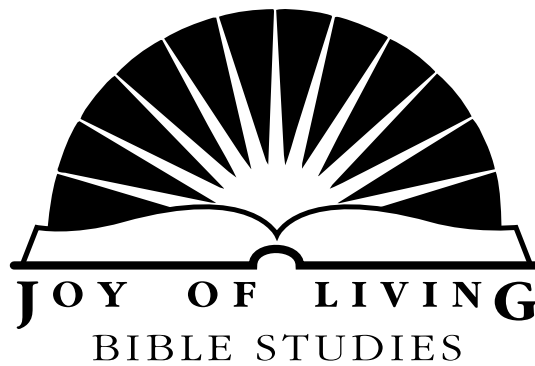


2 Samuel & 1-2 Kings Lesson 1



2 Samuel 1:1—5:5

Introduction

Congratulations for enrolling in this course of Bible study. One of the great needs for every Christian today is to become better acquainted with the Bible and its Author. H.C. Trumbull, a great man of God, once said, “A loving trust in the Author of the Bible is the best preparation for a wise study of it.” The Lord God loves you and you need to learn to know Him better so that your love and trust toward Him may grow. The Bible says, “Our love for him comes as a result of his loving us” (1 John 4:19, *TLB*).

The Bible is God’s message of love to you. God through the Holy Spirit inspired men of old to write that message: “For no prophecy recorded in Scripture was ever thought up by the prophet himself. It was the Holy Spirit within these godly men who gave them true messages from God” (2 Peter 1:20,21, *TLB*). The good news is that the Lord went even one step further. He gave us, His children, the Holy Spirit to live within our hearts to help us understand the Bible. How do we know that? Because the Bible says, “But you have received the Holy Spirit and he lives within you, in your hearts, so that you don’t need anyone to teach you what is right” (1 John 2:27, *TLB*).

As you begin this study you may want to use a prayer that the psalmist prayed long, long ago: “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18, *NIV*). If you sincerely pray that prayer, you’re in for an exciting time as the Lord reveals His truths to you! My challenge to you is:

Search the Scripture’s precious store—
As a miner digs for ore,
Search and you will surely find
Treasures to enrich your mind.

—Anon

Our search for treasures in the next 28 lessons begins in 2 Samuel. For a more effective search we need to get our bearings. Let’s do what I do when I’m traveling. When visiting famous sites, I love to get a bird’s-eye view of the area by climbing up into a tall building or a tower for a panoramic view. For example, when in Rome we climbed up into the dome of the Vatican and other tall buildings. From there we could see that ancient city from various angles—the Tiber River cutting through the city, the Coliseum, the main thoroughfares, etc.

To get a good basic view for our study of this course let’s use questions as our “tall building” from which we can look in several directions for our orientation.

1. Why study the Old Testament?

We can best answer that question by expanding further on the fact that the Bible is God’s message of love to all of us. The fact that God chose to make Himself known to man through His Word means that the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is extremely important to us. The Bible says that God “is the same yesterday and today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). God said of Himself, “I the Lord do not change” (Malachi 3:6). God who was behind the activities and events of the Old Testament is also the God who stands behind history in the making in our present day—the history in which you and I are involved.

First Corinthians 10:6 says, concerning the history of the Old Testament, “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they [the Israelites] did;” and in verse 11, “These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come.”

The accounts in the Old Testament are not fairy tales to entertain us—they are in the Bible for a purpose. *The Living Bible* says it this way: “You will do well to pay close attention to everything they [the prophets] have written, for, like lights shining into dark corners, their words help us to understand many things that otherwise would be dark and difficult” (2 Peter 1:19).

2. Why are there two books called Samuel?

First and Second Samuel originally were one book. Most scholars believe that the book was divided about the time of the early Church, after the death and resurrection of Christ. The books tell of the Israelites moving from a *theocracy*—a time of being ruled by God to a *monarchy*—a time of being ruled by kings. The books cover a period a little longer than a hundred years.

