

Touring the Old Testament

Joshua - II Samuel



History I

by Rev. Timothy Keyes

Touring the Old Testament

Joshua through 2 Samuel

*by
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PREFACE

This manual is a workbook designed to aid live presentation of the subject matter. It is a “survey” of the Old Testament of the Bible. This means that this book contains an overview of a broad field of knowledge as opposed to a highly detailed study of a limited field. In other words, this book will summarize major themes as opposed to studying details verse-by-verse. Furthermore, since even an overview of the entire Old Testament is a work of significant size, this manual is the simply the second segment of a larger work. This manual is an overview of the following Old Testament books:

- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1 Samuel
- 2 Samuel

The overview of each individual book will begin with a summary of basic facts regarding the book.¹

- The number of chapters and verses in the book
- The title of the book (the meaning of the title and how we got it)
- The author of the book (which “holy man of God” wrote the book)²
- The historical period the book covers
- The approximate date the book was written
- Key words and phrases found in the book
- The purposes of the book (key lessons)
- The key messages of the book
- An outline or outlines of the book
- The major themes of the book
- A summary of the book
- How Christ is “seen” in the book (types and symbols)

After the basic facts are given, this study will proceed with an overview and summary of the major themes within a given section of a book. Depending on the book in focus, a section may cover anywhere from one verse up to several chapters at one time. For example, the division of the land of Canaan among the tribes of Israel in the book of Joshua, that take up several chapters in the Bible itself, are summarized in a few paragraphs in this work. In contrast, sections, or even whole books that are historical in nature, tend to be only moderately condensed.

¹ This format and subdivisions are a modification of those presented by Kevin Conner in his *Old Testament Survey*.

² 2 Peter 1:21

The purpose of this study is to give the student as much general information about these five books of the Old Testament as possible in a short period of time, thereby increasing the student's knowledge and scope of the Bible. Because the primary goal of this study is knowledge, lessons on "how to apply" the information are quite limited.

Much of what we will be studying is history—the history of the nation of Israel in particular—the one chosen or "elect" nation by which God has chosen to bless all nations. Therefore, much of our study will limit itself to the plain historical meaning of a given verse or chapter. But the Bible is more than history and although this is a survey, we would be remiss if we studied it only as history. According to the traditions of the Jews, who gave us the Bible, and the testimony of the Bible itself, every verse of the Bible has deeper meanings and applications than just the plain meaning and historical value. Although we cannot know the deeper meanings without understanding the plain meaning, (or should we minimize the value of the plain meaning), the deeper meanings have tremendous benefits and blessings attached to them, and as diligent students,³ we should seek these meanings out as well.

Among these deeper meanings, undoubtedly the most important is the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is indeed the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last. All things were created by him, and for him. He is before all things, and by him all things consist.⁴ As such, the careful student, with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, can find Christ in every verse of the Bible. Indeed, Jesus' own words declare this of Himself.

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me. [John 5:39 NIV]

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. [Luke 24:27 NIV]

(44) He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." (45) Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. [Luke 24:44–45 NIV]

They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" [Luke 24:32 NIV]

To this end, although it is only mentioned briefly in the Introduction to each book, the segment labeled "Christ Seen" will yield gold, silver and precious stones to those willing to dig for them.

³ 2 Tim. 2:15

⁴ Col. 1:16–17

Finally, it is my prayer that Jesus Christ will, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, open the minds of all those who read this book that we may better understand the Scriptures and truly see Jesus in them.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lesson One: Introduction to Joshua	8
Lesson Two: Joshua Chapters One through Twenty-Four	10
Lesson Three: Introduction to Judges	16
Lesson Four: Judges Chapters One through Eleven	19
Lesson Five: Judges Chapters Twelve through Twenty-One	24
Lesson Six: Introduction to Ruth	28
Lesson Seven: Ruth Chapters One through Four	31
Lesson Eight: Introduction to 1 Samuel	34
Lesson Nine: 1 Samuel Chapters One through Sixteen	37
Lesson Ten: 1 Samuel Chapters Seventeen through Thirty-One	43
Lesson Eleven: Introduction to 2 Samuel	49
Lesson Twelve: 2 Samuel Chapters One through Ten	51
Lesson Thirteen: 2 Samuel Chapters Eleven through Seventeen	56
Lesson Fourteen: 2 Samuel Chapters Eighteen through Twenty-Four	60
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65

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Abbreviations

Gen. = Genesis	Hag. = Haggai
Exo. = Exodus	Zech. = Zechariah
Lev. = Leviticus	Mal. = Malachi
Num. = Numbers	Matt. = Mathew
Deut. = Deuteronomy	Mark = Mark
Josh. = Joshua	Luke = Luke
Judg. = Judges	John = John
Ruth = Ruth	Acts = Acts
1 Sam. = 1 Samuel	Rom. = Romans
2 Sam. = 2 Samuel	1 Cor. = 1 Corinthians
1 Kin. = 1 Kings	2 Cor. = 2 Corinthians
2 Kin. = 2 Kings	Gal. = Galatians
1 Chr. = 1 Chronicles	Eph. = Ephesians
2 Chr. = 2 Chronicles	Phil. = Philippians
Ezra = Ezra	Col. = Colossians
Neh. = Nehemiah	1 Thes. = 1 Thessalonians
Est. = Esther	2 Thes. = 2 Thessalonians
Job = Job	1 Tim. = 1 Timothy
Ps. = Psalms	2 Tim. = 2 Timothy
Prov. = Proverbs	Titus = Titus
Eccl. = Ecclesiastes	Phlm. = Philemon
Song. = Song of Solomon (Song of Songs)	Heb. = Hebrews
Isa. = Isaiah	Jas. = James
Jer. = Jeremiah	1 Pet. = 1 Peter
Lam. = Lamentations	2 Pet. = 2 Peter
Ezek. = Ezekiel	1 Jn. = 1 John
Dan. = Daniel	2 Jn. = 2 John
Hos. = Hosea	3 Jn. = 3 John
Joel = Joel	Jude = Jude
Amos = Amos	Rev. = Revelation
Obad. = Obadiah	
Jon. = Jonah	
Mic. = Micah	
Nah. = Nahum	
Hab. = Habbakuk	
Zeph. = Zephaniah	

Chapter and Verse References

Numbers within parenthesis—for example (16), or (4–7)—indicate the verse number(s) within the current chapter being discussed.

If a different chapter within the same book needs to be referenced in this context however, it will be referenced by the chapter number followed by a colon, and then the verse number, all in parenthesis—for example (3:13).

Numbers within brackets, for example [10], indicate chapter numbers within the current book being discussed. This convention will usually be found in a section where several chapters fall under one sub-heading, and therefore a chapter needs to be referenced, but verse references are either not needed, or follow in parenthesis. Usually, with a few exceptions, a chapter reference in brackets will be given at the beginning of a paragraph or sentence, whereas all other designations (within parenthesis) will be given at the end of a sentence or paragraph.

If a different book needs to be referenced in this context however, it will be referenced by the book abbreviation, then chapter number, colon, and then verse number, all in parenthesis.

Considerations for Live Presentation

This manual has been designed as an aid to live presentation and is therefore divided into fourteen one-hour lessons. Each lesson spans between three and seven pages in the manual itself. Obviously, there will be a great deal of difference between presenting three pages of material in one hour versus presenting seven pages in one hour. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the instructor familiarize him or herself with the material to the point that he/she can make minor adjustments in order to utilize their time wisely.

LESSON ONE

Introduction to Joshua

The Book of Conquest

The Basics

Chapters and Verses:

The book of Joshua has 24 chapters, and 658 verses.

Title:

“Joshua” is the English translation of the Hebrew name *Yehoshua*, which means “Yahweh is salvation,” “Yahweh is deliverance,” or “Yahweh is opulence.” It is the sixth book of the Bible.

Author:

At least parts of the book were written by Joshua himself (24:26), but proof of writing the whole book is lacking—scholars generally agree that the author is unknown, and that title is designed to be descriptive of the contents, not necessarily designating the author.

Date:

The Joshua record covers approximately 30 years from the death of Moses to the death of Joshua. It was written between approximately 1390 and 1370 BCE.

Key Words:

Key words and phrases found in the book of Joshua include:

- “Inherit” (inheritance)—61 times.
- “Possess” (possession)—24 times.

Key Verses:

Key verses include: 11:23; 21:43–45; 24:15

Purposes:

The purposes of the book of Joshua are to: 1) Show the fulfillment of God’s promises in the giving of the Promised Land to Israel (23:14). 2) Show how Israel failed to fully possess the land.

Message:

The message of the book of Joshua is: 1) That God is faithful to keep His covenant by giving the “land” to the “seed.” 2) Those who believe must labor to enter into all that God gives (Heb. 4).

Outline:

The book of Joshua can be outlined as:

- I. Entering the Land—Chapters 1–5
- II. Conquering the Land—Chapters 6–12
- III. Dividing the Land—Chapters 13–22
- IV. Farewell and Burial in the Land—Chapters 23–24

Themes:

The focal point of the book of Joshua is clearly Canaan—the Promised Land. The book records how Israel entered, conquered and divided the land promised them by divine covenant. It is primarily a book of victory and fulfilled promises. While the Pentateuch covers events *up to* the possession of the land, the book of Joshua records the actual possessing (entering, conquest, division maintenance) of the land.

Summary:

The following is a summary of the first six books of the Bible as they relate to the land.

- Genesis—the *promising* of the land.
- Exodus—the *leaving* for the land.
- Leviticus—the laws of *living* in the land.
- Numbers—the *wandering* outside the land (old generation).
- Deuteronomy—the *preparing* for the land (new generation).
- Joshua—the *possessing* of the land.

Christ Seen:

Christ is seen in the book of Joshua in/as: our Inheritance; our Joshua (Heb. 4:8); The Captain of our Salvation (Heb. 2:10)—wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Josh. 5:13–15, Eph. 6:12–18), leading New Testament believers into their inheritance (Heb. 4; Eph. 1:3, 14); and numerous other types and symbols.

LESSON TWO

Joshua Chapters One through Twenty-Four

Chapter One

The New Leader

Finally after nearly forty years of wandering in the wilderness due to unbelief, Israel was ready to enter the Promised Land. The Lord continually encouraged their new leader Joshua that He would always be with him as he led the nation, as long as he obeyed the Law of God (1–9). In turn Joshua continually encouraged the children of Israel that they were about to inherit the land that God had promised them (10–18).

