and one of his mighty men went into the camp of Saul and stood right by Saul's sleeping body.

Now, there were centuries they must have been sleeping. His bodyguard was asleep. How can you get that close to the king and not have someone alerted? But the Bible says, I think, that God had put a deep sleep on the whole camp.

So David took Saul's jug of water and his spirit that were by his head and left. He could have killed him, but he didn't. And then he woke him up from a distance and said, Hey, I've got your stuff here.

And Saul again realized that he could have been killed and wasn't. And so Saul wept and repented again. But he was of no.

He couldn't be trusted. And David knew that David decided that he was not safe in the wilderness. So he went to live among the Philistines.

He figured, Hey, Saul's at war with the Philistines. So he's not gonna be able to catch me in the Philistine territory. And the Philistines may trust me because they know that Saul doesn't like me.

And so David pretended for a while to be loyal to the Philistines. And he found refuge in the Philistine cities until making a long story short. Saul eventually was killed in war with the Philistines.

And that comes at the end of 1 Samuel. Now in 2 Samuel, because Saul is dead, David no longer has to flee. And the people of Judah, his own tribe, because he was of the tribe of Judah, they're the biggest southern tribe.

They asked him to be their king. So he did. He became king of Judah for seven and a half years.

In the meantime, there was a son of Saul who was in the northern kingdom and more or less recognized as king, though he didn't really do very much. He was a weak leader. His name was Ish-bosheth.

And his cousin Abner was his general. Abner and Ish-bosheth were first cousins. Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, became sort of a hereditary ruler but didn't have much backbone, didn't have much strength, didn't have much leadership ability.

Abner was the real power behind the throne. And he fought in wars against David and the southern kingdom. Now David had his three cousins.

One of them was Joab. He called these three the sons of Zeruiah. Azahel, Joab, and I think it's Amittai, if I'm not mistaken, were the three brothers who were sons of David's

aunt.

Zeruiah was the sister of David's father, as I recall. And so these three men were David's first cousins. And Joab was the main leader of David's armies.

And his brothers were mighty men also. And so they fought against the northern kingdom a few times. And to make a long story short, Abner had a problem with Ish-bosheth.

Abner was the general of Ish-bosheth, the northern king. But he didn't have much respect for Ish-bosheth. And at one point, it would appear Abner had slept with one of Ish-bosheth's concubines.

Now this is not just something people did because they liked sex, although I'm sure they did. But sleeping with the king's concubine was a political action. That's why later on when Absalom stole the kingdom from his father David, he publicly slept with David's concubines.

That's also why Adonijah wanted to take a concubine of David's after Solomon had become king, because it's a political advantage in the Middle East. If you're sleeping with the wife or the concubine of the previous king, it means you've pretty much usurped his position. And Abner apparently slept with Ish-bosheth's concubine.

And when Ish-bosheth confronted him about it, he didn't deny it. But he got angry and he said, How dare you confront me? I'm going to deliver your kingdom over to David. And so Abner went to David and said, Listen, I can turn over all the tribes of Israel to you.

You can be the king over all of them. And this happened. Ish-bosheth was powerless, and he got himself murdered by a couple of his servants.

And they brought his head to David, thinking they'd get a favor from David for that. And David had them put to death for killing their king. He thought they were scoundrels, and they were.

But Ish-bosheth then was dead, and Abner was now on David's side. But Joab didn't like Abner being on David's side. Joab was David's general.

Now Abner was vying for that position. Abner was now the rival of Joab, and so Joab assassinated him. He actually pretended friendship to him and stabbed him treacherously and killed him.

Now, one of the reasons he said he did it is because Abner had actually, in a battle, killed Azahel, Joab's brother. So Joab and his brother Amittai had lost their brother Azahel to Abner. And so in Joab's mind, he was avenging his brother's blood on Abner, who had killed his brother.



But it was also a case that there is a political motivation there. Abner was a rival of Joab. And so there's all this intrigue going on, all this assassination's going on.

And finally, David's kingdom is established to him, and he's popular. And then as you move through 2 Samuel, we see that one of David's first acts was to conquer Jerusalem. Jerusalem, up to this point, had been a Canaanite city, and Joab actually conquered it for David, and David made it his capital.

Then he sought to move the ark to Jerusalem. But he did it wrong the first time. They put it on a cart, like the Philistines had done, and tried to bring it, but it almost toppled, and a man named Uzzah tried to stabilize it, and he got struck dead by the Lord for touching the ark.

And David got angry at God and decided not to bring the ark to Jerusalem at that time. He put it into the house of a guy named Obed-Edom, where it remained for three months. During that three months, the house of Obed-Edom had the remarkable blessing of God upon it, and when that was reported to David, David thought, well, maybe I will bring the ark back to Jerusalem after all.

