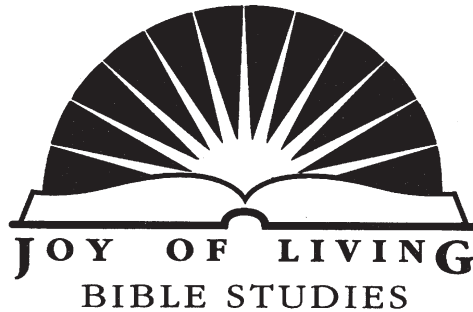


2 Samuel Lesson 1



God's Call, God's Promise (Genesis 11-35)

Although the events in the book of 2 Samuel took place between 1010 and 970 BC,¹ the story began with one man nearly a thousand years earlier in the city of Ur of the Chaldees (in modern day Iraq). The descendants of Noah had spread out, multiplied and populated the earth, and they had again abandoned the God who created them.

Yet God had not abandoned man. He called one man, Abram, and told him that if he would leave his country and go to a land God would show him, He would give Abram that land, make a great nation from his descendants, and bless all the world through him. (It would be through his descendants that the Savior of the world would come.) In faith Abram (later called Abraham) obeyed God. Abraham had a son, Isaac,

1. Kenneth Barker, editor. *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985). See "Introduction: 1 Samuel."

to whom the promise was given, and he in turn had a son, Jacob, to whom the promise was given.

From a Family to a Nation (Genesis 46—Exodus 18)

Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel, had 12 sons. When Jacob was an old man, he, his sons and their families (70 people in all) went into Egypt to escape starvation during a great famine. One of the sons, Joseph, was already there and in great power. He was second only to the Pharaoh, and because of this the family was well cared for.

However, generations passed, and the children of Israel grew in numbers. A new Pharaoh arose and was fearful of this great number of foreigners living within the borders of his land. To protect himself and his country, he placed the Israelites in bondage, where they remained for nearly 400 years. As always, God was faithful, and in His time He raised up a man named Moses. With

great and mighty miracles God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians and led them to the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

A Covenant Made — A Covenant Broken

(Exodus 19 — Judges)

Prior to bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land, the general area of Israel today, God made a covenant with them. At Mount Sinai they agreed to serve the Lord and obey His commands. He gave them His law, and promised to bless them as long as they served Him. But even as God gave them His glorious law, they were rebelling against Him and worshipping other gods. And so began the cycle of God's blessing, Israel's rebellion, God's disciplining, their repentance, God's deliverance and blessing again.

Because of their continued disobedience and rebellion, the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years after leaving Egypt and prior to entering the Promised Land. God, however, miraculously provided for them during that time. Finally, with Israel poised on the verge of entering the Promised Land, God designated Joshua, son of Nun, to lead them in the conquest of

their new homeland. The final chapter of the book of Joshua states, "Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31).

The time of the judges began soon after the death of Joshua. Israel would again rebel against God and worship false gods. God would allow a nation to oppress them until they cried out to God in their misery. In mercy He would raise up a person to judge them and lead them in victory against their oppressor. As long as the judge lived, there was peace, but when the judge died, the Israelites soon slipped into their old ways. This was a time when "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 17:6)—and much of the time, anarchy reigned.

The Kingdom Established

1 Samuel 8 — 2 Samuel 24

Israel had been given the perfect government, with the Lord Himself as King, and the law of the Lord as the law of the land, yet the people weren't satisfied. They wanted to be like the nations round about them. They wanted

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a man as their king. God granted their desire.

Saul, their first king, didn't fully obey the Lord, so God gave the kingdom to David, a shepherd who loved the Lord. Although David made many mistakes, as we will see in our study of 2 Samuel, God said, "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart" (Acts 13:22).

God's Plan

The Bible unfolds for us God's beautiful plan to redeem mankind and restore to us everything that was lost in the Garden of Eden. The conquest of Canaan and the consequent removal of the ungodly and wicked people living there were part of God's plan. His plan for Israel (see Romans 9:4-5) was...

- ☞ to establish a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).
- ☞ to give them His law and the temple worship.
- ☞ to reveal to them His glory.
- ☞ to bring forth through them the Messiah, the Savior, to redeem the world.

It was not that the Israelites were innately better than other nations. As the Bible plainly reveals, all mankind

is lost in sin (see Romans 3:23), and Israel repeatedly sinned. It is simply that God chooses to use whomever He will, and He chose to create and use the nation of Israel as part of His plan. Through them He would demonstrate to the world...