The three main characters of 1 Samuel are Samuel, Saul and David. The state of affairs among the Israelites when 1 Samuel opens was tragic. The Bible says, “Everyone did as he saw fit” (Judges 21:25), and that spelled *chaos!* It was then that God raised up Samuel, a prophet and the last judge of Israel. But even under the teaching of Samuel the Israelites practically rejected God. Their cry was for a king. First Samuel tells the story of man’s choice of Israel’s first

king, King Saul. Second Samuel tells of God's choice of a king, King David.

The two books may be roughly outlined as follows:

First Samuel

1. Birth to manhood of Samuel (chapters 1—15ff)
2. Young David's call from God (chapter 16)
3. David's victory over Goliath (chapter 17)
4. David's growing popularity and persecution (chapters 18—31)

Second Samuel

1. David becomes king over Judah (chapters 1—4)
2. David becomes king over all Israel (chapters 5—6)
3. David's conquests and sin (chapters 7—12)
4. Revolt and restoration (chapters 13—24)

3. What was the problem between Saul and David?

King Saul made a good start, ruling Israel wisely. But soon his reign began to deteriorate. First he became jealous and disobedient to God because David was becoming a successful and popular warrior. He became so possessed with jealousy that God chose David to become the new king. Before David took over the throne, years after his anointing, Saul's one big objective in life was to destroy David. His persistent persecution became so bad that David and about 600 of his followers had to flee for their lives and became refugees among the enemies of Israel.

The two books of Samuel overlap to the extent that both tell of the death of Saul. First Samuel ends with the death of the king, and second Samuel opens with the account.

The Setting for 2 Samuel

Before we descend from our imaginary tower, we need a few more landmarks—facts—in order to get a better understanding of the first chapter of 2 Samuel.

One of the Israelites' most aggressive enemies were the Philistines. As 1 Samuel ends, the Israelites were suffering from an attack: "Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell slain on Mount Gilboa" (1 Samuel 31:1). It was in this battle that Saul was badly wounded and his sons were killed. He must have known all was lost when that happened. To avoid further humiliation from the enemy, the king asked his armor-bearer to kill him. When the man refused, Saul fell on his own sword (1 Samuel 31:4).

Where was David, you ask, and why didn't he come to the king's rescue? David was a refugee, hiding from the abnormal jealousy and anger of Saul. At the time of this battle David was on "the other side," the side of the enemy. David and his followers had been hiding in the city of Ziklag, in Philistine territory. They had almost been conscripted by the Philistine king to fight against their own people. Fortunately, some of the Philistine soldiers didn't trust David, therefore these Israelite refugees were sent back to Ziklag.

Although David knew God had anointed him king of Israel (1 Samuel 16) the time between the anointing and

taking the throne was rough. Waiting could not have been easy for David but in spite of the hardships he trusted in the Lord.

Bill, a friend of mine, was a pilot for Wycliffe Bible Translators. He said one of the first things he had to learn was to *trust* his instruments. In storms, fog, or heavy clouds your feeling and instinct may tell you you're flying due west. "But," said Bill, "if your instruments say you're flying east you'd better believe them." He said one frightening danger is that certain weather conditions can deceive a pilot into thinking he's in a dive. An automatic response is to pull back sharply on the controls which can cause the aircraft to go into a spin, a sharp climb, or even to stall. If his instruments say he's flying level he must believe them regardless of what seems logical.

Just as Bill had to learn to depend on his instruments, we need to learn to depend on the Lord, even when our way seems dark. David did. Because he waited upon the Lord and trusted in His guidance, even when he was in enemy territory, the way was finally opened for him to rule Israel. Since David was still in Philistine territory he didn't hear of the death of King Saul and his sons until later—the news that meant the way was now open for him to become king.

2 Samuel 1:1-27—Tragic News

The scene opens with the arrival of a messenger bearing the news of the king's death. Both the torn clothing and the dirt-covered head (2 Samuel 1:2) were ancient symbols of deep mourning and tragic news. While the young man said he was an Amalekite, most scholars believe he was attached in some way to Saul's army, either as a soldier or a camp follower. Or he may have been a resident alien in Israel.

