**2 Samuel 1 and 2. The War between the Houses of David and Saul, 4/27/2018**

**Opening**

* If someone comes to you reporting that your number one competitor (or enemy) suffers a major loss, what will you do? Very happy and a big gift to him who reported?
* What can you tell about 刘邦and项羽 (Liu Bang and Xiang Yu)?
	+ 項羽（？－前202年），名籍，字羽，以字行，楚國下相（今江蘇省宿遷市宿城區）人，秦朝末年西楚軍事家，政治家。楚國名將項燕之孫，七歲後隨叔父項梁遷吳中，秦末民變期間在會稽郡治所吳縣（今江蘇蘇州）起兵反秦，被楚後懷王封為魯公。前207年鉅鹿之戰中，項羽統率楚軍五萬大破秦軍五十萬，決定秦朝覆亡之勢，秦三世自降為「秦王」，不再稱「皇帝」。項羽起兵三年，即率領山東六國諸侯滅秦，分封天下，政由羽出，自封「西楚霸王」，統治黃河及長江下游的梁楚九郡，年僅二十五歲。前206年，漢王劉邦從漢中出兵進攻項羽，展開了歷時四年的楚漢戰爭，期間項羽雖然屢屢大破劉邦，但項羽始終無法有固定的後方補給，糧草殆盡，又未能重用范增、韓信、陳平，最後反被劉邦所滅。前202年，項羽在垓下之戰為劉邦指揮諸侯六十萬聯軍所敗，突圍至烏江後，自刎而死。項羽被譽為中國歷史最為勇猛的將領，史學家稱「羽之神勇，千古無二」，亦認為「霸王」一詞專指項羽。https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E9%A1%B9%E7%BE%BD.
	+ A good read in English is available at http://people.chinesecio.com/en/article/2010-05/10/content\_122731.htm.
* Who is Kind David? What can you say about him? Good or bad? Historically? Spiritually?
	+ What will be an ideal king? A good king? An okay king?
	+ Who was the first king of Israel? When did Israel start to have fights about who would be the next king? Why?
* We studied 1 Samuel in the summer of 2016. Do you remember what we discussed?
* We will study 2 Samuel in 15 sessions. Why?

**Introduction to 2 Samuel. ESV Study Bible.**

* **Author and Date.** The author or authors of 1 and 2 Samuel are not known. These books recount the stories of Samuel, Saul, and David. Saul’s reign began between 1050-1030 b.c. and ended in 1010. David then reigned until 971. The books were probably written soon after the end of his reign.
* **Purpose.** The purpose of 1 Samuel is to highlight two major events: the establishment of the monarchy in Israel (chs. 8–12); and the rise of David to be king after Saul (chs. 16–31). After ruling for a while, Saul was rejected by the Lord in favor of David (chs. 15–16), though Saul stayed on the throne until his death at Mount Gilboa (ch. 31). Later, in 2 Samuel 7, God promises David and his house an eternal dynasty. The book of 1 Samuel establishes the principle that obedience to the word of God is the necessary condition for a king to be acceptable to the God of Israel.

First and Second Samuel deal with a transitional period in the history of ancient Israel. There is a transition of leadership first from the priest Eli to the judge Samuel, then from the judge Samuel to the king Saul, and then from Saul to David. Samuel thus is the link between the judgeship and the kingship in Israel. He is the prophet God uses to anoint both Saul and David. The kingdom of Saul was also transitional. Under Saul, Israel was more than a loose confederation that gathered together whenever there was a common threat, but there was no strong central rule such as existed later. The story of the rise of David in the second half of 1 Samuel prepares for the full-scale kingship of David in 2 Samuel.

* **Themes.** The themes of 1 Samuel are related to the themes of 2 Samuel: the sovereign God, who has guided David’s life, chooses David as the ruler of God’s people. God pledges to David an eternal covenant. David thus becomes the prototype of the future Messiah, Jesus Christ.
1. Davidic covenant. See 2 Samuel 7.
2. Messianic promise. Second Samuel 7 is a turning point in the history of salvation. God chose David to be the beginning of an enduring dynasty, from which the ultimate Ruler, Jesus, would come. God used David to fulfill his eternal plan of salvation, not because he was perfect from a human viewpoint, but because the Lord was “with him” and showed grace to him.



