

Study 1: The King is Dead!

Background

Read 1 Samuel 30:1-3, 7-10, 17-20, 26.

1. Where is David and what happens to him?

Read 1 Samuel 31

2. Where is King Saul, and what happens to him?

Read 2 Samuel 1:1-10

3. How does the news of Israel's defeat and the deaths of Saul and Jonathan reach David?
4. What is true in the young man's account? What is false?
5. Why do you think he claims to have killed Saul? How does he expect David to respond to this news?
6. How do you expect David to respond to this news?

Read 2 Samuel 1:11-16.

7. Does anything in David's response surprise you?

8. Why does David have the young man executed?

Read 2 Samuel 1:17-27.

9. Why do you think David wanted this lament taught to the people of Israel?

10. Gath and Ashkelon were Philistine cities. Why does David wish the news would not spread there?

11. What does he wish for the mountains of Gilboa? How is this a fitting expression of grief?

12. Verses 22-25 contain a number of images and statements about Saul and Jonathan. How does David want them remembered by Israel?

13. Verse 27 is David's personal lament for Jonathan. What does it say about their relationship?

Despite being unjustly pursued by Saul for many years, David does not rejoice at his death. Instead he gives voice to the nation's loss, and exercises righteous judgement on the one who claimed to have killed the Lord's anointed king.

This attitude of David towards Saul, consistent to the end, foreshadows that of Jesus. Jesus did not grasp at the kingdom that was rightly his, but entrusted himself to the purposes of God. Peter calls us to consider and follow this example of Jesus.

Read 1 Peter 2:13-25 and 1 Peter 3:8-12.

How can we help each other make this righteous response to those who would make us their enemies?

Study 2: Who Will Be King?

A brief geography lesson:

Hebron

Mahanaim

Gibeon

Read 2 Samuel 2:1-7

1. What is David's first action?
2. What happens when David reaches Hebron?
3. The men of Jabesh-gilead have been loyal to Saul all these years. What message does David send to them?
4. What response do you hope for?
5. How do you feel about how things are going with David so far?

Read 2 Samuel 2:8-11

6. We have met Abner before (**1 Samuel 17:55-58 and 1 Samuel 26:10-15**). What do you think motivated Abner to make Saul's son king?
7. Did you expect this delay in David receiving the kingdom? How do you feel about it?

Read 2 Samuel 2:12-32

8. Who is to blame for Asahel's death?
9. How is the battle stopped?

10. Has this day of battle accomplished anything?

Read 2 Samuel 3:1-5

11. How does our narrator summarise the next 2 years?
12. Why do you think David's sons and wives are listed here?

Read 2 Samuel 3:6-21

13. What goes wrong between Abner and Ish-Bosheth?
14. Look carefully at verses 9-10 and 18. What has Abner known all this time? Does this surprise you?
15. What action does Abner now take?
16. What do you think of Abner? David seems to trust him - would you?

Again we see David's life foreshadowing that of Jesus:

- *Humility in seeking and obeying God rather than grasping at the kingdom (**Philippians 2:5-10**)*
- *Gracious offer of blessing to former enemies (**Ephesians 2:1-7**)*
- *Some eager to be his subjects while others oppose his rule (**John 1:10-13**)*

When is it hard for you to remember that Jesus is God's reigning king and that his kingdom will come?

How can we encourage one another to stay true to King Jesus?

Study 3: Do the ends justify the means?

Person in the news: Joab

Read 2 Samuel 3:22-25

1. What can we say about Joab (his character and influence) from these verses?
2. Why do you think he doesn't trust Abner?

Read 2 Samuel 3:26-30

3. What do we learn about Joab's true motivations?
4. How do you feel about the action Joab took?
5. How does David react?