If you compare the man's story (2 Samuel 1:6-10) with the actual facts in 1 Samuel 31 and 1 Chronicles 10:3 you may think there are quite a few discrepancies. Does this mean there is an error in the Bible? Not at all. It *does* mean the story was faked, in part, by the Amalekite in hopes of receiving better compensation from David. Let's look at some of these discrepancies.

The Amalekite said he killed the king at Saul's request (2 Samuel 1:10). But 1 Samuel 31:4 says Saul requested his armor-bearer to do so. Most biblical authorities believe it is highly unlikely that Saul would be alone without his bodyguards, as the man seems to indicate. It is doubtful that Saul would have asked a pagan Amalekite to kill him to avoid torture.

The Amalekite said, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa" (2 Samuel 1:6) implying that his presence on the battlefield was purely by accident, yet he said, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp" (2 Samuel 1:3). The real story probably was that when the Israelites heard that Saul was dead they ran in panic and the Amalekite also ran. In his escape he came upon the body of the dead king before Philistines had collected their plunder (1 Samuel 31:8). True, the man had evidence to prove what he said (2 Samuel 1:10);

however, his well-planned, but distorted story didn't wash. He did not earn the special recognition for which he hoped as we see from 2 Samuel 1:15.

Everything David did, he did with all his heart. At the news of the death of King Saul and his son Jonathan, David's very dearest friend, David mourned deeply. There is no indication that he was glad his refugee days were over at last, that it was safe to return home to Israel and to sit on the throne. David expressed deep grief. His nation was humiliated in tremendous defeat, the Israelite army was scattered and his dearest friend was dead! The great warrior, David, and his men mourned, wept and fasted until evening (2 Samuel 1:12).

People handle grief in different ways. Usually there is a time of numbed shock, a loss of hope, of anger and resentment, a feeling of being cheated. All of these feelings are very normal.

A story is told of Eric Barker, a British missionary who worked for more than fifty years in Portugal giving of himself to the Lord he loved. During World War II the situation became so dangerous that Barker was advised to take his family and return to England. Despite the warning, Eric Barker stayed in Portugal, but his wife and their eight children, and his sister with her three children boarded a ship for home. Tragedy struck at sea. Their ship was torpedoed and all on board were killed. The tragic news reached Barker just before he was to step into the pulpit on Sunday morning. This brave man of God stood before his congregation and said softly, "I've just received word that all my family *has arrived safely home.*" After a moment of hushed silence, he went on with the service as usual. Unfeeling? No. By the grace of God, Barker could rise above this heartbreaking, overwhelming grief because he knew his loved ones were in the presence of the Lord. The Apostle Paul expressed the feeling well when he said he was willing "to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8, *KJV*) because "to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).

David too was grief stricken at the news of the death of those close to him. "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" David asked the Amalekite. To assassinate a king was a capital offense. "Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed,'" said David (2 Samuel 1:14,16). Because of the man's own confession David ordered the Amalekite executed.

To discover some of David's feelings of grief, read 2 Samuel 1:19-27. This lament for Saul and Jonathan is considered to be the most beautiful poetry David ever wrote.

2 Samuel 2:1-4, 8-32—Judah's New King

With the death of Saul, Israel was at the point of collapse. The nation was divided into two parts: Judah, and Israel, the group loyal to Saul. David was now thirty years old. When God first anointed him he was a young boy tending his father's sheep. After years of living as a refugee his lifestyle was about to change.

Unfortunately, it was still not all clear sailing for David. The battle during which Saul was killed again put the Philistines in control of Israel. So David still could not step in and announce to his subjects that he was God's anointed king, but he was on his way.

Notice the first thing he did: "David inquired of the Lord" (2 Samuel 2:1). When he discovered from the Lord where he was to go, he moved his wives and family to Hebron where a representative group from the tribe of Judah asked David to become their king.