Chapter Two

Rahab and the Two Spies⁵

Joshua sent two spies into Jericho to view the land. The two spies entered the house of Rahab (1), who hid them from the inhabitants of Jericho (5–6). Rahab reported to the spies that the inhabitants of the land feared the Israelites because they had heard what happened in Egypt and what happened to the Amorites east of the Jordan River (9–11). Rahab negotiated her family’s safety in return for hiding the spies, and helped them escape (12–22). The two spies returned to Joshua and reported everything that happened to them, and told him that the people of the land feared the Israelites (23–24).

Chapter Three

Crossing on Dry Ground

The final preparations were made to enter into the land. Joshua ordered the people to consecrated themselves and be ready to follow the ark across the Jordan (5). Joshua also revealed to the people how they would know that the Lord was with them, and would drive out the inhabitants of the

⁵ The two spies sent into Jericho didn’t do much “spying.” Furthermore, considering that the book of Joshua models the book of Revelation, it may be more appropriate to call them the two “witnesses.”

land—that when the feet of the priests carrying the ark touched the waters of the Jordan, that the waters would “stand up in a heap,” and the whole nation would cross over on dry ground (10–17).

Chapter Four

Twelve Stones

Joshua and one man from each of the twelve tribes erected a memorial made of stones from the river to commemorate the crossing of the Jordan on dry ground (2–3). This was done so that Israel would always remember what had happened there, and reverence the Lord (20–23), but also so the nations of the world would know that the hand of the Lord is powerful (24).

Chapter Five

The Manna Ceases

The Lord commanded Joshua to circumcise all the males of the new generation entering the land, because they had not been circumcised on the way (2–9)—this was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant, and they were now entering the land God had promised to them. The people also celebrated Passover, using some produce from the land for the Passover meal (10–11). The next day the manna ceased, and from that point on they ate of the produce of the land (12). Joshua also encountered the “commander of the army of the Lord” near Jericho, and fell on his face to worship him (13–15).⁶ Surely this was evidence that the Lord was with the children of Israel and he would fight their battles for them.

Chapter Six

Jericho

The Lord revealed a unique battle strategy for conquering Jericho to the people through Joshua. They were to march

⁶ Another Theophany/Christophany.

around the city one time per day for six days in silence. Then on the seventh day, they would march around the city seven times, blow ram's horns, and shout, causing the walls of the city fall down—leaving it indefensible (1–16). The people obeyed and conquered the city. Rahab and her family were spared, and all the spoils of war were consecrated to the Lord (17–27).

Chapter Seven

Defeat at Ai

During the conquest of Jericho however, the Israelites had been commanded not to keep as plunder any items that had been dedicated to false gods. As it turned out, this command had been violated, and Achan had kept just such items (1). Because of this, when the Israelites went to attack the next town, Ai, they were defeated (2–5). The Lord commanded Joshua to examine the tribes one by one and that He would reveal who was guilty. Joshua obeyed, Achan was discovered, and he and his family were stoned to death, and then their bodies and the cursed items were burned (14–25).

Chapter Eight

Victory at Ai

Now the Lord ordered Joshua to attack Ai again, only this time, they could keep the plunder for themselves (1–2). The Lord also revealed the strategy the army was to use. Part of the army would lure the enemy away from the city and the remainder of the army would use the diversion to attack the city. The strategy worked and the city was taken (2–29).

Chapter Nine

Treaty with Gibeon

As a result of the victories at Jericho and Ai, the other tribes of the region came together to fight the Israelites (1–2). The people of Gibeon however, used deception to get the Israelites to make a peace treaty with them (3–15). When the truth was discovered Joshua confronted the men of Gibeon, and although the Israelites spared their lives

because of the treaty, they made the Gibeonites their servants (16–27).

Chapter Ten

A Very Long Day

When the kings of the Amorites heard about the treaty between Gibeon and Israel, five of them became allies and attacked Gibeon (1–5)—and because of the treaty, the Gibeonites appealed to Joshua for help (6). After an all night march, Joshua’s army took the Amorites by surprise and the Amorites fled (9–10). As they fled, the Lord “hurled large hailstones down on them from the sky, and more of them died from the hailstones than were killed by the swords of the Israelites” (11). Furthermore, to give the army more time to defeat the enemy, Joshua told the sun and the moon to “stand still,” and they delayed going down for almost a full day (12–13). After this, Joshua and his army caught and killed the five kings and attacked and destroyed their cities (16–43).

Chapter Eleven

Conquest

The Lord continued to give Joshua and his army victory over their enemies. After their campaign in the south [10], the army attacked and conquered all the cities in the northern region, putting everyone to death as they had been commanded before entering the land (1–20). Joshua also destroyed the Anakites (giants) from the hill country near Hebron (21)—the only Anakites that remained alive did not live in Israelite territory, but lived in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod (22). Joshua conquered the entire land and divided the land among the tribes of Israel, and the land had rest from war (23).

Chapters Twelve through Twenty-One

Thirty-One Kings

[12] Joshua and the Israelites defeated and took the territory of thirty-one kings west of the Jordan River. They conquered the whole land, although certain specific areas had yet to be subdued (13:1).

Dividing the Land

[13] The land was divided among the tribes by casting lots (see also chapters 15–19), although the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh received land on the east side of the Jordan as they had requested.

Caleb

[14] Caleb was granted the city of Hebron at his request—where he drove out the three sons of Anak.

Division of the Land

[15–19] The land was divided among the tribes by casting lots.

Cities of Refuge

[20] Cities of refuge were designated throughout the land. The cities of refuge were for anyone who killed another person unintentionally to flee to for refuge from the “avenger of blood”—(the next of kin of the person killed). Such a person had to stay in the city of refuge until they stood trial *and* until the current high priest, serving at that time died. Once the high priest had died however, the person was allowed to go free.

The Levites “Inheritance”

[21] Finally, the Levites were given portions of land in and around the cities of refuge. The Levites did not receive regions of land like the other tribes, because their priestly service to the Lord was their inheritance (18:7).

Chapter Twenty-Two

An Altar of Witness

Because the tribes of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh did as they promised, helping the other tribes secure the land west of the Jordan River, Joshua released them to go home (1–9). When they got close to their land however, they built an altar on the west side of the Jordan River (10–11). The other tribes became offended because they believed that this act would bring the wrath of God against the whole nation, and therefore considered going to war against the tribes east of the Jordan (12, 20). The dispute was settled however, when the leaders of the eastern tribes convinced the delegation from the western tribes that the altar would not be used for sacrifice, but was simply a witness that the Lord was their God (21–34).

Chapters Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four

As For Me and My House

[23] Many years later, when Joshua was old, he addressed all the tribes of Israel twice before he died. In the first address he reminded Israel of everything the Lord had done for them in conquering the land, and therefore, they should keep the Law of God and not worship the gods of the other nations near them, or intermarry with them.

[24] In the second address, Joshua recounted Israel's history starting with Abraham, through their deliverance from Egypt, and entering into the Promised Land. Then he challenged them again, not to turn from the true God and worship either the gods of their forefathers, or the gods of the tribes the Lord drove out of the Promised Land. Joshua's whole life had been a testimony summarized by his words "But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord (24:15).

LESSON THREE

Introduction to Judges

The Book of Failure through Compromise

The Basics

Chapters and Verses:

The book of Judges has 21 chapters, and 618 verses.

Title:

The title “Judges” is somewhat misleading. The English title comes from a translation of the Hebrew word *shephet*, which more accurately means “judgments.” In addition, the “Judges” were actually military leaders whom God raised up to deliver the people from their enemies—better words might be “deliverers” or “saviors.”

Author:

Precisely who wrote the book is unknown, but authorship is often attributed to Samuel. Based on internal evidence however, the author must have been at least somewhat a compiler of previously existing material because the historical record covers approximately 300 years, and it must have been written after the events it describes. It was most likely written during the time that Saul or David was king.

Date:

The book of Judges records a historical period of approximately 300 years from the death of Joshua to the death of Samson.⁷ It was most likely written between 1050 and 970 BCE.

Key Words:

Key words and phrases found in the book of Judges include:

- Judge (judges, judged)—21 times.
- Evil—14 times.

⁷ Unger’s Bible Dictionary (other sources claim 400 years).

The keynote phrase of the whole book is “In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes” (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

Key Verses:

Key verses include: 2:10; 3:1; 21:25

Purposes:

The purposes of the book of Judges are to: 1) Show the spiritual wanderings away from God, of Israel in Canaan. 2) To show how Israel’s compromise led to Israel’s failure.

Message:

The message of the book of Judges is: 1) Because of sin, mankind is always prone to wander from away God. 2) Departing from God leads to servitude and oppression. 3) God manifests His grace by raising up a savior/deliverer (“judge”), to bring man back to Himself.

Outline:

The book of Judges can be outlined as:

- I. Compromise in Conquest (Introduction)—Chapters 1:1–2:5 National Unfaithfulness
- II. Forsaking the Lord (History)—Ch. 26–16:10 National Servitudes
 - A. Relapses
 - B. Results
 - C. Recoveries
- III. Anarchy: The Final Result (Appendix)—Chapters 17–21 National Corruption

Themes and Summary:

The book of Judges is not in strict chronological order—events are grouped according to spiritual significance.

The book of Judges depicts Israel’s settling in the land and the special problems they confronted. It is a book of mixture where we find both victories and defeats, good and evil, revival and apostasy, unity and anarchy. The following cycle is repeated many times in the book.

- Despite His manifest favor upon them, Israel departed from the Lord by doing evil and serving other gods
- As a result the Lord delivered Israel into servitude to their enemies

- The Israelites would then cry out to the Lord in their trouble
- The Lord would then raise up a deliverer/judge to save them
- The people would return to the Lord
- The land would have a period of rest
- Again the people would sin and the cycle would be repeated

Although the book covers at least 300 hundred years of Israel's history, only 111 years were actually spent in servitude to Israel's enemies. Although often considered a book of failure, recording the nations wanderings away from the Lord, the ministries of many of the individual judges are recorded in the "Hall of Faith" in Hebrews 11:32–34.

Christ Seen:

Christ is seen in the book of Judges in/as: The Judge/Savior/Deliverer upon whom "the Spirit of the Lord came" bringing deliverance from sin and servitude.