Read 2 Samuel 3:31-39

6. Why does David lead the people in this public mourning of Abner?
7. How do the people feel about their King? (v36)
8. What is the significance of including 'and all Israel' in verse 37?
9. How does David contrast himself and his nephews? (v39)

Read 2 Samuel 4:1-8

10. What is the response in Israel to the news of Abner's death? Why do you think they felt this way?

11. What action do Baanah and Rechab take?
12. What response do you think they expect from David?
13. How do you think David will respond?
14. Why do you think our narrator interrupts the story to tell us about Saul's grandson Mephibosheth (v4)?

Read 2 Samuel 4:9-12

15. How do you feel about David's response to Baanah and Rechab?
16. What do you think will happen next?

Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5

17. What reasons do the leaders of Israel give for wanting David as their king?

18. Here David is called shepherd and prince over Israel. What is being said about how David should lead God's people?

19. Reflect together on what it means to have Jesus as our shepherd (John 10:1-18).

20. Finally David is King of Israel! What expectations do you have his reign?

David refused to bring in his kingdom using deceit or violence. In this he prefigures Jesus (Matthew 26:50-54).

Consider what this means for us as we seek to proclaim God's kingdom today. (Also recall the example of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 2:3-11.)

During the week: If you have time read Psalm 2

Study 4: The Fearful Joy of God With Us

Background: The Ark of God

Read 2 Samuel 5:6-16

1. What good things are recorded here?
2. Where does David's strength come from? Does he know it?
3. Are there any details that might trouble us? (See Deuteronomy 17:17)

Read 2 Samuel 5:17-25

4. What threats are present?
5. What is David's battle strategy (v19,23)?
6. Why do you think the Lord fights David's enemies?

Jesus is God's King, ruling from heaven. People will oppose him and us as his followers.

What comfort is there for you in knowing that God is for you (Romans 8:31)?

Read 2 Samuel 6:1-4

7. What does David set out to do?
8. Why do you think he wants the ark in Jerusalem?
9. What do you think of the transport arrangements? (See Exodus 25:12-15)

Read 2 Samuel 6:5-11

10. Why did God deal so severely with Uzzah?
11. David is angry because of what happened (v8) and afraid of the Lord (v9). Can you understand David's response?
12. What does David decide to do with the ark?
13. Does it surprise you that the household of Obed-edom was blessed?

Reflect on your attitude towards God and his King. Do you serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling (Psalm 2:11)?

Read 2 Samuel 6:12-23

14. What gives David the confidence to try again with the ark?
15. What is different this time?
16. What is the general mood as the ark is brought to Jerusalem?
17. What is Michal's problem (v16,20)?
18. What does David's response reveal about his heart?

David wanted to bring the symbol of God's presence into the heart of his kingdom. With God's presence came joy and blessing.

Consider what Jesus has done to bring us into God's presence (Hebrews 10:19-25). Share with each other your experience of the joy and blessing of God's presence in your life.

Study 5: Building Houses

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-3

1. What is David's concern?

Read 2 Samuel 7:4-7

2. Does God seem to have a problem with the current arrangement?

Read 2 Samuel 7:8-17

3. What has God already done for David?
4. What does God promise for his people Israel?
5. What does God promise for David's son?
6. What does God promise about David's throne?
7. **Read Isaiah 11:1-10 and Jeremiah 23:5-6.** During the time of the exile, how do these promises to David become part of the prophetic hope for Israel?

8. **Read Matthew 1:1, Luke 1:30-33, Acts 13:22-23, Romans 1:1-4, Revelation 21:16.** How do the New Testament writers understand these promises being fulfilled?

9. **Have you considered before what it means for Jesus to be the Son of David?**

Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29

10. What is David's attitude before God?

11. What does David say about what God has done (v18-21)?

12. What does David say about what God is like (v22-24)?

13. What does David ask God to do (v25-29)?

14. **How is this prayer a model for us as we respond to the gracious promises of God?**

Study 6: The Kindness of the Victorious King

Talk: 2 Samuel 8:1-14

Enemies Subdued: **Philistines**
 Moab
 Zobah & the Syrians
 Edom

Promises fulfilled

Judgement enacted

Read 2 Samuel 8:15-18

1. What characterises the reign of David?
2. Why is it important that God's people should be ruled with justice and righteousness?