Wouldn't the Philistines object to David's move, since they controlled Israel? you ask. Apparently they had not completely figured out David. While he was a refugee in their territory he was sort of a double agent. Philistine King Achish thought David was working for him, when in fact David was working in favor of Israel out of the city of Ziklag (1 Samuel 27). In view of past events, the Philistines no doubt felt having David king over Judah was as good as having a Philistine in control. Little did they know! Even though David had been privately anointed by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13), he was now inaugurated and anointed in a public ceremony as the king of the tribe of Judah.

The Philistines were not David's only problem. Another big problem was an opponent for the throne. Who was this opponent? Ish-Bosheth, Saul's surviving son. Abner, Saul's cousin and the commander-in-chief of Saul's army, supported Ish-Bosheth. Apparently it was common knowledge that God had chosen David to be king over all Israel, but that didn't stop Abner. He made Ish-Bosheth king over several cities east of the Jordan River. In reality, Abner was the power behind Ish-Bosheth, who was rather weak and more of a figurehead than a leader. For some five years Abner tried hard to reunite Israel and then to recapture the areas the Philistines had taken.

2 Samuel 3:1—5:11—A Great Power Struggle

Neither of the two small kingdoms—Judah with David as leader or Israel with Abner and Ish-Bosheth as leaders—had much hope of restoring the glory of the nation as long as Israel was divided. One or the other had to relent. Second Samuel 3:1 says "The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker."

Finally, the relationship between Abner and Ish-Bosheth was broken completely. In anger Abner announced he would join David (2 Samuel 3:9-10). Weakening that he was, Ish-Bosheth didn't try to persuade Abner to change his mind. As a matter of fact, he was afraid of Abner (2 Samuel 3:11).

Abner sent a messenger to Hebron to ask David to make a covenant with him and "I will help you bring all Israel over to you," promised Abner (2 Samuel 3:12). It was a good offer, and David agreed, but only on one condition. David had at one time been married to Saul's daughter, Michal. In one of Saul's jealous rages he separated the two. Now David agreed to Abner's proposal on the condition that Michal be

returned to him. Most scholars feel David's request was perhaps more political than romantic. Supporters of Ish-Bosheth and the "house of Saul" would be more apt to agree to the move of uniting Israel and Judah if David was married to Saul's daughter.

Abner agreed with David's request and set about to reunite the tribes. Before the task was completed, however, Abner was killed (2 Samuel 3:27). At his death the people of Israel were concerned because they wanted to keep the crown in Saul's family, and it was no secret that Abner was the power behind Ish-Bosheth. Now they were afraid of what David would do to them. Two officers, in an attempt to assure David of their support, assassinated Ish-Bosheth in his sleep. Instead of being pleased, however, David accused them of shedding innocent blood and had them killed.

2 Samuel 5:1-5—Israel's New King

Now nothing stood between David and the throne of Israel. At last the leaders of the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron to request him to be their king also (2 Samuel 5:1-2). In order to convince David, they gave him three reasons for accepting their request: (1) They were blood relatives. (2) They were aware of his military accomplishments; no doubt all Israel knew David was a military hero because of his excellent work and record as a warrior. (3) They said that the Lord had told David, "You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler" (2 Samuel 5:2; see also 1 Samuel 25:30).

At last David was crowned king over all Israel. He had been ruling over Judah for seven years and 2 Samuel 5:5 tells us he ruled over the united tribes for thirty-three years.

What Does the Scripture Say to Me?

Since we do not have our eyes on a throne somewhere waiting to become reigning people, do God's dealings with David have a personal message for us today? I believe it does!

First, God's timetable is not like ours. In fact our concept of time and God's concept are very different. In our day of instant foods and all the other conveniences at our disposal to save time, we dislike delays. We're in a hurry! We say we trust Him, but if God has not fulfilled a promise by evening (or sooner!) that we claim from His Word that morning, we tend to think He is ignoring us. The Bible says, "With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter 3:8).