So he did bring it back the right way. This time they carried it on poles like they were supposed to and brought it to Jerusalem. He pitched a tent over it.

They didn't have the tabernacle, but he had just a tent he put over it to keep it from the weather. And according to chronicles, he established a bunch of priests to sing and make music around it 24 hours a day. Now, that's how the ark came to Jerusalem.

That's how Jerusalem became the capital of Israel. David was now ruling over all the tribes of Israel. He ruled for seven and a half years only over his own tribe of Judah.

But with the death of Ish-bosheth, he became the ruler of all the tribes of Israel, and he ruled over all the tribes for another 33 years. So the total length of his reign was 40 years and 6 months. And during that time, he conquered the Philistines, finally.

So the Philistines never rose up and gave trouble to Israel again. He also conquered the lands around him. Most of the pagan lands around him were enemies of Israel, and he conquered them all, brought them under tribute.

David, according to scripture, is a picture of Christ. And therefore, he not only ruled over Israel, but over the Gentiles around him. And so he made Israel into an empire.

Under King Saul, it was still just a bunch of loose tribes, and the government apparatus met under a tree with a few bodyguards of the king, and there really was not much there. But David built a palace. David had a capital city.

He set up a shrine in Jerusalem with the ark there. He developed a big army, and he

conquered the people around him. So instead of just being sort of a little group of tribes, loose-knit, he made Israel into an empire, and very possibly the most powerful empire of its time.

I don't know whether Egypt at that time was as powerful or whatever, but for the most part, Israel was pretty unrivaled in terms of its political size and power under David. It was the greatest time in Israel's history was under David. That's why the Messiah is seen to be like another David.

Israel still looks for the Messiah, another David who will come and bring the glory days back that they had under David. But those glory days came to an end. When David got older, he stopped leading the children of Israel into battle, and we know that he became attracted to a woman who lived next door.

She happened to be the wife of one of his mighty men, Uriah the Hittite, who was away at battle. And he seduced her, or at least called upon her to do a command performance before the king, which involved spending the night together. Whether this affair went on more than one night, we don't know, but we know that she got pregnant.

And when she let him know she was pregnant, David thought, uh-oh, I've been caught. So he called her husband back from the front of the battle, hoping that he'd sleep with her, and then the baby would be known to be there, that it would be thought to be her husband's baby. Her husband, however, was a man of rare virtue.

He couldn't bring himself to go sleep with his wife when he was on furlough because his partners were out sleeping under the stars with their lives in danger. He felt like, how can I do that? How can I go back to my home, eat a nice meal, sleep with my wife, have all the comforts of a home when my fellow soldiers are out there on the field? And David couldn't persuade him to do it. David even got him drunk one night, hoping that the guy would lose his principles, but he didn't.

The man wouldn't go and sleep with his wife. And so David thought, well, one thing left to do is kill the guy. Then I can marry her, and then the baby can be owned as my own, which was his own.

So he sent Uriah back to the battlefield with a sealed letter to the captain, Joab, which only Joab was able to read, and said, put Uriah at the front of the hottest battle and see that he dies. And so David arranged for the death of Uriah, and when the news came back that, in fact, he had died, David married Bathsheba. The Bible says the thing displeased the Lord, I guess.

No surprise there. And therefore, David had this sin on his conscience, and the glory of his kingdom never returned. He carried this sin on his conscience for a while, I guess through the pregnancy.

When the baby was born, the baby was sick. Nathan the prophet told David that this was something that God was judging him for, and that the baby would, in fact, die. And more than that, although David repented and would not need to be put to death for his capital crimes, nonetheless, the sword would never depart from David's house all the days of his life.

So David was forgiven. He wrote Psalm 51 at that time. Psalm 51 is his celebration of forgiveness.

Actually, Psalm 51 is really his prayer of repentance. Psalm 32 celebrates his forgiveness that he received. Both of the Psalms, 32 and 51, were written at that time.

And then David continued to reign, but we don't read of the glory anymore. We read of troubles in his house. The next thing we read about is his son Amnon is in love with one of his half-sisters.

David had eight wives. No one knows how many children. We know of at least one son from each wife, because the firstborn of each marriage are listed, but we don't know how many other children.

In any case, Amnon fell in love with his half-sister, Tamar, who happened to be Absalom's full sister. And he raped her. Amnon raped his half-sister and then rejected her.

And her brother Absalom swore in his heart that he'd kill Amnon. And eventually he worked it out. They did kill Amnon.

Now what's interesting here is that Amnon did deserve to die. He should have been put to death for that. That was a capital crime to rape his sister like that.