Read 2 Samuel 9

3. What motivates David's kindness towards Mephibosheth? (See 1 Samuel 20:14-17)
4. What would it have been like for Mephibosheth to have been suddenly brought before the King?
5. Do you think he would have been surprised by David's words (v7)?
6. What provisions are made for him?

*As a recipient of God's kindness (v3), Mephibosheth enjoys restoration of property and status and the privilege of eating at the king's table. Jesus promises similar blessings to those who will come under his rule. (See **Matthew 19:29** and **Luke 13:29.**)*

Share together your experience of the kindness of King Jesus.

Read 2 Samuel 10:1-5

7. What is David's intention towards the Ammonites? (See footnote in v1.)
8. How do they respond?
9. What do you think David will do?

Read 2 Samuel 10:6-14

10. Joab has a good battle strategy, but what is his hope for victory (v12)?

Read 2 Samuel 10:15-19

What started as a fight with the Ammonites has now become a fight with the Syrians!

11. What is the outcome for
 - a. The Syrians?
 - b. The Ammonites?
 - c. Israel?

We have now seen what happened to those who rejected the kindness of King David.

12. **See Romans 2:4-5.** What happens to those who reject the kindness of God in Jesus?

Pray together for those you know and love who have yet to accept the kindness of God.

Study 7: The man after God's own heart??

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5

1. At what point does David sin?
2. Does David's behaviour shock you? Why/why not?
3. What would be the right thing for David to do now?

Read 2 Samuel 11:6-13

4. How does David try to cover up his sin?
5. Why does his strategy fail?

Read 2 Samuel 11:14-27

6. Why do you think David arranges the murder of Uriah? What else could he have done?
7. How do you feel hearing David's words to Joab (v25)?
8. David must have thought it was all sorted. What has he failed to take into account (v27)?
9. **Can you think of a time you thought you had successfully covered up sinful actions? If appropriate share what happened.**
10. **Part of the shock of this incident is that we expect better of David! Why does it surprise us when high-profile Christians are shown to be as sinful as the rest of us?**
11. **Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and 1 Corinthians 10:12-13. What comfort are these verses to you?**

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-14

12. What response does the story of the poor man's lamb provoke from David?
Why is this the right response? (See 2 Samuel 8:15)

13. In what way is David "the man" (v7)?

14. What does God say lies at the heart of David's sin (v9,14)?

15. What will be the consequences?

16. Why is David's response in verse 13 the only right thing for him to say?

17. What is astonishing about the promise given in verse 13?

18. Can you think of a time you have been made aware of your sin? What was your response?

19. Look again at Hebrews 4:14-16. How is it possible for us to receive grace and mercy from God? (See also Hebrews 10:19-22)

Read 2 Samuel 12:15-25

20. In this case God persists in judgement, even in the face of David's hope for grace. What can we learn from David's response to this?

21. What hope is there in the birth and naming of Solomon?

The story of David and Bathsheba would have played out over nearly 2 years. Our narrator ends this section by returning us to the battle for Rabbah, the scene of Uriah's death.

Read 2 Samuel 12:26-31

22. What aspect of David's kingship does this closing section emphasise?

Spend time thanking God for our King Jesus who, though tempted in every way, did not sin; and was therefore able to secure forgiveness for our every sin.

Study 8: Meet the sons

From this point on in our study of 2 Samuel we see the outworking of God's judgement upon David:

2 Samuel 12:10 "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife."

At the same time we remember God's promise:

2 Samuel 7:12 "When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom."

So now it's time to meet the sons...

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-19

1. Amnon is David's eldest son. What do his actions reveal about his character?
2. Why do you think the bible records such appalling behaviour?

