

# 2 SAMUEL Bible Reading Schedule

## 2 Weeks

### WEEK 1

#### DAY 1 – 2 Samuel 2 & 3

I would suggest you reread Chapter 1 to get the flow of things but it isn't necessary. Chapter 2 picks up the story with David emerging as the anointed King. You might think everyone thought so poorly of Saul that they would be quick to crown David as their king. But it isn't so. Many were loyal to the house of Saul. Saul gave his life in battle and honoring him would mean remaining true to Saul's family and his leaders. That would include Saul's son, Ishbosheth, and his military commander, Abner. These beginning days for David were not especially smooth, however, but he did have people loyal to him and found favor with the people in Hebron. The Lord directed David to live and rule from Hebron. This was essentially the tribe of Judah. But there was also Abner. He pledged his loyalty to Saul's son. Israel was still under the rule of Saul's house but this would not last because God had already revealed his plan to elevate David, a man after his own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). The rest of chapter 2 describes the conflict between the house of Saul and those loyal to David. Chapter 3:1 is a good summary, "That was the beginning of a long war between those who were loyal to Saul and those loyal to David. As time passed (at least two years) David became stronger and stronger, while Saul's dynasty became weaker and weaker." Reading through Chapter 3 reminds me of how warriors dealt with those they opposed and how intense life was in those days. We begin to appreciate Abner and his change of heart. There's no doubt that he was a very skilled warrior and a gifted leader. But revenge was the name of the game. Now you do know God is never in favor of our retaliation out of revenge. So, Joab's revenge will not sit well in heaven and one day justice will be served. (1 Kings 2:5-6, 29-34) Romans 12:17-21 could not say it any clearer. We are called to be peacemakers and have a heart to forgive. What stands out to you in our reading for today? I plan to read two chapters a day because it is a story unfolding. I think that is how this type of literature in the Bible is meant to be read. We do well to read God's Word as it was intended, as the story of God's activity among mankind.

#### DAY 2 – 2 Samuel 4 & 5

I could add to my comments about revenge again since chapter 4 has two men with an idea they think is smart but contrary to God's will. They murder an innocent man. David displays the justice of God. But my main topic pertains to Jerusalem. Chapter 5 opens the door to how significant Jerusalem will be in fulfilling God's purposes. I am also drawn to Jerusalem because visiting that city on my Holy Land trip was by far the highlight for me. I felt God's presence there and realized the immense history of a place called the City of David. David's ornate casket is housed in Jerusalem still today. It was actually quite a feat that David would take over the city. Many warriors would try to do so and fail. Psalm 48 speaks

beautifully and powerfully of Jerusalem as a fortress. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament call Jerusalem a “holy city.” It is the only city described in that way from God’s Word. Why is it considered holy? First, God chose it! Then he determined that his glory and his name along with his presence would make Jerusalem holy. Just think, Revelation tells us about the New Jerusalem as the heavenly city where we will eventually reside for all eternity. As I already mentioned, Psalm 48 gives expression and inspiration to me even as I can remember walking the streets of Jerusalem in 2015. “We had heard of the city’s glory, but now we have seen it ourselves...” (Psalm 48:8) To me, the significance is found in the presence of the Lord. Psalm 16:11 says, “You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.” When do you sense the presence of God the strongest? How does the culmination of David finally becoming King inspire you?

#### DAY 3 – 2 Samuel 6 & 7

There are three highlights for me in these two chapters: the Ark of God, the dancing & celebration of David, and the promises of God to David that point to the Davidic covenant and the assurance of God’s blessing on the descendants of David. You might not have even noticed the absence of the Ark of the Covenant since 1 Samuel 7, but it had been many years since the Ark was recognized. The Ark’s virtual absence took place during Saul’s forty-year reign. His insensitivity to the ways of God and neglect to seek the Lord reveals why we haven’t heard about the Ark of God for some time. According to 1 Chronicles 10:13-14, Saul died because of his unfaithfulness to the Lord. Thus, the Ark would represent the Lord God returning to his rightful place as the true king over Israel in the new capital of Jerusalem. As the Ark is brought to Jerusalem there is a great celebration, especially by David the King. In the first few verses of chapter 6, we read about David celebrating but when he finally orders the Ark to Jerusalem, the words suggest exultant dancing and extravagant expressions of joy. The music was bold with trumpets and additional shouting. As unorthodox as this may seem, the Hebrews were known for their delightful energy in worshipping our God. Our stiff approach to worship is cultural, not Biblical. The Bible tells us to express worship with celebration, dancing, hands lifted, along with a joyful song on our lips. Finally, the promise of God to bless David and carry out his plans through the line of David takes up most of chapter 7. “Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.” (7:16) “And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David’s ancient home.” (Luke 2:4) You understand that Jesus was from the house and lineage of David. The promises of God to David in chapter 7 are messianic. The promises are met by David with humility, adoration for God, and his personal commitment from the heart of David. Which of these three highlights that I have mentioned blesses you? What else do you notice in these chapters that stirs your heart?