But David didn't do anything about it. It says David heard what Amnon had done, but that's all. It says he was angry, but he didn't do anything about it.

Why, I wonder. Is it because David's conscience wasn't totally clean? Because he had done something horrendous, also, sexually? He had violated a woman, killed her husband. It might be that David felt he didn't have the moral authority to rebuke his son for something like that.

This is what happens when you compromise yourself morally. Even if you do get forgiven, you definitely compromise your moral authority to speak to anybody else about living a holy life or anything like that, even rebuking them for criminal behaviors like this. And so David didn't even speak to Amnon about this.

And that's why Absalom took matters into his own hand. He killed Amnon, and then he fled for his life. He lived outside the country for several years.

And then Joab interceded with David to let Absalom come home, back into Israel. And so David agreed and let him come back, but David said, I don't want to see him. He can come back, and I won't arrest him, but I don't want to see him.

But Absalom wanted to see his dad, and David was avoiding him. So David, Absalom told Joab, I want you to go tell my dad I want to see him. And Joab ignored Absalom until Absalom set Joab's field on fire.

And Joab came over to Absalom's house and said, why did you set my field on fire? He said, I wanted to talk to you. You've been ignoring me. And so he did intercede for him, Joab did, and Absalom was restored into the good graces of David but was never very friendly and began to undermine David behind David's back and try to win the people's hearts to himself and make himself the king.

He was very successful at this, and many of the people's hearts were turned to Absalom to the point where Absalom felt like he had the loyalty of the nation and could overthrow his father. And so he had himself declared king, and when David heard about it and those loyal to him, they fled from Jerusalem, knowing that Absalom probably had more people on his side. And besides, if it came to war, David wasn't going to kill his own son.

Absalom would kill David. In fact, Absalom wanted to kill David. But David didn't want to kill him, so it had nothing to do but flee.

You're not going to go to war against your own son if you can help it. So David pretty much abdicated the throne and left Jerusalem and fled. Absalom came to town, took over the palace, slept with David's concubines in public, and made plans to kill his dad.

Now, there are two counselors, formerly counselors of David. One was Ahithophel, of whom it was said you'd as well inquire of an oracle of God as to inquire of Ahithophel. Ahithophel was not a prophet, but he had the reputation of being as wise as a prophet.

If you're going to ask for counsel from Ahithophel, it's as good as asking God for counsel. It was really his reputation. There was another guy who was named Hushai who was a friend of David who was posing as a loyalist to Absalom.

Ahithophel wanted to immediately take the armies out and capture David and kill him and wipe him out. Hushai said, no, I think that's a bad idea. You know your father, David, he's like a lion robbed of his whelps.

He's fierce. I think we'd better get a bit more troops together before we try to attack him. So wait till morning until we can gather all Israel.

Then we can go out against him. Absalom listened to Hushai, who was secretly on David's side. Hushai sent messages to tell David, hey, Absalom is going to come after you tomorrow.

In the meantime, Ahithophel went home and hanged himself. Why? I used to think he hanged himself because he was just so proud. It's the first time someone didn't take his counsel.

But I think now it's because he was so wise. I think he knew that because his counsel was not heeded, that Absalom was going to be killed in battle. David would win, and then David would hang Ahithophel as a traitor.

So he saved David the trouble, he hanged himself. Anyway, the battle came against David the next day. Joab and his men fought against Absalom and his men and did better than they did.

Absalom fled on his donkey, but his head got caught in the branches of a tree. He had a lot of hair. The Bible says he cut his hair once a year, and they cut off three pounds of hair a year.

More like a sheep than a man. But then Esau had so much hair that he felt like a goat, they say. So, anyway, Absalom got stuck in a tree.

He was not dead, but he was hanging off the ground and couldn't get off. And Joab came and killed him, shot him with arrows. And the battle was over, and the people all came back to David.

Except for one guy named Sheba. And in chapter 20 of 2 Samuel, we find that Sheba started a rebellion against David. Joab and his men went out to conquer that rebellion.

Sheba and his men holed up in a walled city, and Joab came to tear the walls down. And a wise woman who lived in the city came to the wall and said, Why are you going to destroy a city in Israel? This is a famous city here. Why destroy it? He said, Well, I don't care about the city.

I just want Sheba. And she said, Oh, if that's it. She went and she counseled the elders of the city, and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it over the wall to Joab.

And then that was the end of that. And so David had no more opponents after that. And that's where the historical chronology of the book ends, in chapter 20.

As I said, chapters 21 through 24 are not chronological. They are appendices of the book. And David's story doesn't continue again, of course, until 1 Kings.

And that's what we'll have to take next time, because we're out of time for tonight. So that's a summary of the whole books of 1 and 2 Samuel. Are there any questions?