There were 12 judges recorded in the book of Judges:⁸

1. Othniel (3:7–11)
2. Ehud (3:12–30)
3. Shamgar (3:31)
4. Deborah (4:1–5:31)
5. Gideon (6:11–8:35)
6. Tola (10:1–2)
7. Jair (10:3–5)
8. Jephthah (11:1–12:7)
9. Ibzan (12:8–10)
10. Elon (12:11–12)
11. Abdon (12:13–15)
12. Samson (13:1–16:31)

⁸ Some scholars reckon Barak as a judge (with Deborah). This is problematic however. He is never specifically called a judge and his relationship to Deborah seems to indicate that his authority was strictly limited to military matters and not leading the nation of Israel. Also, Samuel is listed as a judge in 1 Samuel 7:15; and his sons are listed as judges in 1 Samuel 8:1–2.

LESSON FOUR

Judges Chapters One through Eleven

Chapter One

But They Did Not Drive Them Out Completely

After the death of Joshua, the tribes of Israel continued to take possession of the land of Canaan, each according to the area allotted to them.

The tribes met with various levels of success. When they were strong, they succeeded in making the Canaanite tribes serve them, but they were never able to drive them out of the land completely.

The Sons of Anak

Of note however, is the fact that the tribe of Judah was able to conquer the city of Hebron and drive out/kill the sons of Anak, who were *nephilim* (“giants”). The various Canaanite tribes were apparently infested with *nephilim*/giants, who remained an ever-present threat to the tribes of Israel due to the fact that they never fully drove them out of the land.

Chapters Two and Three

To Teach Them War

Because the tribes of Israel failed to obey the voice of the Lord in driving the inhabitants of Canaan from the land, the Lord also refused to drive out the inhabitants of the land from before them.

God’s purpose in allowing Israel’s enemies to remain in the land is revealed (3:1–4), that is—to test and to teach warfare to His people who lacked experience in warfare—to not only be able to conquer the territory that God had promised them, but to be able to defend and hold on to it as well. This historical example in the physical realm reveals parallel lessons in the spirit realm.

Raised Up Judges

[2] Not only did the tribes of Israel fail to drive out the inhabitants of Canaan, but they also did not remain separate from them, but lived among them, inter-married with them, and came to serve their false gods. When the Israelites cried out to the Lord, He raised up a series of deliverers for them in the form of judges to govern the people and lead them in war. When the Lord was with the judge, the nation would prosper—but when the judge would die, the people would quickly return to serving false gods.

Othniel, Ehud & Shamgar

[3] The first judge was Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother (3:9), who defeated the king of Aram (Mesopotamia). Under his leadership the Israelites had peace for 40 years, but when Othniel died and the people fell back into their pattern of serving false gods. The second judge was Ehud (3:15), who slew Eglon, the king of Moab and subdued the Moabites. The third judge was Shamgar (3:31), who won a victory over the Philistines.

Chapter Four

Deborah

The fourth judge was Deborah, who was also a prophetess (4). Israel was oppressed by the Canaanites at this time and Deborah summoned Barak to lead an army against the Canaanite army commanded by Sisera (2–6). Barak consented on the condition that Deborah would go with him, to which she agreed, assuring him however that the prize of victory would not be his, but would be given to a woman (8–9). Based on divinely revealed strategy, at Deborah's signal, the army charged the enemy and routed the army of the Canaanites (7, 14–16). Sisera fled and sought refuge with Heber, a friend of his king (17). Heber's wife Jael agreed to hide Sisera in their tent (18). Assuming that he was safe, Sisera fell asleep and was killed by Jael, who drove a tent peg through his temple (20–21). Victory over Sisera soon led to complete victory over Jabin, king of the Canaanites (23–24).

Chapter Five

The Song of Deborah

Deborah and Barak sang a prophetic song recounting the victory over Sisera. The ode is considered one of the earliest and best examples of early Hebrew poetry.

Chapter Six

Gideon

Once again Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and was oppressed by a foreign enemy—this time the Midianites and their allies (1–3). The angel of the Lord called Gideon (the fifth judge) to save Israel from her enemies. Doubtful of how he would accomplish this, Gideon requested a sign that was answered by the angel (17–21). As a result Gideon built an altar at that location and named it Jehovah-Shalom (the Lord our Peace) (24). As the enemy once again began to occupy their territory, Gideon summoned an army (33–35). Before the battle however, he sought another sign from the Lord confirming Israel’s victory by his hand—that a fleece put out overnight would be wet with dew, but that the ground would remain dry (37). After God answered this sign, Gideon requested yet another sign, this time reversing the conditions and asking that the fleece be dry and the ground wet (39–40).

Chapter Seven

The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon

As the Israelite forces led by Gideon prepared for battle, the Lord intervened and reduced their numbers from 32,000 to 300 so that the Israelites would not boast that it was their own strength that saved them from the Midianites (1–8). During the night, God instructed Gideon to go down to the camp of the Midianites and spy on them and listen to what they were saying about the impending battle, also telling him that he would be encouraged by what he heard. When Gideon did so, he overheard a man relate an unusual dream to a friend who interpreted the dream to mean victory for Gideon (9–15). Aided by divine strategy, Gideon divided his forces to surround the Midianite army. The unusual tactics appear to have convinced the Midianites that they

were surrounded by a superior force, and as a result they either fled or turned on one another (16–22). The Israelites then chased the remnants of the Midianite army across the Jordan River—capturing and killing two of their leaders.

Chapter Eight

Gideon Judges Israel

Gideon and his 300 men continued to pursue the remnant of the Midianite army and their two kings beyond the Jordan River, but he received no aid from the local inhabitants (4–8). After routing the army and capturing the two Midianite kings, Gideon punished the local inhabitants for not helping him, and then killed the Midianite kings himself (7, 9–21). Because of the victory over the Midianites, the Israelites asked Gideon to rule over them but he refused (22–23)—although as long as Gideon remained alive, the land enjoyed peace. No sooner had Gideon died however, than the Israelites once again turned away from the Lord and worshipped false gods.

Chapter Nine

Abimelech

After Gideon's death, his son Abimelech aspired to be king. At first he won support from his mother's family (1–4), and then murdered his seventy brothers and half-brothers (except the youngest, Jotham, who escaped by hiding) in order to secure his position (5). When the men of Shechem made Abimelech king, Jotham declared a judgment over them in the form of a parable (7–21). This judgment came to pass relatively soon. After Abimelech succeeded in ruling over Israel for three years (22), God sent an evil spirit between the men of Shechem and Abimelech so that He might avenge the deaths of Gideon's seventy sons on Abimelech and the men of Shechem for conspiring in his crime (23–24). During the contention that arose between the men of Shechem and Abimelech, Abimelech was mortally wounded when a woman dropped a millstone on his head (53). Thus God repaid the wickedness done by Abimelech and the man of Shechem (56–57).

Chapter Ten

Tola and Jair

The sixth judge was Tola (10:1–2). The seventh judge was Jair (10:3–5). And once again when the judge died, the Israelites forsook the Lord and served false gods.

Chapter Eleven

Jephthah

The eighth judge was Jephthah, the son of Gilead and a prostitute (1). Forced to flee his father's house, Jephthah made a name for himself leading a band of brigands (2–3). This reputation caused Israel to seek him out as their leader when a war with the Ammonites became imminent (4–6). At first Jephthah refused because of his mistreatment at the hands of his half brothers—but later consented due to the solemn vow of the Israelites to make him their leader if he won (7–11). In the war that followed, Jephthah and Israel were victorious over the Ammonites (12–33). On the eve of the battle however, Jephthah made a vow that whatever came out of the door of his house on his return home he would offer to the Lord as a burnt offering (30–31). This turned out to be his only child, a daughter (34). Whether Jephthah actually sacrificed his daughter by fire has been a matter of great debate. Both his and his daughter's response (35–40) could easily be interpreted that he did indeed sacrifice her. There is a textual argument however that suggests that verse 31 should read "...will surely be the Lord's *or* be a burnt offering..." which when combined with the prohibition against child sacrifice, and the possibility that dedicating her to the Lord meant that she would remain a virgin for life, makes a convincing argument that he did not actually kill her.

LESSON FIVE

Judges Chapters Twelve through Twenty-One

Chapter Twelve

“Shibboleth”

After this Jephthah defeated a group of arrogant Ephraimites by using a clever strategy against them. When asked if they were Ephraimites, they would be instructed to say the word “shibboleth.” If they were Ephraimites, they would be unable to pronounce the word correctly and would say “sibboleth”—their accent betraying them as the enemy.

Ibzan, Elon & Abdon

After Jephthah died, Ibzan, the ninth judge, led Israel (8–10). After Ibzan, Elon, the tenth judge led Israel (11–12). And after Elon, Abdon, the eleventh judge led Israel (13–15).

Chapter Thirteen

Samson

Again the Israelites turned away from the Lord and worshipped false gods, and this time the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines (1). An angel appeared to the wife of Manoah, who was barren, told her that she would conceive, and instructed her to set the child apart to the Lord’s service as a Nazirite (2–4). The angel later returned and instructed Manoah and his wife how to raise their son as a Nazirite (8–14). Manoah and his wife prepared a sacrifice for the Lord, and when the flames were consuming the sacrifice the angel ascended in the flames (15–21). Manoah’s wife gave birth to Samson (24).

Chapter Fourteen

Samson’s Riddle

As a young man, Samson saw a Philistine girl who pleased him and asked his parents to acquire her for him as his wife (1–2). They were opposed to him marrying a Philistine, but Samson persisted (3). His parents did not realize that this was actually from the Lord, Who was seeking an opportunity to move against the Philistines (4). On a visit to his future bride, Samson killed a lion with his hands, and when he returned to marry her, he found the carcass occupied by a swarm of bees (5–9). At the wedding feast he used this incident to formulate a riddle to entertain and wager with the guests (12–14). Unable to solve it, they urged his wife to secure the answer from him and inform them (15–17). When confronted with the answer, Samson yielded, but seized by the Spirit of the Lord and righteous anger, he went to Ashkelon, killed thirty Philistines, and gave their clothes to those who had solved the riddle (18–19). Samson then returned to his father’s house, and his wife was given to his companion from the wedding (20).

Chapter Fifteen

The Jawbone of a Donkey

Soon after, Samson visited his wife but was refused admission to her by her father, who offered him his younger daughter instead (1–2). Interpreting his father-in-law’s response as the general attitude of the Philistines toward the Israelites, he resolved to avenge his wrong upon the whole nation without them knowing it was him (3). To do this he caught 300 foxes and by tying torches to their tails, set fire to the Philistine grain fields, vineyards, and olive groves (4–5). The Philistines responded by burning Samson’s wife and father-in-law (6). This provoked Samson so much that he “struck them ruthlessly with a great slaughter” (8). When the Philistines came to avenge themselves, the men of Judah, failing to recognize Samson as a deliverer, determined to bind him and give him to the Philistines (10–13). When Samson heard their shout, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he easily broke the cords that bound him, and killed one thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey (14–15). Weary and thirsty, Samson prayed unto the Lord, who caused a stream to flow from a hollow place, and Samson drank and was revived (18–19).