God's promise that David would be Israel's king (1 Samuel 16:1) was a long time coming, but eventually God delivered. He doesn't always work at our speed.

Second, God does keep His promises. David was young when he was first anointed Israel's king (1 Samuel 16:1-13). The events that followed, however, would be apt to convince most of us today that we had "misunderstood" what God wanted. After all, hadn't King Saul tried to kill David twice (1 Samuel 18:11,25)? Hadn't David been forced to leave home and hide in the hills like a refugee because Saul was out to destroy him (1 Samuel 21-26)? These frightening circumstances could easily convince most of us that surely God was trying to tell us to forget the throne. But David found guidance, strength and comfort during these times by talking to God (1 Samuel 23:1-4; 30:6; 2 Samuel 2:1).

As we mentioned at the beginning of our study, God is the same; He doesn't change (Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17). When God makes a promise He *will* deliver. The Bible also says, "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (Numbers 23:19). God's answer may not come in the way we have planned, we may not always understand. But as David did, who by the time of our study had waited years (not just a few hours, days or weeks), we also need to trust the Lord to keep His promise in the way that is best for us.

Third, God's promises are for us even when it means waiting. Our role is to spend time with Him by reading His Word and talking to Him in prayer. Difficult as it may be for us to accept, the Bible says we are not to lean on our own understanding but to acknowledge our need for His guidance (Proverbs 3:5-6). We need to thank Him for His promises and for what He will do in our lives. The Bible says God "calls things that are not [yet] as though they were" (Romans 4:17). By expressing gratitude to the Lord even before we see evidence of a promise being fulfilled we are in reality claiming the Lord's promise to us. By thanking Him we remind ourselves that the Lord has promised and that He is able to keep that promise. Abraham knew this. The Bible says that Abraham believed God even in a situation that according to human ability and logic was impossible. But Abraham "was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised" (Romans 4:20-21). These verses in Romans refer to a promise God made to Abraham for which, incidentally, Abraham also had to wait years for it to be filled.

If Abraham, known as "God's friend" (James 2:23; Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7), and David, known as "a man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) had to wait and be confined to God's timetable, why should we today be exempt?

Written by Ruth M. Bathauer

Study Questions

Before you begin each day:

- a. Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- b. Use only your Bible and lesson notes for your answers.
- c. Write your answers and the verses you used.
- d. Challenge questions are for those who have the time and wish to do them.
- e. Personal questions are to be shared with the class only if you wish to share.

First Day: Read all the notes and look up all the Scriptures.

1. What new thought did you find in the lecture or notes concerning 2 Samuel?

2. David waited a long time to become Israel's king. Has God used a period of waiting in your life? How did you handle these "periods of waiting" and what lessons did you learn? What Scripture helped you through that time? Read Psalm 25:4-6, Isaiah 30:18 and Isaiah 40:31 and share thoughts that help you.

3. The suggested memory verse is Psalm 119:18. What comfort do you find in this Scripture? (You may choose another verse that was meaningful to you, if you prefer.)

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 5:6-13 and 1 Chronicles 11:4-7.

1. Why couldn't David move into Jerusalem to set up the new capital as soon as the Lord told him to go to that city?

2. What taunts did the city dwellers hurl against David?

3. What reward did David promise to the man who led the attack against the Jebusites? Who won? (See 1 Chronicles 11:4-6.)

4. What was another name given to Jerusalem after the Jebusites were defeated?

5. a. What was the secret of David's success and power?

b. Challenge: Read either Psalm 62 or 63, psalms of David. Write down several verses that are especially meaningful to you.

6. a. What promise from the Lord in Romans 8:31-32 can you claim?

b. (Personal) Is there a situation in your life today in which this promise from God can strengthen and encourage you? You can pray right now and give that situation back to Him. God not only gave His only Son as a sacrifice on the cross for you personally, He continues to help you to meet any trial through the power of the Holy Spirit within you.