Read 2 Samuel 13:20-22

Absalom's words to Tamar sound strange and inadequate to us. However, having guessed what has happened, he reassures his sister that she needn't take this matter into her own hands ("hold your peace", "do not take this to heart"), effectively assuring her that he is taking this matter to his heart. He is also aware that Amnon will not be easy to deal with ("he is your brother") because he is the prince.

3. How does King David respond? Does he actually do anything?

Read 2 Samuel 13:23-29

4. How long does Absalom wait to get his revenge?
5. What do Absaloms' actions reveal about his character?

Read 2 Samuel 13:30-39

Absalom flees to his mother's family in Geshur, outside of Israel. David's response to these events is hard to translate. Most likely the son he mourns is Amnon, and he longs to go after Absalom in battle.

6. Do you think there is a connection between David's own sin and his inability to deal with his sons' sinful actions (lust, rape, vengeance, murder)?

7. **Read 1 Timothy 3:1-5 and Ephesians 6:4.** How can we encourage the fathers in our church to set a godly example for their children?

Amnon is dead, Absalom is in exile, so now Joab steps up to try and make things right in the kingdom. His plan involves some pretence, and a story.

Read 2 Samuel 14:1-24

8. What result does Joab want (v20,21)?

9. What result does he get (v24)?

10. Do you think Absalom will be satisfied with this arrangement?

Read 2 Samuel 14:25-33

11. These two chapters have spanned seven years. How do things stand between David and Absalom at the end of this time? (Note the formal language of v33.)

How can God's kingdom be entrusted to sons like these?!

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. How can God's kingdom be entrusted to people like us?

Study 9: On the Run (Again!)

Person in the news: Absalom

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-6

1. How does Absalom go about undermining David's rule?

Read 2 Samuel 15:7-12

2. Do you think this attempt to overthrow David was spontaneous or carefully planned?
3. What do you think David will do?

Read 2 Samuel 15:13-17

4. Why does David decide to flee? (v14)

David, God's anointed king for his people, is on the run again! Our narrator now introduces us to a series of people who meet the king as he journeys away from Jerusalem.

Read 2 Samuel 15:18-23

*This group of foreigners under the leadership of **Ittai** had been with David since his time on the run from Saul.*

5. What does David recommend to them?
6. How does Ittai respond?

*Next come the priests **Abiathar** and **Zadok**.*

Read 2 Samuel 15:24-29

7. Why does David send them back with the ark of God?
8. What job does David have for them in Jerusalem?

Read 2 Samuel 15:30-37

9. What is David's response to the news of **Ahithophel's** betrayal?
10. David prays, and meets **Hushai!** What does he ask Hushai to do?

Read 2 Samuel 16:1-4

11. We met **Ziba** and Mephibosheth back in 2 Samuel 9. How does Ziba help David now?
12. What is David told about **Mephibosheth**? Does this surprise you?

Read 2 Samuel 16:5-14

13. What are we told about **Shimei**?
14. How does **Abishai** (Joab's brother) want to deal with him?
15. Does David's response surprise you?

16. Look again at **2 Samuel 15:25,26** and **16:12**. Where is David's hope in the midst of this crisis?

Consider Jesus' triumphant entry to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and his departure less than a week later as, abused and cursed, he is lead out to die. How is David's departure from Jerusalem like, and unlike, Jesus' experience? (See Luke 22:1-6, 39-43, 47-51, 23:23-43)

One commentator has observed that this is the David we've come to know and love – adversity seems to bring out the best in him! How do you respond to difficulties and opposition in your life? Does it produce the kind of faith-response we see in David? (See also 2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Extra: Psalm 3 was written by David during this time. Read it for further insight into David's confidence in his God.

Study 10: Can love and justice meet?