- ☞ that He alone is God.
- ☞ that He is completely holy.
- ☞ that all mankind is depraved.
- ☞ that sin is terrible.
- ☞ that we are helpless in our sin.
- ☞ that it is impossible to remove sin and its consequences by any natural means.
- ☞ that a Savior is necessary (see Galatians 3).
- ☞ that through them, finally, He would send His Son to be our Savior.

1 and 2 Samuel

First and Second Samuel were originally one book. The translators of the Septuagint, a pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament, divided the book of Samuel into two books. The book of 1 Samuel begins during the time of the judges and ushers in the five hundred year period of the kings

of Israel (approximately 1050-586 BC).¹ The events recorded in 1 Samuel cover a period of about 115 years, beginning with the childhood of Samuel the prophet, through the difficult times of Saul, Israel's first king, and ending during the early part of the reign of David, God's chosen king. These events are covered in the *Joy of Living* study of *1 Samuel*. Second Samuel is focused on the story of David as king and ends prior to his death. It records David's triumphs and his failures and, through it all, God's faithfulness. As we study, we will see what God can do in and through an imperfect man who was committed to serving Him.

Who Wrote 1 and 2 Samuel?

There are varying opinions regarding what person or persons physically wrote 1 and 2 Samuel. Was it Samuel? Did Samuel write part of it, and then someone else finished it? Was it a scribe who gathered information from various sources and compiled it? There are entire books written about who and when various portions of the Bible were written, and it is all very interesting and serves a purpose; however, our pur-

1. Henrietta C. Mears. *What the Bible Is All About* (Ventura: Regal, 1997) 111.

pose in this study is to know God better, to understand His working on behalf of mankind and through mankind.

And to that end, God solves for us the problem of "Who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel?" He tells us simply that the Bible (including 1 and 2 Samuel) is His Word, recorded by man but written by the Holy Spirit. Second Peter 1:21 says, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." And 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed..." Regardless of whom God used to record it, He has spoken to us. The test of time has proven the infallibility of His Word.

Second Peter 1:19 says, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place..." As you work through the study of 2 Samuel, ask God to open the eyes of your understanding to His truth. Ask Him to help apply His truth to your own life.

A Daily Appointment with God

Make a daily appointment with God. Find a quiet spot. Take your Bible, pencil or pen and your study material with

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you. If you have a busy phone, you may have to turn it off! Remember how very important your appointment with God is, and make time to be with Him daily. Ask yourself the following things:

1. How much time will I spend with the Lord each day?

2. What do I need to put aside in order to spend this time with the Lord? (Examples: sleep, TV, emailing, web-browsing or online chatting, casual telephone conversations, etc. Each person will have to decide what his or her priorities are, and what can be removed from the daily schedule to make time to spend with God.)

3. What is the best time for my appointment with God?

4. Where is the quietest place for me to pray and study?

5. Do I really want to spend time with God? (If your last answer is “yes,” God will bless you as you work out the time. If your last answer is “no,” pray that God will give you a desire, a hunger to spend this time with Him. He will do this for you!)

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the Introduction to 2 Samuel.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the Introduction to 2 Samuel or from your teacher’s lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 1:1-16.

1. a. We last saw David in 1 Samuel 30, when he and his men pursued and defeated the Amalekites who had burned Ziklag, recovering all their women and children and the Amalekites’ plunder. First Samuel 31, which took place at approximately the same time, recounted the Philistines’ victory over Israel and King Saul. Where do we find David in 2 Samuel 1:1?

- b. Who arrived in Ziklag, what was his appearance, and what was his attitude toward David? (2 Samuel 1:2)

2. a. What story did the man tell? (2 Samuel 1:3-10)

b. Challenge: Compare the Amalekite's story with the account given in 1 Samuel 31:1-7. He may have changed the facts in his report in order to gain favor with David, who would benefit from Saul's death.

3. How did David and his men react to the Amalekite's news? (2 Samuel 1:11-12)

4. a. This young man thought he was bringing good news to David. What questions did David ask him? (2 Samuel 1:13-14)

b. Review 1 Samuel 24:4-6 to see David's attitude toward Saul, the Lord's anointed.

5. What did the Amalekite bring upon himself by his reported action? (2 Samuel 1:15-16)

6. Personal: The death penalty is a controversial subject. Read Genesis 9:6 (spoken to Noah after the flood) and Exodus 21:12-14 (given in the law). What do you think of David's actions? Do you think there is a difference between a person taking revenge into his own hands and the government (whether a king or elected officials) executing a person?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 1:17-27.

1. What did David compose and where was it eventually written down? (2 Samuel 1:17-18)

2. How are the deaths of Jonathan and Saul introduced in 2 Samuel 1:19, and then summed up in the last line of the lament, 2 Samuel 1:27?