 Geographical setting of 2 Samuel

**Outline** (ESV Study Bible)

1. Story of King David ([1:1–20:26](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B1-20/))
	1. David and the death of Saul ([1:1–27](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B1/))
	2. David becomes king ([2:1–5:5](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B2-5.5/))
	3. Jerusalem, the city of David ([5:6–25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B5.6-25/))
	4. Zion, the place of worship ([6:1–23](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B6/))
	5. Davidic covenant: eternal throne ([7:1–29](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B7/))
	6. Catalog of David’s military activities ([8:1–18](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B8/))
	7. Mephibosheth ([9:1–13](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B9/))
	8. Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–12:31](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B10-12/))
		1. Beginning of Israel-Ammon war ([10:1–19](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B10/))
		2. David and Bathsheba ([11:1–12:25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B11-12.25/))
		3. End of Israel-Ammon war ([12:26–31](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B12.26-31/))
	9. Absalom’s banishment and reinstatement ([13:1–14:33](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B13-14/))
	10. Absalom’s rebellion ([15:1–19:43](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15-19/))
		1. Absalom’s conspiracy ([15:1–12](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15.1-12/))
		2. David’s escape from Absalom ([15:13–16:14](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B15.13-16.14/))
		3. Ahithophel and Hushai ([16:15–17:23](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B16.15-17.23/))
		4. David arrives at Mahanaim ([17:24–29](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B17.24-29/))
		5. Death of Absalom ([18:1–19:8a](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B18-19.8/))
		6. David’s return to Jerusalem ([19:8b–43](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B19.8-43/))
	11. Sheba’s rebellion ([20:1–26](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B20/))
2. Epilogue ([21:1–24:25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21-24/))
	1. Famine and the death of Saul’s sons ([21:1–14](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21.1-14/))
	2. Philistine wars ([21:15–22](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B21.15-22/))
	3. Song of David ([22:1–51](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B22/))
	4. Last words of David ([23:1–7](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B23.1-7/))
	5. David’s heroes ([23:8–39](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B23.8-39/))
	6. The census and the threshing floor ([24:1–25](https://www.esv.org/2%2BSamuel%2B24/))

**A General Introduction**

* I have found the article by B.T. Arnold, "Books of Samuel", pages 866-877 in Dictionary of the Old Testament: Historical Books, IVP, 2005 to be very helpful. Arnold's basic thesis is that Samuel the prophet and king-maker, who at first did not want a king since he would likely be guilty of the typical abuses of kings (1 Sam. 8:10-18), changes his mind upon the Lord's instruction. He comes to support a king who would recognize that the Lord is the true king of Israel and that he serves as his representative. The ideal of that kind of king is summarized in Samuel’s farewell address (1 Sam 12). Thus both those negative and positive statement become the standard by which to evaluate, Saul, David and kings that follow in David's dynasty. See also the royal Psalms 45 & 72 especially. Jesus fulfills that ideal kingship. Pastor Thomas Yoakum.
* 2 Sam. 1:1–20:26 Story of King David. Most of 2 Samuel recounts the rise of David’s kingship, first over Judah and then over all Israel, and the major challenge to David’s rule resulting from David’s own sins. ESV Study Bible.

**David Hears of Saul's Death (1:1-16)**

* 2 Sam. 1:1–27 David and the Death of Saul. The earliest history of the Israelite monarchy now moves into its second stage, the era of King David. The narrator first looks back to the end of Saul’s life (the death of Saul and his sons at Mount Gilboa; 1 Samuel 31). David, who is in Ziklag, hears of the death of Saul. But instead of rejoicing, he mourns Saul’s death and executes the man who claims to have killed Saul. His elegy shows his deep personal grief over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan in battle. David was not a vengeful rebel against Saul, and thus can receive the kingship in good conscience. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 1:6–10 So I stood beside him and killed him (v. 10). The narrator (whom readers should believe) in 1 Samuel 31 says that Saul killed himself. Having already read that, readers know that this man is lying to gain favor with the person who was most likely to replace Saul as king. Saul had destroyed most of the Amalekites (1 Samuel 15), but since this man was the son of a sojourner (2 Sam. 1:13), his presence in Israel is no surprise. ESV Study Bible.
	+ 1 Samuel 31:3-6. The battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor-bearer, “Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and mistreat me.” But his armor-bearer would not, for he feared greatly. Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. And when his armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. Thus Saul died, and his three sons, and his armor-bearer, and all his men, on the same day together.
* Discussion
	+ How did David treat the young man who came to report the death of Saul and Jonathan? Why?