Talk: 2 Samuel 16:15-17:29

Hushai's Deception

Ahithophel's Counsel

(2 Samuel 12:11-12)

Ahithophel vs Hushai

Good counsel defeated

(2 Samuel 15:31)

Read 2 Samuel 18:1-5

1. Why do you think David wants to lead the men into battle?
2. Why does he stay behind? (vs 3,4)
3. Why do you think David gave the instruction to be gentle with Absalom?
4. How do you think the commanders felt about that?

Read 2 Samuel 18:6-18

5. Why didn't the young man kill Absalom?
6. Why does Joab go against King David's orders?

Read 2 Samuel 18:19-23

7. What is the good news Ahimaaz wants to take to David? (v19)
8. What is the news Joab needs to send? (v20)

9. How do you think David will receive the news?

Read 2 Samuel 18:24-30

10. What news reached David first?

11. What is David's main concern? (v29)

Read 2 Samuel 18:31-33

12. What do you think of David's reaction to the news of Absalom's death?

Read 2 Samuel 19:1-8

13. What is the effect of David's grief on his army?

14. Do you agree with Joab's rebuke?

For David's kingdom to be restored, his enemy must be punished. This is justice. But David loved his son. Was there any way for love and justice to both be satisfied?

For God's Kingdom to be restored, his enemies must be punished. This is justice. But God loves the world.

Read Romans 5:6-11. How has God made it possible for love and justice to both be satisfied?

How eager are you to spread the news of Jesus' victory?

Spend time thanking God for our King Jesus, who died instead of us. Pray for boldness to proclaim him the risen King.

Study 11: The Return of the King

Talk: 2 Samuel 19:8b-15

Bring back the king!

Just as we were introduced to a number of people who met David as he fled from Jerusalem, so now we meet some of them again on his return...

Shimei, who threw rocks and curses at David (2 Sam 16:5-14)

Ziba who gave generous provisions, and reported that **Mephibosheth** had turned against David (2 Sam 16:1-4)

Barzillai who provided for David and his men at Mahanaim (2 Sam 17:27-29)

Read 2 Samuel 19:16-23

1. How does Shimei approach David?
2. How does Abishai want to deal with him? (Recall 2 Sam 16:9)
3. Does David's response surprise you?

Read 2 Samuel 19:24-30

4. How does Mephibosheth approach David?
5. Does David's response seem satisfactory to you?

Read 2 Samuel 19:31-39

6. Why does Barzillai refuse David's offer for himself?
7. What does it mean for all these men that David is returning victorious?

Read 2 Samuel 19:40-20:3

8. This is hardly the return that David was hoping for! What do these events reveal about the unity of the kingdom?

Read 2 Samuel 20:4-13

9. What do you think of Joab's actions?
10. What do you think David will do when he finds out?

Read 2 Samuel 20:14-22

11. What do Joab's words in vs 20-21 reveal about his motives?

Read 2 Samuel 20:23-26 and 2 Samuel 8:15-18

12. What's the same?
13. What is different?

In this study we have seen the return of the king. The nation he rules is fractured and fragile. He himself is flawed. If this is Israel under the great King David, man after God's own heart, what hope is there for God's kingdom?

Read the following passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11; Revelation 21:3-4; Revelation 22:12-17. What do they tell us about the return of our King Jesus?

As those who look forward to the return of our King, how are we to live today? (See 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8)

Footnote: It looks like Shimei got away with cursing the Lord's anointed, and that Joab has once again gotten away with murder. But see David's death-bed instructions to Solomon in 1 Kings 2:5-9!