Chapter Sixteen

Delilah

Samson's weakness for pagan women proved to be his undoing. After earlier falling in love with a Philistine woman (14:1–3), he visited a prostitute in the city of Gaza and was almost captured by the Philistines as a result (16:1–3). Samson then became involved with Delilah, a woman from the Valley of Sorek (4). The Philistines bribed her to discover the key to his great strength. Delilah tested and nagged Samson until he revealed to her that the secret was his uncut hair (17). While Samson slept, she arranged for his hair to be cut (19). Because his hair had been cut, Samson's strength left him—yet not only because his hair had been cut, but because the Lord had left him (20). Samson was captured, imprisoned, blinded, and forced to work grinding grain (21). At a celebration in the temple of the Philistine god Dagon, Samson was brought out to entertain the people (25). Praying to the Lord for one last burst of strength to avenge the loss of his sight, Samson pushed the down the central pillars of the temple, causing the roof of the temple to collapse killing himself and about three thousand people (27–29).

Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen

The Danites

[17] A man from the hill country of Ephraim stole 1100 shekels of silver from his mother (1–2). Fearing the curse she uttered however, he confessed and returned the money (3–4). She in turn took 200 shekels and gave them to a metal worker to make idols for her son's shrine (4–5). At first the man installed one of his own sons as the priest, but later appointed a traveling Levite to be priest—giving him a yearly wage (7–13).

[18] As the Danites explored the region in search of an area where they might settle, they took Micah's priest and household gods with them (1–21). When Micah and some men pursued them to attempt to retrieve Micah's possessions, they were challenged by the Danites and returned home because the Danites were too strong for

them (22–26). The Danites then proceeded to the city of Laish where they captured the city (27–28), renamed the city “Dan” (29), and set up idolatrous worship there (30–31).

Chapters Nineteen through Twenty-One

War with Benjamin

A Levite who lived in Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah (19:1). As they traveled they spent the night in Gibeah in the land of Benjamin (19:14). As they celebrated during the evening, certain men from the city intended to sexually violate and kill the traveler (19:22; 20:5). The man sent his concubine out to the vile men who raped and abused her (19:25). When the man rose in the morning to continue his travels, he discovered his concubine outside the door (19:27). He cut her body in twelve pieces and delivered a piece to each of the twelve tribes (19:29). Upon hearing of the disgraceful incident, all the tribes of Israel united against the city of Gibeah, demanding the surrender of the men who committed the crime (20:1–13). The Benjamites however refused to deliver the guilty men to their fellow Israelites and united against them prepared for battle (20:14–20). The battle was engaged and Benjamin inflicted heavy casualties on Israel (20:21–25). Finally the Israelites determined to set an ambush for Benjamin and defeated them (20:29–48). Yet to prevent the tribe from utterly perishing, it was arranged to provide wives for the Benjamite survivors despite the fact that the Israelites had made a solemn vow not to permit intermarriage with them (21:1–25).

LESSON SIX

Introduction to Ruth

The Book of Grace

The Basics

Chapters and Verses:

The book of Ruth has four chapters and a total of 85 verses.

Title:

The book of Ruth takes its title from the principle character of the book—the Moabite woman named Ruth. The English title is a simple transliteration of the Hebrew. It is the eighth book of the Bible.

Author:

The author of the book of Ruth is unknown, but is most frequently attributed to Samuel.

Date:

The book records a period of approximately eleven years “in the days of the judges” (1:1)—contemporary to the book of Judges. It was most likely written between 1030 and 970 BCE. Ruth is a wonderful, elegant, and even romantic little book. It is noted for its literary style even among secular scholars and critics.

Key Words:

Key words and phrases found in the book of Ruth include:

The key word of the book of Ruth is the Hebrew word *goel*, which means “kinsman redeemer”—although it is never translated by both words together. It is translated by the words “kinsmen,” “kinsman,” “kinsman’s,” and “redeem,” a total of 21 times. Other key words include “grace/favor” (used three times), and “rest” (used three times).

Key Verses:

Key verses include: 3:13, 4:4–6

Purposes:

The purposes of the book of Ruth are to: 1) Extract a positive picture from the period of the judges. 2) Establish the lineage of David. 3) Illustrate (typify) the doctrine of

the Kinsman-Redeemer. 4) Typify the calling of the Gentiles.

Message:

The message of the book of Ruth is: 1) The kinsman-redeemer redeems by grace into rest, restoring the lost inheritance. 2) Pure love overcomes all difficulties.

Outline:

The book of Ruth can be outlined as:

- I. Rest Forsaken—Chapter 1:1–1:5
- II. Rest Desired—Chapter 1:6–1:22
- III. Rest Sought—Chapters 2–3
- IV. Rest Secured—Chapter 4

Themes and Summary:

Two books of the Bible bear the names of women—Ruth and Esther. Ruth was a Gentile who married a Hebrew, while Esther was a Hebrew who married a Gentile. The book of Ruth is the only book of the Bible wholly devoted to the story of a woman. In Chapter One the background is laid. Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons left Bethlehem-Judah because of famine and went to the land of Moab. The two sons married two Moabite women—Orpah and Ruth. After ten years Elimelech and his two sons had died and Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem. Orpah remained behind but Ruth was determined to go with her. In Chapter Two we are introduced to Boaz, the son of Rahab of Jericho (Matt. 1:5). He took notice of Ruth gleaning in his fields and treated her kindly. In Chapters Three and Four we see Boaz fulfilling the role of the kinsman-redeemer, by buying Elimelech and his son's inheritance and marrying Ruth. The book closes with a genealogy noting the presence of Boaz and Ruth in the ancestry of David. This shows that God used Gentile blood to form the chosen family within the chosen nation, which would bring forth the Messiah for all nations. Ruth also provides some beautiful and powerful typology with Naomi representing Israel, Ruth representing the Church, and Boaz representing Jesus—The Kinsman Redeemer.

Christ Seen:

Christ is seen in the book of Ruth in/as: Our Kinsman-Redeemer, a Mighty Man (2:1) and, the Lord of the Harvest (2:4–17).

Additional Insights:

Despite its brevity, the book of Ruth contains an enormous amount of information in a condensed form that when “unpacked” yields a profound insight into key biblical themes such as:

- The Law of Gleaning (Lev. 19:9–10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19–22)
- The Levirate Marriage (Deut. 25:5–10)
- The Daughters of Zelophehad (Lev. 25:25–28, 47–50; etc.)
- The *Goel*, The Kinsman Redeemer
- The Law of Redemption
- The Bastard Curse (Deut. 23:2)
- The Hem of a Garment (Exod. 28:33–34; 39:25–26; Isa. 6:1; Matt. 9:20; 14:36; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:33–34)
- Purchasing a Bride (Gen. 2:21–24; John 3:29; Eph. 5:25–32; Rev. 19:7, etc.)
- The Wheat Harvest/Feast of Weeks/Pentecost
- Barley Harvest/Feast of Passover
- Threshing Floors and Winnowing

But possibly the most striking component of the book of Ruth is the profound and powerful typology.

- Naomi represents the nation of Israel
- Ruth represents the Gentile bride, the Church
- Boaz represents Christ, the *goel*, the Kinsman Redeemer
- The Unnamed Servant represents the Holy Spirit
- The Nearer Kinsman represents the Law

LESSON SEVEN

Ruth Chapters One through Four

Chapter One

Famine in Bethlehem

In the days of the Judges of Israel a man from Bethlehem named Elimelech migrated to Moab with his wife Naomi and his two sons Mahlon and Chilion because of a famine.

Death of Elimelech and Sons

Elimelech died and the two sons took Moabite wives, Orpah and Ruth. In time the two sons also died, leaving Naomi and her two daughters-in-law.

Naomi's Return to Bethlehem

Naomi heard that prosperity was returning to Bethlehem and desired to return herself. Her two daughters-in-law proceeded as if to go with her. Naomi however, entreated them to stay in their own country with their own people and with their own gods.

Ruth Goes With Naomi, Orpah Remains

Orpah decided to stay but Ruth besought Naomi that she might stay with her. Her words to Naomi are some of the most profound and eloquent ever spoken.

(16) And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: (17) Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. [Ruth 1:16–17 KJV]

So Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem at the time of the barley harvest.

Chapter Two

The Law of Gleaning

Ruth gleaned grain behind the reapers in the fields and was noticed by Boaz, the owner of the field, the Lord of the harvest, and a relative (“near kinsman”) of Naomi.

Ruth’s Special Privileges

An unnamed servant introduced Boaz to Ruth. Boaz gave Ruth special protection and privileges, including giving her bread and wine—because Ruth had honored Naomi since their husbands’ deaths.

Naomi Teaches Ruth How to Approach Boaz

Ruth returned to Naomi with the grain she has gleaned and told her about Boaz, who Naomi recognized as a relative. Naomi then taught Ruth the best ways to associate with Boaz and his servants and handmaids.

Chapter Three

The Kinsman Redeemer

Naomi taught Ruth about how to prepare herself and approach Boaz according to a specific Jewish custom that entreated Boaz to perform the role of a “kinsman redeemer”—a close relative capable of redeeming (“buying back”) Naomi and her land.

The Nearer Kinsman

Boaz was deeply honored by the request, but also recognized the profound responsibility that accompanied it. He blessed Ruth once more and sent her back to Naomi. He informed her however, that there was a potential loophole—there was a relative closer to Naomi than he who must be given the option to redeem Naomi before he can agree to do so.

When Ruth returned to Naomi and reported all that Boaz had said and done, she recognized (according to the Jewish custom) that Boaz would not rest until he had fulfilled all his obligations.

Chapter Four

Boaz Redeems Naomi

Boaz met with the “nearer kinsman” and informed him of the situation—if he (the nearer kinsman) could perform the role of kinsman redeemer, he must. The nearer kinsman informed Boaz that he was incapable of performing these duties. Now free to redeem Naomi and her land, Boaz redeemed (“purchased”) everything that belonged to Elimelech and his sons, including “purchasing” Ruth to be his wife (bride).

Famous in Bethlehem

The local authorities witnessed and validated the transaction, blessing Boaz and his new bride, and thereby redeeming Naomi and her land.

Ruth became pregnant and bore a son, who they named Obed, who became the father Jesse, the father of David.