#### DAY 4 – 2 Samuel 8 & 9 & 10

These three chapters are shorter and mostly highlight David, the warrior. But chapter 9 gives me hope. I am sure that David conquering these foreign armies was essential for the survival of God’s people. Please remember that David is heir to the One predicted who we know as the Christ. Nothing could get in the way of God’s plan to redeem this world and its people from sin. No enemy would prevail as we see in chapters 8 & 10. But chapter 9 is such a beautiful expression of compassion and forgiveness that I included the study & discussion of this chapter in my class on “Healthy Relationships.” David was

searching for a way to display kindness and the importance of keeping a promise. We recall from our reading in 1 Samuel that David promised to care for and protect Jonathan's descendants and that is what he is doing in this chapter. You might think of David as simply a warrior but this story helps us see the presence of God in David with his concern for individuals and compassionate heart. As I am reading these responses to David the King, I remember from the story that the allegiance of both Ziba and Mephibosheth would later come into question. Human nature presses us into survival mode so easily. We are by nature selfish and prone to say what we think others want to hear in order for us to have "our cake and eat it too." When Absalom rebels, Ziba and Mephibosheth turn their backs on David. We will read about that next week, but I mention it here because again David will be forgiving and compassionate. I think David realizes how gracious God has been to him and because of it, he is more prone to share that same grace with others. An important principle that I also highlighted in my class on relationships is found in 2 Corinthians 1:3-6. God is compassionate to us and comforts us in troubles so that we can share that same comfort with others who are going through similar troubles. David was a warrior but he was also kind and compassionate. How would you evaluate your kindness and compassion?

#### DAY 5 – 2 Samuel 11 & 12

I am sure this section is one that you are familiar with because David & Bathsheba are as recognizable as David & Goliath. So, yesterday we highlighted David's compassion but today we see his unbridled passion. David must have viewed life with a sense of entitlement. He could have any woman he wanted but taking a married woman was a violation of God's commands. During these days of sinful conniving in David's life, God is not a part of his thinking and he is wandering around the palace instead of joining the others in war as he had always done. But there are no secrets to God. The consequences of David's sin would be significant as God would punish the man after his own heart. The point is that David was not engaged in pursuing the Lord. He was vulnerable and the outcome is devastating in so many ways. I am thankful for a story like this because I can think that I am exempt from doing certain things. But David shows me that anyone can sin greatly if their heart is wandering and their connection to God is weak. Nathan is God's instrument in chapter 12. His wisdom is exceptional and he gives us insight into the ministry of confrontation. Listen to the consequences; they get my attention: "This is what the Lord says: Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you (chapter 15). I will give your wives to another man before your eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view. You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel." (12:11-12) Verse 14, "Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the word of the Lord by doing this, your child will die." These two chapters have much to teach us. Psalm 51 is entitled as a psalm of David, regarding the time Nathan the prophet came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba. This Psalm is recognized as one that speaks to us in such a relevant way when we sin. Please take the time to read through Psalm 51 as well. What do we learn about repenting for our sins in this Psalm? How is God speaking to you today?

## WEEK 2

We are reading the story of David. His sinful choices will spill out with many disappointing consequences. We will finish 2 Samuel this week with 6 days for reading. The story is fascinating in spite of the fact that it often highlights David's disconnect as a father and his vulnerability to sin. The emphasis on reading God's Word is in full view as we take the narrative of David, Absalom, Joab, Abishai, and the mighty men of David. Read, reflect, journal, pray, apply... are all especially enriching aspects of taking in God's story.