Study 12: Pictures of the Kingdom (Part 1)

We have reached the epilogue in our narrator's account of David's reign. The overall structure can be illustrated like this:

21:1-14 A problem in David's kingdom: God's wrath, part 1

21:15-22 The strength of David's kingdom: his mighty men, part 1

22:1-51 The hope of David's kingdom: the Lord's promise, part 1

23:1-7 The hope of David's kingdom: the Lord's promise, part 2

23:8-39 The strength of David's kingdom: his mighty men, part 2

24:1-25 A problem in David's kingdom: God's wrath, part 2

(John Woodhouse, 2 Samuel "Your Kingdom Come", Preaching the Word commentary series, p483)

Read 2 Samuel 21:1-6

1. What does David do in the face of this natural disaster? (v1)
2. What reason is given for the famine? (v1)
3. See **Joshua 9:3-7,14-21** for the history of Israel's dealings with the Gibeonites.
4. Does it shock you that David should agree to the Gibeonite's request?

Read 2 Samuel 21:7-14

5. Rizpah was the subject of the dispute between Ish-bosheth and Abner back in 2 Samuel 3. Take some time to consider the pain of her experiences.
6. What does Rizpah's devotion prompt David to do?
7. What does David hope to achieve by these deaths? (v3)
8. Was God's wrath turned away? How do we know?

Why is atonement for sin always necessary?

Read 1 John 2:2; 4:9-10. [Note: propitiation = sacrifice for atonement.] Who paid the price for our atonement? We feel horror at the death of these 7 young men. Should we feel similarly about Jesus' death?

Read 2 Samuel 21:15-22

(Comparing 1 Chronicle 20:5, it was probably Goliath's brother that Elhanan killed (v19))

9. Why do you think the victories over these four Philistine giants are recorded?

10. Describe the relationship revealed here between David and his men.

The men were concerned that with David's defeat the lamp of Israel would be quenched. Read John 1:1-5, 9; 8:12. What does it mean for us as Jesus' followers that he is the unquenchable light of the world?

Read 2 Samuel 22

11. Who does David know God to be?

12. Recalling all that we have read together in 2 Samuel, reflect on how this song speaks of David's various experiences.

Let each person choose a verse or two to turn into prayers of praise for our great and victorious King Jesus.

Study 13: Pictures of the Kingdom (Part 2)

Read 2 Samuel 23:1-7

These are not literally David's last words, but this the last word from God spoken through him.

1. What kind of king brings blessing to God's people?
2. What do the images used in verse 4 say to you about life under a righteous king?
3. To what extent do verses 5-7 reflect David's experience?

Look again at v4, and think about the images Jesus used about himself (e.g. living water, bread of life, light, life etc.). How would you describe the blessing of living under King Jesus?

Read 2 Samuel 23:8- 39

Here we have a roll of honour, with selected exploits, of David's mighty men.

4. Even as we meet "the three" what truth is emphasised (v10,12)?
5. What do we see about the relationship between David and his men (especially v13-17)?
6. Recall the promises in 2 Samuel 7:10-11a. What does this listing of mighty men tell us about the kingdom of David?
7. Who is the last man on to be listed? How does realising that he was one of David's elite warriors make you feel about the whole incident with Bathsheba?

Read Isaiah 9:6-7 and Luke 2:11,14. What hope do we have in a world full of wars and hostility towards God's people?

Read 2 Samuel 24:1-9

8. What reasons might David have for wanting to count the people?
9. Why do you think Joab objects?
10. What people in particular was David interested in numbering (v9)?

Read 2 Samuel 24:10-17

11. What does David realise?
12. What choice does David make? Why?
13. What does David's prayer (v17) show us about his character?
14. Why does the plague stop (v16)?

Read 2 Samuel 24:18-25

15. We know (although David doesn't) that this episode arose due to God's wrath against Israel for some unspecified sin (v1). We also know (v16) that God has already stopped the plague. So what is the purpose of this instruction to David?
16. What more do we see of David's character (v19,24)?

Even as we see David at his best here, and even as God includes David in the process, we see that ultimately David is impotent to save God's people from God's wrath. What hope for Israel does this give us as the books of Samuel close?

Read John 3:16-18,36 and 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11. What is the right response for us to make to the God who saves us from his wrath at such great cost?

Having completed these studies on the reign of David, what does it mean for you to pray "Your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven"?