LESSON EIGHT

Introduction to 1 Samuel

The Book of Transition

The Basics

Chapters and Verses:

The book of 1 Samuel has 31 chapters and 810 verses.

Title:

The common title of “1 Samuel” is taken from the name of the prophet Samuel, the principle character in the first part of the book and anointer of the other two principle characters, Saul and David. The name Samuel means “asked or heard of God.” It is the ninth book of the Bible.

In the Septuagint version,⁹ the titles of 1 and 2 Samuel are “1 and 2 Kings,” while what we know as 1 and 2 Kings are known as “3 and 4 Kings.”

Common and Septuagint Titles Compared

Common Title	Septuagint Title
1 Samuel	1 Kings
2 Samuel	2 Kings
1 Kings	3 Kings
2 Kings	4 Kings

Author:

The author of the book is unknown although Samuel himself, along with Nathan and Gad are likely writers (1 Sam. 10:25, 1 Chr. 29:29). It is also likely that the author was a prophet who lived during David’s reign who compiled sources left by Samuel, Nathan and Gad. This is due to the fact that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book, the form and flow of which suggest one author, and contains events that transpired after Samuel’s death. The single book was then divided as part of the translation process into Greek (Septuagint).

Date:

The book is historical in purpose and covers approximately 115 years from the close of the era of the Judges and birth

⁹ Greek translation of the Old Testament

of Samuel to the death of Saul and establishment of David's kingdom. It was most likely written between 1060 and 900 BCE.

Key Words:

Key words and phrases found in 1 Samuel include:

- Saul (Saul's)—296 times.
- David (David's)—291 times.
- Samuel—131 times.
- Kings (king's)—88 times.
- Priest (priest's)—33 times.
- Prophet (prophets, prophesy)—24 times.
- Anoint (anointed)—19 times.
- Pray (prayed, praying)—9 times.
- Rejected—8 times.

Key Verses:

Key verses include: 12:23

Purposes:

The purposes of the book are to: 1) Establish the united kingdom of Israel. 2) Establish the scepter of Judah upon David, thus preserving a Godly line unto Messiah. 3) Give us examples of good and evil character.

Message:

The message of the book is: 1) Disobedience will bring rejection of the anointed—Eli, the anointed priest, and Saul, the anointed king—were each rejected because of disobedience. 2) A man of God will also be a man of prayer, continually interceding for the needs of the people.

Outline(s):

The book of 1 Samuel can be outlined as:

- I. Samuel: From Theocracy to Monarchy—Chapters 1–7
- II. Saul: From Election to Rejection—Chapters 8–15
- III. David: From Anointing to Humiliation—Chapters 16–31

Themes and Summary:

The book of 1 Samuel is an historical record of three primary characters, Samuel, Saul and David, and is essentially divided into three sectional biographies

corresponding to these characters. Samuel is the most important figure during this period of Israel's history, the transition from anarchy (the era of the judges) to monarchy. Samuel himself was the last of the judges, the first of the prophets, and anointed the first king.

Christ Seen:

Christ is seen in the book in/as: Our Anointed Prophet, Priest, King and Intercessor. He is seen as the only true claimant to the Scepter of Judah, the Throne of David and the Everlasting Kingdom of Israel (Luke 1:31–33).

LESSON NINE

1 Samuel Chapters One through Sixteen

Chapter One

Hannah

Barren yet faithful Hannah prays for a son and dedicates him (although he is yet to even be conceived) to the Lord's service (11). Hannah conceives and bares Samuel (19–20). Hannah fulfills her vow (22–28).

Chapter Two

Samuel Ministers to the Lord

Hannah rejoiced in the Lord and His salvation (1–10). Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas did evil in the sight of the Lord and caused the people to transgress, yet Samuel responded to God's call even while very young, ministered unto the Lord, and grew in stature and favor before the Lord and men (11–26). A man of God prophesied to Eli of the decline of his house, and Hophni and Phinehas' death (27–36).

Chapter Three

Samuel the Prophet

Young Samuel was trained by Eli in the ministry of the Tabernacle at Shiloh (1). The Lord revealed himself to Samuel (2–15). Samuel declared all the Lord showed him to Eli and became established as a prophet of the Lord (16–21).

Chapter Four

The Deaths of Hophni, Phinehas and Eli

Losing in battle against the Philistines, the Israelites decided to take the ark into battle (1–4). Hophni and Phinehas brought the ark to the battle, Israel was defeated, the ark was taken, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed (4–11). News of the defeat was brought to Shiloh. Upon hearing the news, Eli died, and Phinehas' pregnant wife went into labor and bore Ichabod (12–22).

Chapter Five

The Ark in the Temple of Dagon

After capturing the ark, the Philistines took it to the city of Ashdod and put it in the temple of their god Dagon (1–2). The Lord punished the inhabitants of Ashdod and each city where the Philistines moved the ark (3–12). The Philistines decided to send the ark away (11).

Chapter Six

The Ark Returned

The Philistines sent the ark away on a cart pulled by two cows, along with a guilt offering (1–11). The cows pulled the cart to Beth Shemesh proving to the Philistines that it was the Lord who was punishing them (9, 12). The Israelites took the ark to Kiriath Jearim (21).

Chapter Seven

Samuel Judges Israel

The ark remained in Kiriath Jearim for 20 years (2). The Lord rescued and restored Israel from the Philistines (3–14). Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life (15–17).

Chapter Eight

The People's Choice

Samuel's sons proved to be unjust and corrupt judges, and as a result, the elders of Israel demanded that Samuel

appoint a king “like all the other nations” (1–5). The Lord told Samuel to do as the people asked because they had not rejected him (Samuel)—they had rejected God from being their king (7). God directed Samuel to warn Israel what a king would do (9). Samuel warned Israel (10–22).

Chapter Nine

Saul of Benjamin

Saul is introduced and it was revealed to Samuel that he was to be anointed king of Israel (1–16). The people’s desire to have a king “like all the other nations” was clearly a wrong motive for desiring a king. In addition they also used wrong criterion for choosing their king (2). Finally, despite God’s promise that Israel would indeed have a king, the people chose a man from the wrong tribe.¹⁰

As recorded in Genesis 38, Judah committed incest with his daughter-in-law Tamar resulting in pregnancy with the twins—Pharez and Zarah. This was a sexual sin, which although committed prior to the codification of the Law, may nonetheless be a precursory example of what would eventually be recorded by Moses in Deuteronomy 23:2. If the spirit of the law applies, because of Judah’s sin, none of his descendants could receive the prophetic promise (inheritance) given by Jacob in Genesis 49:10 (become king), until at least ten generations had past. It is provocative to note that David is exactly ten generations removed from Judah. (See below.) This may be an unseen reason why Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, was made king.¹¹

Judah

1. Pharez
2. Hezron
3. Ram
4. Amminadab
5. Nahshon
6. Salmon
7. Boaz
8. Obed
9. Jesse
10. David

¹⁰ Cf. Gen. 49:10, 1 Sam. 9:1.

¹¹ Gen. 38; 49:10; Deut. 23:3; Ruth 4:18–22

Chapter Ten

Saul Anointed King

Samuel anointed Saul king over Israel (1). The Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul and he prophesied among the prophets, as declared by Samuel (2–13). Samuel called all the people together and Saul was confirmed as king before the people (17–27).

Chapter Eleven

Saul Reaffirmed as King

Besieged by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, the men of Jabesh Gilead negotiate terms for surrender (1–3). When word of this reached Saul in Gibeah, the Spirit of God came upon him in righteous anger (4–6), and he mustered an army to fight against the Ammonites and rescue Jabesh Gilead (7–9). Saul's army defeated the Ammonites (11), and the Samuel and people reaffirmed Saul's kingship at Gilgal (14–15).

Chapter Twelve

The Consequences of Kinship

Samuel confronted the people for demanding a king by recounting what happened to them when they turned from following the Lord under the rule of the judges (1–13). He then went on to confront them further, declaring what will happen to them if they turn from the Lord now that they have a king (14–15). Samuel also prayed to the Lord to confirm His word to the people with a miraculous sign (16–18). Finally, the people asked Samuel to intercede for them in prayer (19–25).

Chapter Thirteen

Saul's Presumption

Saul set about the task of delivering Israel from their enemies. When his son Jonathan attacked the Philistines,

the Philistines responded to the declaration of war with a great army (3–5). As Saul and his army waited for Samuel to arrive at their camp many of the men began to fear and deserted (6–8). Dismayed by the delay, Saul decided to offer sacrifice without the prophet (9). No sooner was the ceremony over than Samuel arrived and confronted Saul over what he had done (10–11). Saul pleaded his case without success, and Samuel rebuked Saul, informing him that his kingdom would not endure (11–14).

Chapter Fourteen

Saul's Rash Oath

The oppression of Israel by the Philistines continued. King Saul's son Jonathan determined to deliver Israel and attacked the Philistine garrison (1–14). This attack was unknown to anyone except Jonathan and his armor bearer. As Jonathan attacked, God sent a panic throughout the Philistine army and they began to fight each other and flee with the Israelites in hot pursuit (15–23). The men of the army were distressed however, because Saul had rashly made them all swear an oath that no one would eat until sunset (24). Unaware of his father's command, Jonathan ate some honey because he was hungry (27). When Saul inquired of the Lord regarding the final outcome of the battle and the Lord did not answer, Saul determined to discover which member of his had army sinned, and have that person put to death, even if it turned out to be Jonathan (36–42). When it was discovered that Jonathan had indeed violated his father's ordinance (even if unknowingly), Saul was still determined to put Jonathan to death (44), but the men intervened on his behalf, and he was spared (45).

Chapter Fifteen

Saul's Disobedience

The prophet Samuel brought the word of the Lord to Saul commanding him to utterly destroy the Amalekites (1–3). Saul indeed attacked the Amalekites and soundly defeated them, but disobeyed the word of the Lord by sparing the Amalekite king Agag and the best of the livestock (4–9). Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel again revealing

that Saul had disobeyed (10–11). The prophet confronted the king’s disobedience. Saul then attempted to defend and then later rationalize his actions (12–25). As Samuel turned to depart Saul grabbed Samuel’s robe and it tore (27). Samuel then delivered the word of the Lord yet again “The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you” (28). Finally Samuel put Agag to death as originally commanded by the Lord (32–33).