3. a. From 2 Samuel 1:20 and 24, compare the reactions of the Philistines and the Israelites to Saul's death.

b. How did David feel about the area where this event took place? (2 Samuel 1:21)

4. From 2 Samuel 1:22-23, summarize the characteristics and accomplishments of Saul and Jonathan.

5. How did David express his grief over the death of Jonathan? (2 Samuel 1:25-26)

6. Personal: Saul had treated David terribly, making him a fugitive and driving him out of the country, yet David displayed no bitterness toward him in this lament. Saul had treated David as his mortal enemy, yet throughout their relationship David would not treat Saul that way in return. How do you respond when someone mistreats you? If you face this situation today, how can you follow David's example?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:1-7.

1. a. Since Saul was dead, David was now free to leave Philistine territory. What did he do before moving? (2 Samuel 2:1a)

b. Where did the Lord direct David to move? (2 Samuel 2:1b) Find this area on a Bible map, if possible.
2. Who moved to this place with David? (2 Samuel 2:2-3)
3. a. Review 1 Samuel 16:1-13. Who anointed David in a private ceremony, and over whom was he anointed king? Who was present?

b. From 2 Samuel 2:4a, who publicly anointed David, and over whom was he anointed king?
4. What did David eventually learn about Saul's burial? (2 Samuel 2:4b)
5. a. Jabesh Gilead was not a part of the territory of Judah. How did David reach out in peace and friendship to this Israelite town? (2 Samuel 2:5-7)

b. Challenge: David invoked the Lord's kindness and faithfulness upon the men of Jabesh Gilead. What do you learn about these attributes of God in Exodus 34:5-7a?

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6. Personal: Do you personally know these attributes of God, as David did? How has God showed you His kindness and faithfulness?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:8-11.

1. a. From 2 Samuel 2:8a, who was Abner?
- b. Review 1 Samuel 14:50b-51. What additional relationship did Abner have to Saul?
2. a. Who did Abner take to Mahanaim? (2 Samuel 2:8b)
- b. Challenge: From 1 Samuel 14:49a and 1 Chronicles 8:33, list Saul's sons. Which of his sons were killed in battle, according to 1 Samuel 31:2? Scholars believe that "Ishvi" (1 Samuel 14:49) and "Esh-Baal" (1 Chronicles 8:33) both are probably the same son as Ish-Bosheth.¹
3. a. What did Abner do for Ish-Bosheth? (2 Samuel 2:9)
- b. How old was Ish-Bosheth, and how long did he reign? (2 Samuel 2:10a)
4. Although Abner set up Saul's last living son as king over "all Israel" (2 Samuel 2:9), did all of the Israelite tribes acknowledge him as their king? (2 Samuel 2:10b)

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary.*

5. How long did David rule as king over the tribe of Judah? (2 Samuel 2:11)
6. Personal: Yesterday we reviewed 1 Samuel 16:1-13, in which God told Samuel to anoint David as “king over Israel” (verse 1). Much time had passed between 1 Samuel chapter 16 and 2 Samuel chapter 2. Although David was now king over Judah, one of the tribes of Israel, God’s plan had not yet been fulfilled. Yet, as we have seen, David trusted God to lead him day by day. Read Psalm 25:1-7, in which David expressed this trust. Can you pray these verses to God regarding your own life and circumstances? How does this change your outlook?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:12-32.

1. a. Where did Abner, Ish-Bosheth and their men go, and who met them there? (2 Samuel 2:12-13)
- b. Challenge: Read 1 Chronicles 2:13-16. How was Joab related to David?
2. a. How did Abner and Joab decide to try and settle the question of the succession to the throne of Israel? (2 Samuel 2:14-15)
- b. What was the result of this fight? (2 Samuel 2:16)

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3. Although this fight ended in a draw, 2 Samuel 2:17 looks forward to the result of further fighting described in the rest of this chapter. What would be the result by the end of the day?
4. a. Whom did Asahel, another of David's nephews, single-mindedly pursue, and what was the result? (2 Samuel 2:18-23)
- b. Who continued pursuing Abner, and how were the pursuit and the fight finally ended? (2 Samuel 2:24-28)
5. a. How many men were killed on each side of the battle? (2 Samuel 2:30b-31)
- b. Where did each of the two armies go after the battle ended? (2 Samuel 2:29-30a,32)
6. Personal: In 2 Samuel 2:26 Abner said to Joab, his fellow Israelite, "Don't you realize that this will end in bitterness?" Any fight between "brothers"—whether countrymen, family members or friends—is a bitter ordeal. Have you been in this situation in the past, or are you in it right now? From John 13:34-35, how did Jesus instruct us to relate to our brothers and sisters?