

2 Samuel

Summary

This book is a continuation of 1 Samuel, and in the original Hebrew, it was one book. It was separated as part of the Septuagint when it was translated into Greek and has been that way since. The book can be divided into three parts: the rise of David and good things that happened to him (chapters 1-10), the failures of David and the bad things that happened to him (chapters 11-20), and other pieces of information about David's reign (chapters 21-24).

The book opens with Saul's death and David declaring a period of mourning. David is then anointed as king over the tribe of Judah. David enters a period of war with Saul's son Ish-bosheth, who was king of Israel. David begins to consolidate power, and in chapter 4, Ish-bosheth is killed. All of the tribes of Israel now accept David as king over all of Israel.

David then conquers Jerusalem by leading his men through a water shaft to the city, and he moves his capital there. He then conquers the Philistines and expands the borders of Israel from Egypt to the Euphrates. Giving God full credit for his victories, David brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem while singing, dancing, and leaping in front of it. Michal (his wife), sees his behavior as un-kinglike and despises him from that point on.

Chapter 7 records the most important part of 2 Samuel. David wants to build a house of the Lord (the temple), but the prophet, Nathan, tells David that God does not want him to build the temple. Instead, God promises to build David a dynasty that would endure forever. This is the establishment of the Davidic Covenant, from which a descendant of David would fulfill the role of the king and complete the redemption of his people. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this covenant. He is from the lineage of David, and He is the Son of God, who will reign forever.

In chapter 9, David shows kindness to Saul's handicapped grandson, Mephibosheth, to honor his father, Jonathon (David's friend). Beginning in chapter 11, David's fortunes change for the worse. He commits adultery with Bathsheba, has her husband, Uriah, killed, and then David marries Bathsheba. God confronts David, through the prophet Nathan, about his sin.

David is repentant, and though God forgives him, He still promises punishment for his sin. We see this in the death of their first son. They then go on to have a second son, Solomon.

After this act of sin, David's life continues to contain strife. He has a series of familial problems, including acts of betrayal, war, and murder. Through these struggles, David begins to lose the confidence of his men. This, coupled with leniency toward other enemies, causes his supporters to question his priorities and Joab confronts him to regain their support. David returns to Jerusalem and regains the confidence of his men, but Judah and the northern tribes argue over who has more right to David. After another rebellion against the throne by Sheba, David finally re-establishes his rule over all of Israel. The last chapters of 2 Samuel record David's last words, in which he composes a song praising God as a loving and kind Deliverer. The last chapters of the book also record a three-year famine that occurred during David's reign, the listing of David's mighty men and their exploits, and a record of a census David took that displeased God, for which David was conscience-stricken and then repentant.

Author

Scholars are unsure of who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel, but most scholars believe it was a combination of numerous authors. It is believed that Samuel wrote the first part of the book, although we know Samuel did not write the entire book, as evidenced by his death recorded in chapter 25. Gad and Nathan may have contributed to the writings, as well as others, and they were all gathered together by an unknown author who may have incorporated into his own composition as much as possible in their original, unedited form.

Date

Scholars are unsure of the exact date this book was written. Sections of the book may have been written by Samuel as early as the year 1000 B.C. Some scholars suggest it was compiled around 930 B.C., but others suggest it was around 600 B.C. or later.

Primary Characters

David (2 Samuel 1-24)

Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11-12)

The Prophet Nathan (2 Samuel 7,12)

Absalom (2 Samuel 13-19)

Historical Moments

David Made King Over Judah (2 Samuel 2)

Civil War and Assimilation of His Kingdom (2 Samuel 2-5)

David Anointed King Over All of Judah and Israel (2 Samuel 5)

The Ark Is Brought to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6)

The Establishment of God's Eternal Covenant with David (2 Samuel 7)

David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11)

Solomon Is Born (2 Samuel 12)

The Absalom Conspiracy (2 Samuel 15)

Major Theological Themes

Kingship and Covenant - God promises an eternal covenant and kingdom through the lineage of David, including divine protection of Jerusalem and salvation for all through a Messiah from David's lineage.

Human Depravity - Every human is capable of great evil. We will all make mistakes throughout our lives; even godly people sin. But, like David, if we are repentant, God will forgive our sins.

God Is the Foundation - God is our Rock, our Fortress, our Refuge, our Deliverer, and our Source of Strength through all of our trials. Despite the trials that David went through, God was with him and offered strength and forgiveness.

Lessons Learned from 2 Samuel

Our Actions Matter - God blesses those who love Him and keep His commands, but He punishes those who do not keep His commandments and laws. Throughout the course of 2 Samuel, the leaders and people were blessed for their good decisions and faced consequences for their poor ones. In 2 Samuel, David paid dearly for his sin with Bathsheba.

God Keeps His Promises - God made a covenant with David and the people of Israel. This promise can be seen throughout the rest of the Old Testament and in the fulfillment through Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Even though David's son Solomon had his own struggles, this promise continued through him all the way to Jesus Christ. We can know that God is consistent and that His promises can be trusted.