Chapter Sixteen

Saul’s Rejection

Because God had rejected Saul and his descendants, it was necessary for God to declare a new king. God instructed Samuel to go to Bethlehem, where God would specify who Samuel should anoint as the new king (2–3). When Samuel arrived at the home of Jesse and saw his sons, he was convinced that one of them would be the one God chose. Yet as Samuel considered each one in turn, it was revealed to Samuel that none of those present were the one, and he asked Jesse if he had any other sons (6–11). When David arrived, it was revealed to Samuel that he was the one God had chosen and he anointed him (12–13). Since the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul he was tormented by an evil spirit (14). Saul’s servants advised him to find a harp player who would play when the evil spirit was tormenting him and he would experience relief (16). Saul agreed and David was brought to Saul’s court because he was a harp player. Saul liked David very much and he entered Saul’s service as an armor bearer and minstrel (18–23).

LESSON TEN

1 Samuel Chapters Seventeen through Thirty-One

Chapter Seventeen

Goliath

Once again the Philistines gathered their army to fight against Israel. This time their champion, a *nephilim* (giant) named Goliath, defied the army of Israel, challenging any man to fight him in single combat, and that this would determine which army was the victor instead of full-scale battle. No Israelite (including king Saul) would accept the challenge however, because they were terrified of Goliath (1–11). Three of Jesse’s sons served in Saul’s army and Jesse sent David on an errand to bring them food (12–20). When David arrived at the front he witnessed Goliath’s challenge and became righteously indignant. News of David’s attitude reached Saul who then sent for David (31). David told Saul that he would accept Goliath’s challenge and Saul offered to provide David with armor and weapons, but David refused because he was not used to them (32–39). David fought Goliath with his weapon of choice—a slingshot—striking Goliath in the forehead and then cutting his head off with his own sword (40–51). Because their champion was dead, the Philistines fled. The Israelites pursued them and plundered their camp (52–53).

Chapter Eighteen

Jonathan

David and Jonathan became very close friends. They made a covenant and Jonathan showed David great favor (1–4). David was also very successful and was greatly loved by Saul and the people (5). But soon, Saul became jealous of David’s success and popularity. This was because the Lord had left Saul and was with David (6–12). David’s success continued to grow and Saul’s jealousy along with it—but the people loved David (13–16). Saul then attempted to get David killed in battle by offering him one of his daughters as his wife (17–19). When this didn’t work, Saul tried again with another daughter, asking David for a bride price of 100 Philistine foreskins (20–25), secretly hoping that David

would be killed in the process of acquiring them. David however, presented Saul with 200 foreskins (27). Saul gave David his daughter Michal as his wife, but because of David's victory, Saul realized that the Lord was with David and became even more afraid of him (28–29).

Chapter Nineteen

Saul's Jealousy

Saul became more determined than ever to kill David. He even went so far as to enlist the help of his son Jonathan (1) and also expected his daughter, David's wife Michal, to help deliver David into his hands (17). David managed to escape all of Saul's attempts to take his life and finally fled to meet Samuel and tell him all that Saul had tried to do (18). The Lord even intervened supernaturally on David's behalf, causing His Spirit to come upon those seeking David's life, so that they prophesied (20–21)—even including Saul himself (23–24).

Chapter Twenty

David and Jonathan's Secret Meeting

David met once again with Jonathan and expressed his distress that Saul was seeking his life (1). Jonathan was in a difficult place trying to balance his loyalty to his father and his love for his friend, the future king of Israel (2–4). Jonathan promised David that he would discover his father's intentions and the two arranged a secretive meeting and a coded message by which David would know with certainty whether he was safe or if indeed Saul sought his life (5–23). David and Jonathan reconfirmed their covenant and pledged themselves to protect each other's lives (12–17). When Jonathan questioned his father's intentions, Saul became so angry that he tried to kill Jonathan—thus Jonathan knew for certain that David was not safe (27–34). The next day Jonathan used the coded message system he and David had agreed upon (35–40). Once they were alone, Jonathan and David wept together and then parted to only meet once more.

Chapter Twenty-One

The Bread of the Presence

When David fled from Saul he went to Nob where the Tabernacle was (1). The high priest Ahimelech was surprised to see him and David lied to him about why he was there alone (1–2). Under this pretext, David convinced Ahimelech to give him the old bread of the Presence (showbread) from the Table in the Tabernacle, which had just been replaced with fresh bread (3–6). One of the king’s servants, Doeg, an Edomite, saw what happened and told Saul (21:7; 22:9). David also convinced Ahimelech to give him Goliath’s sword (9). Then David went to Achish, king of Gath to hide from Saul, but pretended to be insane because Achish’s servants were suspicious of him (10–15).

Chapter Twenty-Two

The Cave at Adullam

Then David went to a cave near Adullam where his family and many other people who were in distress came to meet him (1–2). From there, David went to Moab and left his parents with the king of Moab for their safety (3–4). From there David went into the land of Judah (5). When Saul learned of David’s movements, he became angry and sent for Ahimelech and questioned him (6–15). Displeased by the answer, Saul ordered Ahimelech and his family put to death along with the entire town of Nob (16–19). Ahimelech’s son Abiathar escaped however, fled to David, and reported all that happened (20–22).

Chapter Twenty-Three

Final Meeting with Jonathan

David continued to flee from Saul by moving from place to place. Saul continued to pursue David but could never catch him (1–29). David met with Jonathan for the final time (16–18).

Chapter Twenty-Four

The Hem of His Garment

During David's flight from Saul, David had an opportunity to kill Saul but did not and cut off a corner of his robe instead (1–4). But David was conscience stricken by what he had done and allowed Saul to escape (5–7). Nonetheless, David confronted Saul with the fact that his pursuit of him was unjustified since David did not seek to do him any harm, even though he had the opportunity to kill him (8–15). Saul acknowledged his poor treatment of David, further acknowledging that David would indeed become king (16–20), and asked David for his assurance that his family would go unharmed (21).

Chapter Twenty-Five

Samuel's Death

Samuel died and was mourned by all Israel (1). When David and his men moved down to the desert of Maon, the people of the region evidently benefitted from David's protection. Because of this, David sent ten men to a wealthy man named Nabal to solicit a gift (5–9). Nabal replied in an insulting manner and refused to give David anything (10–12). David was enraged by this answer and determined to exact revenge upon Nabal (13). One of Nabal's servants however, had told Nabal's wife Abigail, who wisely and quickly arranged for provisions to be sent to David (14–19), and then went to meet him herself (20–35). When Abigail returned to Nabal, she found him drunk and told him nothing until the next morning (36). When sober and confronted with the news however, Nabal's "heart failed him and he became like a stone" (37). About ten days later "the Lord struck Nabal and he died" (38), and shortly thereafter Abigail became David's wife (39–42).

Chapter Twenty-Six

Saul Delivered into David's Hands (Again)

Once again the Lord delivered Saul into the hands of David. This time, as Saul slept with his army round about him, David and some men crept into the camp and stole

Saul's spear and water jug (5–12). David did not kill Saul and refused to allow his men to do so either (8–10). Once again David confronted Saul, showing him his spear and water jug, proving that he could have taken his life but did not, and that Saul's fear and pursuit of David were unjustified (13–20). Once again Saul acknowledged that David was acting righteously and that he had not, and that Lord would bless David because of his integrity (21–25).

Chapter Twenty-Seven

David in Gath

Still fearing persecution from Saul, David once again went to Achish king of Gath (1–2). When David settled in Gath, Saul stopped searching for him (3–4). David asked Achish to give him and his men a town of their own to live in, so Achish gave him Ziklag (5–6). David lived in Philistine territory for a year and four months and conducted raids against various tribes that were common enemies of both Israel and Philistia (8–12).

Chapter Twenty-Eight

The Witch of Endor

Achish had great confidence in David and proposed to make him the chief of his bodyguard for life (1–2). Once again the Israelite and Philistine armies gathered to fight (4–5), and Saul inquired of the Lord regarding the outcome of the battle (6). When the Lord did not answer, Saul sought the services of a medium to conjure the spirit of Samuel (6–19). Samuel spoke to Saul and informed him that the culmination of his disobedience was finally at hand and that “tomorrow you and your sons will be with me” (19). Horrified and weakened by the experience and lack of food, the woman and Saul's men encouraged him to eat so that his strength would return and he could be on his way (20–25).

Chapter Twenty-Nine

David Dismissed by Achish

As the battle was about to take place, David and his men accompanied Achish and his army (2). Although Achish trusted David, his commanders did not and urged Achish to dismiss David and his men, lest they attack the Philistines during the battle (3–6). Achish did as his commanders suggested and dismissed David from the battle (6–11).

Chapter Thirty

Ziklag

While David and his men were absent, the Amalekites raided the town or Ziklag, burned it, and took the men's wives and children captive (1–3). David and his men were distraught and wept until they had no strength left (4). David inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue the raiding party, and was told that he should and would succeed in the rescue (7–8). Using intelligence gained from an Egyptian slave abandoned by the raiding party, David attacked the raiding party, defeated them and recovered all that was lost (11–20).

Chapter Thirty-One

Death of Saul and Sons

The fateful battle between the Philistines and Israel was engaged and Israel fled before the Philistines and lost many men (1). The Philistines zealously pursued Saul and his sons, and Saul's three sons were killed (2). Saul himself was soon overtaken and critically wounded (3). Fearing that the Philistines would torture and abuse him, Saul appealed to his armor bearer to finish him off (4). Saul's armor bearer complied and then killed himself as well (5). The Philistines exalted in Saul and his son's deaths, and put their armor and bodies on display (8–9). When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard the news, they made a special effort to retrieve the bodies and mourn the loss of their leaders (11–13).

LESSON ELEVEN

Introduction to 2 Samuel

The Book of Kings

The Basics

Chapters and Verses:

The book of 2 Samuel has 24 chapters and 695 verses.

Title, Author and Date:

Due to the fact that 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book, for an explanation of the title, authorship, and date of the writing of 2 Samuel, see the corresponding section in 1 Samuel. Because the book was later divided however, the following key points refer only to the book of 2 Samuel.

Author:

Because 2 Samuel records events after the death of Samuel, the book was likely written by Nathan and/or Gad (1 Chr. 29:29), and/or a later author who compiled resources from them.

Date:

The book is essentially a biography of David, covering approximately 40 years from his enthronement to just before his death. It was most likely written between 970 and 900 BCE.

Key Words:

Key words and phrases found in 2 Samuel include:

- King (king's, kingdom)—290 times.
- David (David's)—286 times.
- "Before the Lord"—10 times
- "Enquired of the Lord"—4 times.

Key Verses:

Key verse: 5:12

Purposes:

The purposes of the book are to: 1) Establish the Davidic Covenant (Seed, Throne and Kingdom)—(2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89). 2) Record the reign of David including both his triumphs and his trials.