### DAY 1 – 2 Samuel 13 & 14

This is the kind of story that you might expect on TV at 10 PM. It always amazes me that the Word of God is so honest with stories that highlight the sinfulness of people. Both chapters are a travesty and regard human life with such a lack of dignity. These words are hard to read. I am not sure how to interpret the sequence of events that motivate Amnon to rape Tamar and then to hate her more than he even loved her. But obviously, he didn't ever love her. His lust took over and he sexually abused Tamar. Sin may appear to be satisfying but, in the end, it is poison. But we see the first indicator of David's weakness as a father. "When King David heard what had happened, he was very angry." (13:21) But he did NOT do anything about it. David's multiple marriages and numerous children would undermine his priority to be a godly father. I have previously pointed out that David resisted revenge. But his example did not direct the steps of his children. Absalom would take revenge. These two chapters are very complicated. David's relationships are confusing, at best. David could not be confronted in conventional ways as Joab enlists a female sage from Tekoa to get David's attention and direct his thinking. So too, Nathan displayed wisdom from God when he confronted David about his sin of adultery and murder in Chapter 12. Why was confronting David so tenuous? I am seeing holes in David's spiritual armor. How might that have happened? Any thoughts? What stands out to you from this story?

### DAY 2 – 2 Samuel 15 & 16

The surprising turn of events in these two chapters portrays the handsome son stealing the father's throne. In my reading, it appears to happen so easily. That doesn't make sense to me. I suppose a lot can happen in 4 years but I would think that David would have noticed the problem and would have stepped in before it was too late. Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba which could reveal why he would abandon David for Absalom. David caused the death of Uriah who was Bathsheba's husband. He might have still been angry and this motivated him to follow Absalom. (15:12) But I shouldn't be surprised because my life on earth tells me that there are always people who hate the President. Biden has less than a 40% approval with many people believing he is the worst. The truth is people often have a critical opinion of those who lead. David seemingly let people down as Absalom convinced them that he would do it differently if he were the King. I have heard that promise ever since I was old enough to understand; human leaders are human. Nonetheless, they are often the object of our frustrations. Do you interpret David's escape as one of strength or weakness? I have wondered about that. I perceive David's genuine concern for the people in Jerusalem as what motivated him as well as the likelihood that this takeover would be short-lived. I also sense David's humility realizing that part of the problem was his to own. This "divorce" would have to be partially his fault. I believe his response indicates just that. This

chapter ends in such a way that I am eager to read the next two chapters tomorrow and pick up where we left off. But until we read further, how does this story stir your heart? Why?

#### DAY 3 – 2 Samuel 17 & 18

Ahithophel is the first person mentioned in our reading today. He is a fascinating character to me. He was especially wise in one way but foolish in another. He knew God had chosen David to be king and decided to side with David's rebellious son. That seems foolish to me. In 15:31, David prayed, "O Lord, let Ahithophel give Absalom foolish advice." And I think David's prayer was answered but not in the direct way he had prayed it. Ahithophel actually gave Absalom sound advice to quickly attack David and his men. But Absalom didn't listen to him so the prayer was answered in that way. It is an interesting side note about prayer. David needed God's help and God was faithful to rescue him. But through this change of events, his respected adviser would take his own life (17:23) which would ultimately grieve the heart of David. And his own son would die at the hands of Joab, a man who David trusted. These outcomes were not a part of David's prayer but they were a part of God's plan. We often suggest that specific prayers are always the best prayers but I don't agree. The best prayers are ones that trust God absolutely. The specifics of David's prayers were not answered in the way he prayed them but because David trusted God, the Lord protected him. Read David's prayer from Psalm 3 which was specifically written as David is fleeing from Absalom. God answered the prayer of this Psalm, right!? Secondly, David's grief over Absalom is very intense. Maybe you would expect that but his grief will dominate the next chapter as well. In my opinion, David wasn't just feeling grief but also guilt. How could his very own son turn against him? Absalom had little to no respect for his father. Either the absence of his father and/or the adultery of his father could be part of the reason for his disrespect. I'm not sure what David thought would happen in this battle but his unrealistic hope did not transpire and Absalom lost his life. It is possible to love God and be a weak father. It happens all the time. But there are consequences to neglecting such an important aspect of life... whether you are a father or a mother. We notice the devastating consequences in David's life. What are your takeaways from today's reading?