**David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan (1:17-27)**

* 2 Sam. 1:17–27 David’s lament is a profound expression of public and personal grief. As part of the historical records of David’s reign, the lament provides lasting evidence of David’s innocent ascent to the throne. Though grievously wronged by Saul, David nonetheless chose to remember Saul in a generous way, setting an example of graciously emphasizing the good that someone has done after that person dies. The recurring theme of how the mighty have fallen (vv. 19, 25, 27) provides the structure of David’s lament, which exhorts Israel first to mourn Saul (v. 23) and then to mourn my brother Jonathan (v. 26), then closes with the repetition of the haunting refrain, “How the mighty have fallen” (v. 27). ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 1:20 Gath and Ashkelon are Philistine cities. David cannot bear to think about the Philistine victory celebrations (cf. the Israelite women rejoicing in 1 Sam. 18:6–7). ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 1:26 Very pleasant refers to the way in which the relationship between David and Jonathan was uniquely “good,” i.e., in a “pleasant” or “lovely” way (v. 23; cf. 23:1, where the same word is translated “sweet” in the phrase “sweet psalmist of Israel”). Jonathan deeply loved and supported David (as seen in 1 Sam. 18:1–20:42; 23:16–18), in accordance with their covenant with the Lord. Surpassing the love of women. David’s remark does not carry any sexual overtones. Rather, he is calling attention to Jonathan’s radical self-denial in giving up any right to the throne of Israel (1 Sam. 23:17); instead, he gave his absolute support to David as the Lord’s choice to succeed Jonathan’s father Saul, even to the point of risking his life for David (1 Sam. 20:30–33). ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ If we were David, what would we do?

**David Anointed King of Judah (2:1-7)**

* 2 Sam. 2:1–5:5 David Becomes King. Judah makes David its king. Saul’s general Abner, however, seeks to restore Saul’s kingdom with Saul’s son Ish-bosheth as king. During the struggle between the two kingdoms, Abner, who has decided to go with David, is killed by David’s commander Joab. Later, Ish-bosheth is killed by two of his own men, but David executes them for murder. With no candidate for king in the house of Saul, all of Israel unites to anoint the hero David as king. There are many cases of Israelites’ shedding the blood of fellow Israelites, and this is tragic; but the narrator holds David innocent in each case, and thus he is qualified to be king over all Israel. ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 2:1–3 Hebron was the most important city of southern Judah and not far from Bethlehem. It was associated with Abraham (Gen. 13:18; 23:2; 25:10) and was a Levitical city (Josh. 21:13). ESV Study Bible.
* 2 Sam. 2:4b–7 See 1 Sam. 31:11–13. David seems to be presenting himself as Saul’s successor and suggesting that Jabesh-gilead should enter into a treaty relationship with Judah; Gilead, however, soon becomes part of Ish-bosheth’s kingdom (2 Sam. 2:8–9). David is not motivated by mere politics when he sends messengers to Jabesh-gilead. He is moved by their faithfulness toward their mutual sovereign and wants to reward them with blessings from the Lord and with his own work on their behalf. ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ From these verses, what can you say about David as a person?

**Ish-bosheth Made King of Israel (2:8-11)**

* 2 Sam. 2:8–9 Abner tries to continue Saul’s kingdom, even on a reduced scale. Saul’s son Ish-bosheth appears as Eshbaal in the genealogies in 1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39. It is uncertain whether he is the Ishvi of 1 Sam. 14:49. From these verses and 3:9, it appears that Ish-bosheth was little more than a puppet for Abner. Mahanaim, a city on the Jabbok River, was apparently the capital of Gilead. The fact that the capital had to be in Transjordan suggests the precariousness of Ish-bosheth’s reign. Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel refers to the northern and Transjordanian part of the country, Ephraim and Benjamin to the central and main part. Ish-bosheth did not necessarily have real control over all this area, especially since the Philistines apparently were in the Jezreel Valley (1 Sam. 31:7). All Israel is a summary description of the area just mentioned. ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ Was Ish-bosheth a king? Did he have the power of a king?

**The Battle of Gibeon (2:12-32)**

* 2 Sam. 2:13 This marks the first appearance of Joab the son of Zeruiah, though Abishai was referred to as his brother in 1 Sam. 26:6. Joab was commander over the army (2 Sam. 8:16) and appears frequently in 2 Samuel, often as a mover of events. Since Abner knows him and his brothers well (2:20–22), Joab probably came to Saul’s court soon after David’s rise to prominence. He was one of the three sons (Joab, Abishai, and Asahel) of David’s sister Zeruiah, and thus was David’s nephew (v. 18). Joab’s father probably died young, since he had a grave in Bethlehem (v. 32) and it was unusual for a man to be known by his mother’s name. Zeruiah is not identified in Samuel, but according to 1 Chron. 2:16, she and Abigail, the mother of Amasa (2 Sam. 17:25), were sisters of David and his brothers. Abigail is identified in 2 Sam. 17:25 as “the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah.” Therefore, it appears that Abigail and probably Zeruiah were maternal half-sisters of David by an earlier marriage of their mother. (David’s sister Abigail is a different Abigail from Nabal’s wife, who later became David’s wife.) ESV Study Bible.
* Discussion
	+ According to the Bible, who was the first person committing murder? Who was the first king? When was the first fight for the kingship? Why?

**Wrapping up**

* From these two chapters, wat can you say about David? Good or bad?
* The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart. Can we be more and more like that person?
* What are your favorite verses?

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