Message:

The message of the book is: 1) Patience and dependence upon God are necessary for the fulfillment of His promises—shown in David’s preparation to become king—from David being humbled in 1 Samuel through to his exaltation in due time in 2 Samuel. 2) Obedience will bring blessing to those in covenant relationship with God—shown by the first 20 years of David’s reign. 3) Sometimes pardoned sins still have consequences—shown by the last 20 years of David’s reign.

Outline:

The book of 2 Samuel can be outlined as:

- I. David’s Triumph’s: First 20 Years/Blessing—
Chapters 1–10
 - A. King over Judah (7 years)—Chapters 1–4
 - B. King over all Israel (33 years)—Chapters 5–10
- II. David’s Trials: The Last 20 Years/Judgment—
Chapters 11–24
 - A. David’s Downfall: Pardon yet Consequence—
Chapters 11–21
 - B. Closing—Chapters 22–24

Themes and Summary:

The book of 2 Samuel is essentially a record of David’s reign as king—an anointed political and religious leader. David was “a man after God’s own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14), and thus he established the tabernacle of David and the order of worship set forth in the Psalms (2 Sam. 23:1–2). He obeyed the Covenant and was continually “enquiring before the Lord.” However, this book also records David’s sin and tragic consequences despite repentance and forgiveness.

Christ Seen:

Christ is seen in the book in/as: The “Greater King David” who established a pre-figure of New Testament order of worship.

LESSON TWELVE

2 Samuel Chapters One through Ten

Chapter One

David Laments Saul and Jonathan

David returned to Ziklag from his retaliatory raid against the Amalekites (1). Soon an escapee and survivor from the battle between Israel and the Philistines arrived with news of Saul and Jonathan's deaths (2–4)—claiming that it was in fact he that killed Saul (5–10). David and his men mourned and fasted for Saul and Jonathan (11–12), and David had the man killed (15). David wrote the song recorded in verses 19–27, and instructed that it be taught to the men of Judah (18), as a lament (funeral song) for Saul and Jonathan (17).

Chapter Two

King of Judah

David traveled to Hebron where he was anointed king over the house of Judah (1–4). Saul's senior military officer Abner, however, took Saul's surviving son Ishbosheth to Mahanaim, where he was anointed king over the house of Israel (8–10). A battle was engaged between the forces of David under Joab, and Ishbosheth under Abner at Gibeon, where Abner and his men were defeated (12–17). Abner fled after the battle and was pursued by some of David's men (18–22). But when Abner killed Joab's brother Asahel, and rallied support from the tribe of Benjamin (23–25), Joab halted the pursuit of Abner (28).

Chapter Three

Death of Abner

The war between the house of Saul and the house of David continued—the house of David grew stronger while the house of Saul grew weaker (1). Meanwhile a crisis grew between Abner and Ishbosheth. Ishbosheth accused Abner of cohabiting with one of his father's concubines (7).

Whether Abner had actually done so is unclear, but he took great offense at the accusation and threatened to change loyalties to David (8–10). Ishbosheth did not push the matter further because he feared Abner (11). Then Abner made overtures to David (12), and having obtained the loyalty of Benjamin, went to Hebron to offer his help in David securing kingship of the whole nation (17–21). When Joab learned that Abner had visited David and left, he had him recalled without David’s knowledge, made arrangements to meet him, and killed him (22–27). David publicly reprimanded Joab and sincerely mourned the death of Abner, which convinced the people that he had no part in his death (28–39).

Chapter Four

Death of Ishbosheth

When Ishbosheth heard that Abner was dead, “he lost courage” (1). Among Saul’s men were two who were leaders of raiding parties—Baana and Rechab (2). These two men (undoubtedly utilizing their special skills) sneaked into Ishbosheth’s bedchamber while he was resting and murdered him (6–7), most likely hoping to obtain a reward from David. When they presented Ishbosheth’s head to David however, they were met with even greater indignation than that which met the messenger of Saul’s death (8–11). Accordingly David had the two men executed, and had Ishbosheth’s head buried with Abner in Hebron (12).

Chapter Five

King of All Israel

All of the tribes of Israel gathered together at Hebron and anointed David king over all Israel (1–3). David and his men then proposed to capture the city of Jerusalem, the capital of the Jebusites. Because they were well fortified, the Jebusites did not believe that David would be able to capture their stronghold (6). David nevertheless succeeded in capturing the fortress and the city (7). David built a palace using materials and workers sent to him by Hiram, the king of Tyre (11), and “took more concubines and

wives,” and “more sons and daughters were born to him” (13). Clearly aided by divine strategy, David twice defeated the Philistines who came in full force to fight Israel (17–25).

Chapter Six

David Dances Before the Lord

David attempted to bring the ark of God from the house of Abinadab to Jerusalem. Unfortunately David attempted to move the ark using an ox cart as opposed to the Levites carrying the ark as God had commanded in the Torah (2–3). When the oxen stumbled and the ark began to topple, Uzzah, the man driving the cart, attempted to steady the ark and God struck him dead (6–7). David therefore moved the ark to the house of Obed-Edom where it remained for three months (10–11). When David tried moving the ark again, he did it properly (13), accompanied by sacrifices, praising and shouting (13, 15). David himself led the procession, dancing with all his might before the Lord (14). David placed the ark in a tent that he prepared for it (17). When David’s wife Michal saw him leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart (16).

Chapter Seven

Plans for the Temple

Concerned about the fact that God lacked a proper dwelling while he lived in a fine palace, David inquired of the prophet Nathan what he should do (1–2). Then the word of the Lord came to Nathan who reported to David all that the Lord had showed him (17). The revelation Nathan received included information about the Temple that he (David) would provide for, but that Solomon would build (13). But even more so, the bulk of the revelation contained promises God made to David concerning the establishment of his kingdom, and his descendants and heirs, including the Messiah (5–29). These promises would be confirmed by a divine covenant—the Davidic Covenant. This covenant would become one of the major focal points of God covenantal work with the human race in general and the

nation of Israel in particular, and also has strong ramifications for the Church as well.

Chapter Eight

David's Reign

David became a powerful and successful king and military leader—"the Lord gave David victory wherever he went" (6, 14). David subdued the Philistines, the Moabites, the Arameans, the Ammonites, the Amalekites, and the Edomites—placing garrisons in their lands, taking spoil and receiving tribute. David reigned over all Israel and did what was just and right for all his people (15).

Chapter Nine

David Honors the House of Saul

Because of his friendship and covenant with Jonathan, David sought occasion to honor any of the house of Saul that remained alive and was still living in his kingdom. Finding one of Saul's servants named Ziba, David questioned him about any of Saul's descendants (3). Ziba told David that one of Jonathan's sons, Mephibosheth, remained alive, although he was crippled in both feet (3). David sent for Mephibosheth and had him brought to his court, where he restored to him his family's land, and honored him at his table, treating him like one of his own sons (7, 11). David also ordered Ziba and his household to manage Mephibosheth's land for him—presumably due to his handicap (9–11).

Chapter Ten

Peace with the Syrians

"In the course of time, the king of the Ammonites died, and his son Hanun succeeded him as king" (1). Upon hearing the news, David sent a delegation to Hanun to express his sympathy, but Hanun's nobles convinced him that David had ulterior motives, so they seized David's men and humiliated them (2–4). When the Ammonites realized that

they had greatly offended David, and fearing reprisal, they assembled a strong army, along with Syrian mercenaries, to defend their cities—and David sent “all the host of his mighty men,” under the command of Joab, against them (6–8). Analyzing the situation, Joab divided his forces, and strategically deployed them against the Ammonites and their Syrian allies (9–12). As the battle was engaged, the Syrians fled before Joab and his men (13), and when the Ammonites saw this, they fled from before Abishai and his men (14). When the Syrians sent for reinforcements, David “gathered all Israel together” and fought them and defeated them (15–18). Because of this, the Syrians made peace with Israel and became David’s servants (19).

LESSON THIRTEEN

2 Samuel Chapters Eleven through Seventeen

Chapter Eleven

Uriah and Bathsheba

In the spring of the year, Israel's army went off to war under the command of Joab while David remained in Jerusalem (1). One evening, when David took a walk on the roof of the palace he saw a woman named Bathsheba bathing (2–3). David sent for her and she came to him, he slept with her and she became pregnant (4–5). Bathsheba's husband Uriah was a soldier in David's army, so he sent for him and asked him how the army fared and how the war was going (6–7). David then instructed Uriah to go to his home, presumably so that he would sleep with his wife, and therefore disguise the source of her pregnancy—but Uriah repeatedly refused to go home because of his loyalty to David and David's men (8–13). So David wrote a letter to Joab instructing him to order Uriah to the place in the battle where the fighting was at its worst so that he would be killed (15). Joab obeyed David's orders and Uriah was killed (16–17). Joab sent word to David that Uriah had been killed (18–25). Bathsheba mourned for Uriah (26), and when her mourning was over, David sent for her and she came to the palace, and became his wife and bore him a son—but what David had done displeased the Lord (27).

Chapter Twelve

The Consequences of Sin

The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David. Nathan told David a parable in which a rich man took unfair advantage of a poor man—taking from the poor man what little he had (1–4). When David heard the story (which he assumed was true) he ordered that the rich offender repay the poor victim four times what was taken (5–6). Recognizing that David understood the lesson of the parable, Nathan reproved David, pointing out that he himself was actually the subject of the parable (7–9), and telling David that there would be serious consequences for his sin, including the death of the child born to Bathsheba (10–12). David pleaded with the

Lord, and fasted and wept, but the child died (15–19). After the child died, David quickly returned to his normal behavior since he knew continued grieving would not restore the child (19–23). David then comforted Bathsheba, and he slept with her. She became pregnant again and bore another child—a son named Solomon (24). Meanwhile, Joab continued his attack on the Ammonites and was near complete victory when he sent word for David to join him for the final battle. David came with the entire army and they attacked and subdued the nation of Ammon, taking great plunder and making the Ammonites David’s servants (26–31).