#### DAY 4 – 2 Samuel 19 & 20

Joab is the main character in these two chapters. He played a very significant role throughout David's reign as commander of his army. But there is a sense that David didn't appreciate Joab's decisions and independence. He often acted in his own interests. To me, Joab is a bully. That doesn't mean he did everything wrong. God used him as a warrior and as a confidant for David. But his revenge did not sit well in heaven. He had already killed his rival Abner in chapter 3 and he would do it again in this chapter by killing his cousin Amasa (20:8-10). Yesterday, in our reading, he ordered his men to kill Absalom which was against David's desires. I am going to be a bit vulnerable with you in what I am about to write. Joab reminds me of President Trump. He made some good decisions, yet, how he did it doesn't fit for me and doesn't follow the ways of our Lord. I say that because what we do is not the whole story. How we do it is equally important. I think David realized this about the commander of his army and appointed Amasa to take over. "Since you are my own flesh and blood, like Joab, may God strike me and even kill me if I do not appoint you as commander of my army in his place." David could be operating in a political fashion but I also think he thought Joab was an unpredictable commander and wanted to replace him. Of course, the bully Joab stops that from happening. We will read more about Joab next week. His future reveals

that God is not ignoring his self-centered ruthless approach to leadership. Friends, how we do things and why we do them is probably more important to God than what we do. It reminds me of Isaiah's powerful words as he relays to us what God says, "These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote." (Isaiah 29:13) How do you respond to my observations?

#### DAY 5 – 2 Samuel 21 & 22

The idea of "statute of limitations" came to mind as I read the first 14 verses of chapter 21. Saul had ignored the treaty Joshua made with the Gibeonites. But obviously, that happened a long time ago. However, God was still grieved for the breach of trust broken by Saul. The specific event of Saul "murdering the Gibeonites" is not recorded elsewhere. But we are not surprised by this reference because Saul often acted ruthlessly in regards to killing people if they made him angry. What appears to be a secret to us, since it is not mentioned in the record of Saul's life as king, is not a secret to God. The reality that God knows all can be especially encouraging if we read about it in Psalm 139. But if we read about it from the Apostle Paul, he says, "Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart." (1 COR 4:5, NIV) Might this situation have been different if Saul had repented? When I realize that I have sinned in God's eyes, I want to have a sincere heart to repent. I know God is a forgiving God so repenting recognizes that I care about my relationship with him and do not want anything to get in the way. Chapter 22 records David's Psalm of Thanksgiving which also made it into the hymn book of the Hebrews known as Psalms. This is Psalm 18. This is a tribute to God's character and his intervention in David's life. This is also a great example to me of how to pray. David recognizes who God is and then expresses his appreciation for what he has done. But I don't think I read one request in this prayer. Have you ever prayed a prayer without asking God to do anything but only focused your prayer on who God is and what he has done? Why not spend 10 minutes right now doing just that?!

#### DAY 6 – 2 Samuel 23 & 24

As I was reading about the mighty men of David, I couldn't help but think of the sports heroes of our day. It sounded very similar to me because he highlighted their achievements. Did you think the same thing? Every era has its heroes, right? I actually have a list of my personal heroes who have stood by me through thick and thin. I am thinking of some of those men right now. You probably have a list, at least in your mind. But chapter 24 was even more significant to me because David's pride got in the way. I have seen that in my own life also. The story of David's census has an interesting twist to it. This same account is also recorded in 1 Chronicles 21. Verse 1, in that book, reads, "Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel." What we read says that "the Lord caused David" to harm Israel by taking a census. Isn't that interesting? Some might suggest that this is a contradiction in the Bible. But I see it as explaining the bigger picture. The bigger picture is God permitted Satan's action in order to fulfill his own purposes. This phenomenon is not uncommon in Scripture. Matthew 4:1 contains a similar stance with Jesus being led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted by the devil. Job tells us that God allowed Satan to bring on trials and pain. Satan was sure that Job would reject God but that never happened. 2 COR 12:7 tells us that Paul was afflicted by a thorn in the flesh described as a messenger from Satan. The way that Paul wrote about this "thorn" was in the passive tense

indicating that this affliction was given by God. We know Satan works in ways in an attempt to discourage and even destroy God's people. Yet God is over all; he is sovereign. God does not author evil, as we will learn Sunday night at the New Harvest Institute. However, sometimes God makes use of the evil deeds of the devil and sinful people to accomplish his good purposes (Gen 50:20). This is an important truth to understand. How does this reading apply to your life?