

Men's Sunday Night
A Study in the Life of David
A Man After God's Own Heart
Introduction
1 & 2 Samuel

God Raises up a King

Christianity rests on actual events that happen to real people, whose experiences have been written down in a reliable document, the Bible. The books of 1 and 2 Samuel tell about one of the most important developments in the history of faith: the transition of ancient Israel into a kingdom and the installation of God's choice for the nations king, David.

These books show that God works through history. Today there is a tendency to see history as either unimportant, or as a random series of incidents. But these books remind us that God is and has been working out His purposes.

In ancient Israel, He raised up His kin for His people. In light of the years of decline seen in the book of Judges, this development might seem long overdue. But God carries out His plans in His time and in His way. He also works the choices of peoples and nations, allowing principles of cause and effect to weave the tapestry of time. David by no means was a perfect man. But despite his flaws, he kept turning toward the Lord for guidance, help, and forgiveness. He was God's choice to solidly establish a monarchy to last forever.

The Rise and Rule of David

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel were originally one book which gave an account in the transition between the period of the judges and the monarchy. 1 Samuel tells of the rise of David to the throne, and 2 Samuel deals with David's reign.

The demand for a king was based on the chronic moral and spiritual breakdowns that occurred under the Judges. As 1 Samuel opens, we find Israel once again drifting under ineffective leadership. Eventually disaster strikes as the ark is captured by the Philistines. God graciously brought the ark back to His people and raised up Samuel as their judge. But as Samuel grew older, a debate sprung up for and against a monarchy. Samuel sons were not worthy to succeed him, and there seemed to be no other leadership on the horizon. Consequently, the people insisted

on having a king and God finally granted the people's wish with Saul. Yet, Scripture says that this request was a "*great wickedness*" in that it was a denial of the Lord's right to rule over His people. The problem was not that Israel did not need a king, but that the Israelites were not willing to serve the king that they already had, the Lord. How then could they follow a human king who had faults and failures?

Ironically, God was already at work to produce a ruler of His own choosing when the people demanded a king. He allowed Saul to be anointed and reign temporarily, but His own plans called for David. 1 Samuel tells the story of how God brought David to the throne in spite of Saul's efforts to the contrary.

2 Samuel continues with the account of David's reign. At first, he was king over Judah only, which he ruled for seven and a half years. During much of this period, he fought a war with the successors of Saul, until he finally gained control over all Israel.

Personality Profile: David

Author and Setting: The author of 1 and 2 Samuel is unknown. The Judge Samuel, for whom these books are named may have written much of 1 Samuel. However, someone else must have completed the rest after Samuel's death. The events of these books take place in the land of Israel and various adjoining territories. The account begins with the birth of Samuel, the last of Israel's judges, probably around 1050 BC and ends late in David's life, around 970 BC.

Home: Bethlehem during his youth, Gibeah while he served Saul, Ziklag during much of the time while Saul pursued him, Hebron during the first seven years of his reign; Jerusalem during the rest of his reign.

Family: Was a son of Jesse, a descendant of Judah. He had seven brothers and two sisters. Married to numerous wives and concubines, including Saul's daughter, Abigail, and Bathsheba. Father of numerous sons and daughters, including Absalom and Solomon. An ancestor of Jesus.

Occupation: Shepherd, court musician, poet and military commander under Saul king of Israel.

Best Known Today As: The king under who the Israelite monarchy was firmly established. Known as “A man after God’s own heart.” Most significant ancestor of Jesus.

David the Man

The theme of David is summed up in, the only one in all scripture to be called “A man after God’s own heart.” This single individual is mentioned more than any other Old Testament character in the pages of the New Testament. Poet, musician, courageous warrior, and national statesmen, David distinguished himself as one of God’s greatest men. In battle he modeled invincible confidence. In decisions, he judged with wisdom. In loneliness, he wrote with transparency and quiet trust. In friendship he was loyal to the end. Whether a humble shepherd boy or a musician before King Saul, he remained faithful and trustworthy. Even in his position to the highest position in the land, David modeled integrity and humility. What a man of God!

But, as we shall see, he was anything but perfect. Having earned the public’s trust and respect, he forfeits it all in a brief season of sensual pleasure. Then, as the consequences kick in, we discover another side of the man's makeup, lustfulness as a husband, weakness as a father, and partiality as a leader is all there for us to learn, and preserved for all to remember. David was a great man, though far from perfect, nevertheless lived a life with strengths worth modeling. Since our world is desperately in need of models worth following, here is one deserving of our time and attention.