Chapter Thirteen

Amnon Rapes Tamar— Absalom Murders Amnon

“In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David” (1). Amnon was David’s eldest son and half brother to Tamar. Amnon pretended to be sick in order to get Tamar into his bedroom where he overpowered her and raped her (2–14), and then disgraced her further by sending her away (15–19). Absalom consoled his sister and she lived in his house (20), but when David heard of the matter he was furious (21). Yet Absalom never said a word and plotted an opportunity to avenge his sister. Two years later, Absalom arranged an opportunity and his servants killed Amnon (22–28). After the incident, word reached David that all of his sons had been killed and David was extremely upset at the news. But Jonadab counseled David not to be grieved because he knew what Absalom had plotted and that only Amnon was dead, which soon proved to be true (30–36). Meanwhile, Absalom fled into exile because of what he had done (34, 37), and stayed with his grandfather Talmai in Geshur for three years (37–38). Because Absalom was one of David’s favorite sons, David longed to see him despite his crime (39).

Chapter Fourteen

Return from Exile

Because Joab knew that David's heart longed for his son Absalom (1), he endeavored to get Absalom restored to royal favor and to return to Jerusalem. He arranged for "a wise woman of Tekoa" to bring a supposed complaint to the king. The complaint appears to have been fictitious and was delivered more as a parable in order to get the king to see the situation more objectively (2–17). The plan succeeded, but David saw Joab's hand in it, and gave him permission to bring Absalom to Jerusalem (18–23). Absalom returned, but was sequestered in his own house and not allowed to see the king (24). Absalom lived in his own house for two years without seeing his father, and repeated attempts to get Joab to intercede on his behalf were refused until he had his servants set fire to Joab's crops (28–31). This act of desperation worked. Joab saw Absalom and then entreated David to receive his prodigal son (32–33).

Chapter Fifteen

Absalom's Coup d'etat

David's decision to allow Absalom to return turned out to be ill advised because Absalom secretly plotted to take the throne. Taking advantage of his natural appeal and good looks, Absalom deliberately incited dissent by implying that he could rule more justly than his father (2–6). When the plot was ready, Absalom obtained permission to go to Hebron to worship (7–9). Meanwhile, he had sent spies throughout Israel, inviting those favorable to him to meet him at Hebron (10), and enlisted the disloyal Ahithophel as his aide and advisor (12). Realizing the urgency of the situation, David fled Jerusalem with all of his household and his foreign allies (14–23). David was also accompanied by Zadok the priest, and the Levites, carrying the ark of God (24). But the king instructed Zadok and the Levites to return into the city, knowing that if it were God's will, he also would return (25–29). As David and his company left the city, he met Hushai the Arkite on the Mount of Olives (30–32). David suggested that Hushai go to Jerusalem and serve him as a spy and counter balance to Ahithophel's counsel in Absalom's court (33–37).

Chapter Sixteen

David's Flight from Jerusalem

Shortly after meeting Hushai, David met Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth (see Chapter Nine), who had arrived with provisions for David's company (1–2). David asked Ziba about Mephibosheth and was told by him that Mephibosheth was in Jerusalem because he expected to be given his grandfather Saul's kingdom (3). In return for this report, David granted all of Mephibosheth's property to Ziba (4). For the rest of their journey David and his company were harassed by a man from Saul's clan named Shimei (5–13). Meanwhile, Absalom occupied Jerusalem and Hushai offered him his service in his court (15–19). In addition, Ahithophel advised Absalom to publicly take possession of the concubines David left in Jerusalem to further drive a wedge between them and cause more of the people to rally to his cause (21–22).

Chapter Seventeen

Frustrate Good Advice

Ahithophel then advised Absalom to attack David as quickly as possible, while he and his company were still retreating and unprepared for battle (1–4). But Absalom also asked Hushai for his advice (5–6). Hushai advised a different course of action—pointing out that David and his men were experienced fighters, and that if this attack failed Absalom's cause would also fail (7–10). Hushai therefore advised Absalom to gather all his forces for one full-scale attack, led by Absalom himself (11–13). This was the work of the Lord however, using Hushai to “frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom” (14). Absalom heeded Hushai's advice (14), allowing time for Hushai to send a message to David to finish his retreat and assemble an army (15–22). When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed he committed suicide (23). David completed his retreat by crossing the Jordan River and going to Mahanaim, where he was met by allies that brought provisions for him and his company (22–29). Absalom quickly followed, crossing the Jordan River with his full army under the command of Amasa (24–26).

LESSON FOURTEEN

2 Samuel Chapters Eighteen through Twenty-Four

Chapter Eighteen

Death of Absalom

David assembled his army and appointed commanders over them, also ordering that Absalom be captured alive (1–5). The battle was engaged and David’s army defeated Absalom’s army with heavy casualties in the woods of Ephraim (6–8). Attempting to flee the forest on a mule, Absalom’s head got caught in an oak tree (9). Initially, David’s men did not kill him because of David’s order not to, but when Joab heard of it, he and his armor bearers killed Absalom (10–15). Absalom’s army continued to flee, but Joab halted David’s army from pursuing them (16–17). News of Absalom’s death was brought to David who wept bitterly at the loss of his beloved son, wishing that he had died instead of him (19–33).

Chapter Nineteen

Re-uniting the Kingdom

Because the king grieved so bitterly and openly over the death of his son, Joab sternly rebuked him fearing the effect it would have on David, his army, and the kingdom (1–7). The rebuke was effective and David encouraged his men (8). Yet because of recent events, the whole kingdom was confused and disorganized. Many people were still loyal to David, but many had been loyal to Absalom, and many were simply indifferent. Of particular concern was the tribe of Judah, David’s own, who had allied themselves with Absalom at Hebron (15:10). Ever the skillful politician, David appealed to them as his “own flesh and blood” and appointed Amasa as commander of the army in place of Joab (13), and won their hearts (14). The favoritism showed to the tribe of Judah however, caused an outburst of jealousy from the other tribes (40–43), and was not without consequence. David also used the occasion of his return to pardon Shimei, who had harassed David’s flight from Jerusalem (16–23), and to deal kindly with

Mephibosheth, who had apparently been misrepresented by Ziba (24–30; 16:1–4).

Chapter Twenty

Sheba's Rebellion

Also at the time of David's return, there was a man named Sheba who initiated yet another rebellion against David (1). He succeeded in gaining the allegiance of all the tribes except Judah (2). David instructed Amasa to assemble the men of Judah to put down Sheba's rebellion, but Amasa took too long to get them ready (4–5). So David turned to Abishai to lead the pursuit of Sheba instead (6).¹² At one point during the pursuit, Amasa came to meet them, and Joab killed Amasa (8–10). After this, the men of Judah rallied behind Joab as their leader, along with Abishai, and continued the pursuit of Sheba (11–13). Sheba continued to assemble troops from all the tribes and then fortified himself in the city of Abel Beth Maacah (14). When Joab and his men arrived they laid siege to the city (15). A "wise woman of the city," clearly concerned for the welfare of the town, asked to speak with Joab, and asked him what must be done to avoid its destruction (16–20). Joab advised her that if they would hand over the rebel Sheba, he would spare the city (21). The people of the city caught Sheba and beheaded him, throwing his head off the city walls. At this sign, Joab dispersed his men and returned to Jerusalem (22).

Chapter Twenty-One

Five Smooth Stones

At one point during his reign, because a famine had lasted for three years, David inquired of the Lord to determine the

¹² Some translations substitute Joab for Abishai in this verse. Regardless of who was in charge, the men were brothers and both were clearly present for the pursuit of Sheba.

reason for the famine. The Lord told him that it was because Saul had engaged in a massacre of the Gibeonites (1). David therefore summoned the remnant of the Gibeonites and sought to make reparations for their treatment and to make atonement for this national sin (2–4). The Gibeonites asked for seven of Saul’s descendants, who they would publically execute, to which David agreed (6–9). After this, David gathered the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh Gilead, along with the bones of the seven executed men, and buried them in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish (10–14), and after this, God answered prayer on behalf of the land (14). Later still, there was once again war between Israel and the Philistines, and David accompanied the army to fight, but became exhausted (15). Attempting to seize the opportunity, a giant named Ishbibenob, a brother of Goliath, tried to kill David (16), but Abishai intervened and killed the giant (17). Because of this, David’s men insisted that David never go out to battle again, because his death would be too great a loss to the nation (17). Over time, Goliath’s three remaining brother’s were also killed by David’s mighty men (18–22).

The record of David and Goliath, along with Goliath’s brother’s deaths at the hands of David’s mighty men provides a provocative lesson. The names of the five giants each represents a type of attack of the devil against the children of God, while the names of each of the mighty men represents God’s promise that overcomes the attack of the enemy.

Goliath’s Brothers, and the Mighty Men that Killed Them

Giant	Mighty Man	Reference
Goliath	David	1 Samuel 17:50–51
Ishbibenob	Abishai	2 Samuel 21:16–17
Saph/Sippai	Sibbechai	2 Sam. 21:18; 1 Chron. 20:4
Lahmi	Elhanan	2 Sam. 21:19; 1 Chron. 20:5
Man of great stature from Gath	Jonathan	2 Sam. 21:21; 1 Chron.20:6–7

The Five Giants and the Attack of the Enemy They Represent

Name	Meaning	Symbolism
Goliath	Exile	Rejection
Ishbibenob	Dwells in high places	Pride
Saph	Threshold	Hypocrisy/Lying
Lahmi	My bread; my war (possessive)	Selfishness/Greed
Man of great stature from Gath	Winepress	Fear/Anxiety

The Five Mighty Men and the Promise of God They Represent

Name	Meaning	Symbolism
David	Beloved	Acceptance
Abishai	To equalize	Equality
Sibbechai	Yahweh intervenes	God's intervention
Elhanan	Favor or grace	Favor or grace
Jonathan	Yahweh has given	God's gift

Chapter Twenty-Two

David the Psalmist

The song recorded here is virtually identical to Psalm 18. It was most likely written during the early part of David's reign when his triumph over the house of Saul, establishment on the throne of Israel, and victories over the pagan nations was still fresh. The first half of the song extols the Lord's deliverance of David from the persecutions of Saul. The second half proclaims the victories the Lord granted David over his foreign enemies. It is a song of praise and thanksgiving that magnifies God and gives Him the glory for the many salvations, deliverances and victories that He gave to David.

Chapter Twenty-Three

David's Final Psalm

This song appears to be the last of David's divinely inspired writings, and serves as a kind of last will and testament of the great king. Like the preceding chapter, it is also a song of praise and thanksgiving extolling God for the many deliverances and benefits David experienced

throughout his life. In particular it names and lists the exploits of David's mighty men.

Chapter Twenty-Four

David Takes a Census

The parallel record (1 Chronicles 21:1) reads, "Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census." God is frequently described in Scripture as "doing" what He merely permits. Either way David was most likely moved by a natural desire to expand his kingdom and was curious to know whether he had enough men to accomplish the task.

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