Third Day: Read 2 Samuel 5:17-25.

1. Tell what you remember about the enemy that attacked Israel after David was anointed king over Israel.

2. a. Describe how David prepared to meet the Philistines (see 2 Samuel 5:19).

b. What shows you that David got direction from God when he asked for it?

c. Read Psalm 145:18-19. Write these verses in your own words, inserting your name in them.

3. a. In your own words tell how David gave glory to God for giving them victory over the enemy.

b. When you are victorious over a temptation, how can you give glory to God?

c. (Personal) Have you recently had a victory over temptation by God's power? If it's not too personal, share this experience with your group so that others can be encouraged to trust God more.

4. Read 1 Chronicles 14:12. What did David instruct his men to do with the idols the Philistines left behind?

5. a. Challenge: Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-14. Jot down God's warning and the promises of victory in Christ.

b. Write in your own words what Christ's promises are in 1 Corinthians 10:13.

6. a. Take special time to read 1 Corinthians 10:7-8 along with 1 Corinthians 10:14. How do these verses indicate the way that Christians can worship idols?

b. (Personal) Look at your own life. Are there any "idols" you need to remove by Christ's power? Pray and ask God to help you "flee" idolatry. Read Zechariah 4:6b.

Fourth Day: Read 2 Samuel 6:1-7; 1 Chronicles 13:1-7.

1. a. How many men were with King David at this time?

b. What did King David and his people do at Kiriath Jearim?

2. Read Exodus 25:10-22. What do you learn about the ark in verse 22?
3. Compare the way the ark was carried in 2 Samuel 6:3 with God's instructions for moving it in Exodus 25:14 and Numbers 4:6.
4. What clue can you find in 1 Chronicles 13:3 that describes the spiritual condition of Israel during the reign of King Saul, the king who preceded King David?
5. a. What happened to the ark when the procession arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon? See 2 Samuel 6:6.

b. What happened to Uzzah?
6. Disobedience to God always brings suffering and sometimes death. The Christian can claim Psalm 143:10-11, one of David's psalms, as a prayer to God for His leading and help. Write this passage in your own words and insert your name in it.

Fifth Day: Read 2 Samuel 6:8-15; 1 Chronicles 15:11-15.

1. Describe David's feelings toward God when Uzzah died.
2. a. Where did David and the people leave the ark?

b. How long was it there?
3. What news about the ark and the home of Obed-Edom encouraged David to again try to bring the ark to Jerusalem?
4. How did David explain the reason for the tragedy in the first attempt at moving the ark? See 1 Chronicles 15:13.
5. List two things the priests did this time in preparing to move the ark. See 1 Chronicles 15:14-15.
6. a. Describe David's actions during the celebration.

b. (Personal) The Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all that belonged to him (2 Samuel 6:12). How do you experience God's blessings through the presence of Christ in your life?

c. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:8-10. Write the verses in your own words and insert your name to claim the promise they include.

Sixth Day: Read 2 Samuel 6:16-23.

1. How did David's wife Michal respond to the celebration?
2. How does David's explanation to Michal of his celebration (2 Samuel 6:21-22) compare with what Paul said about the attitude of Christ in Philippians 2:6-9?
3. David and the people learned to reverence the Person of God when they moved the ark. Jot down phrases from the following references that tell how we are to show reverence to God.

Isaiah 45:23 (Prophecy of Christ)

Ephesians 3:14

Philippians 2:8-11

4. Challenge: Find one reason why we need to celebrate by expressing our love and joy in praise to God for what He has done for us.

John 3:16

John 14:16-18

Hebrews 13:5b-6

1 John 4:4

1 John 5:14-15

5. (Personal) Choose one of the verses in question 4 to celebrate with joyful praise. Insert your name in this verse and copy the verse on a piece of paper or a card that you can look at when you are discouraged or feel that God is far away.
6. Did you memorize a verse this week? If so, share it with your discussion group to encourage others to store God's Word in their minds and hearts also.