

# Chronology of David's Life

## Part 1: Aged 0-30

As a civilian, shepherd and warrior.



**Born c.1030 BC.** No details of his birth are given, except that he was born in Bethlehem to a man called Jesse, who had several other children (1 Samuel 16:1-11). Of his youth, we learn that he was a shepherd boy who had musical ability.

**Aged approx. 10-15,** whilst still a shepherd, he was anointed by the prophet Samuel to become the next king of Israel after Saul (1 Samuel 16:13). Ascension to the throne would not come for at least another 20 years.

Nevertheless, the Spirit of God was upon David. In contrast, a "distressing spirit" frequently vexed King Saul, and David was first introduced to the king as a talented musician who would play music in his presence to soothe the distressed monarch (1 Samuel 16:19-23).

**Aged approx. 16-19,** David bravely stepped up and slew the giant Goliath, thereby gaining the attention of King Saul (1 Samuel 17).

David grew close to Saul's son Jonathan during this time (1 Samuel 18:1-4). David maintained his commitment to Jonathan, even after the latter's death. Note his kindness to Jonathan's son many years later, in 2 Samuel 9.

**Aged approx. 20,** King Saul gave him a degree of military responsibility (1 Samuel 18:5). During this period, David began to prove and establish himself as a mighty warrior, though it was Jehovah enabling these victories (1 Samuel 18:28; 25:28). David's reputation developed to such an extent that King Saul grew increasingly jealous of David and attempted a number of times to kill him. It was partly through Saul's jealousy that David married Saul's daughter Michal during this time (1 Samuel 18:6-30).

At first, the attempts on David's life were random and spontaneous, but over time, they were made with greater planning and concentrated effort. By this time, David had become a fugitive, and largely remained so for a period of 8-10 years. Nevertheless, he honoured the fact that Saul was the Lord's anointed king of the day, and at least twice, David spared Saul's life when he had the opportunity to take it (1 Samuel 24 & 26).

David's period of refuge also saw him grow in popularity amongst many Israelites, to the degree that he found himself roaming from one location to another with a growing band of loyal followers and armies (1 Samuel 22:2; 27:2; 30:9; 1 Chronicles 1:21-22).

David is noted as being a composer of many psalms - songs meant to be sung, whilst accompanied by the stringed musical instrument called a psaltery, not unlike a zither or a small hand-held harp. It was during this period of refuge that David composed many, though not all, of his psalms (2 Samuel 22:1; Luke 20:42; Acts 1:16,20; Romans 11:9; Hebrews 4:7; etc.).



Whilst separated geographically from Michal for some time, David married both Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Samuel 25:42,43).

Still a fugitive, he allied himself with one of the Philistine regional rulers, Achish, after which Saul pursued him no more (1 Samuel 27:2-4). However, several Philistine rulers (Achish's allies) from other regions rejected David as they gathered for war and headed northward to face Israel (1 Samuel 29). It was during this battle that both King Saul and his son Jonathan would be killed (1 Samuel 31).

Meanwhile, having been ejected by the Philistine armies, David and his followers headed back southward to Ziklag, a town that had become a sort of home base for him during his final years of refuge from Saul. Upon arrival, he discovered that Amalekites had come up from the south, raided Ziklag and, among things, taken David's two wives captive. (1 Samuel 30:5). David and his armies went and recovered what had been taken captive, and he sent some of the spoils to his allies in Judah (1 Samuel 30:26-31). All this time, he continued to credit Jehovah for his victories. It was whilst in Ziklag that David learnt of Saul and Jonathan's deaths (2 Samuel 1).

## Part 2: Aged 30-70

### As king – first of Judah, then over all of Israel.

**At the age of 30**, David was anointed king of the southern province/tribe of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4), whilst Saul's son Ishbosheth was made king over the rest of Israel (2 Samuel 2:8,9).



Contrary to popular belief, David did not become king over all of Israel immediately after the death of Saul, though 1 Chronicles 10:13-11:3, if read on its own, may give that impression. The account in 1 Chronicles is not in error; it simply draws the reader's attention to the origins of how David became the great figurehead of Judah – an emphasis in the books of Chronicles originally written for the benefit of those Jews (i.e. Judahites) returning from exile 500 or so years later, who needed to understand their ties to Judah of old, King David, and the promises of a glorious kingdom and homeland in God's plans for Judah.

Israel and Judah faced off as enemies for several years (2 Samuel 2:12-3:1). After a time, Ishbosheth was murdered (2 Samuel 4).

**At age 37**, David became king over all Israel (2 Samuel 5:1-5; 1 Chronicles 11:1-5; 12:23-40).

In response to David being made king over all of Israel, Philistine forces gathered for war, but were defeated by David's army. (2 Samuel 5:17-25; 1 Chronicles 14:8-17)

After a varied history of resistance and part-occupation (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21), Jerusalem was finally and entirely captured by David's forces (2 Samuel 5:6-16). It became David's new home, his centre of operation and, effectively, the capital of a united Israel. From the captured city's occupants, David took to himself several wives; he is recorded as having at least 8 wives (2 Samuel 5:13; 1 Chronicles 3:1-9).

In the context of the ragged state of the priesthood and tabernacle worship following the period of the Judges, some unusual circumstances arose during David's reign and several significant events took place:

(1) A failed attempt was made to bring the ark from its temporary housing in Kiriath Jearim to a tent-like structure in Jerusalem, David's new home. (2 Samuel 6:1-11; 1 Chronicles 13)

(2) The tabernacle, where the ark should have been housed, was at Gibeon.



(3) A second attempt was made at bringing the ark to Jerusalem, this time successful (2 Samuel 6:12-19; 1 Chronicles 15 & 16).

(4) For almost all of the duration of King David's reign, there were two "tents of worship" operating simultaneously – one at Gibeon, the other in Jerusalem. Each had their own high priest, but only the tent at Jerusalem had the ark (1 Chronicles 16:37-40).

(5) David sought to build a permanent structure (a temple) to replace the tent-like tabernacle(s) in operation at the time. He was not permitted to construct the temple, but God promised David a "house" (or dynasty) that was to last hundreds of years, and include the glorious Messiah as one of his descendants (2 Samuel 7; 1 Chronicles 17).

(6) David wrongly ordered a census of the whole nation, bringing about a plague upon the people (1 Chronicles 27:23,24). In the course of making atonement for his sinful action, the site for the future temple was chosen and purchased (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21).

(7) Based on God's plans in writing (1 Chronicles 28:19), David made many preparations for the future temple (1 Chronicles 22:1-29:17), to be constructed under King Solomon's leadership. Preparations were still being made in the final year of David's reign (1 Chronicles 26:31). At this time, there were no battles with gentile nations (1 Chronicles 22:18).

(8) David also organised the Levitical divisions for those who would serve at the temple. This was in addition to some general administrative organisation (1 Chronicles 23 to 27). These two aspects are given much attention in Chronicles, as opposed to the books of Kings, perhaps because Chronicles was designed to act as a sort of guide to the newly returned exiles in the process of establishing temple and administrative processes.



Many conquests were made under David's reign (2 Samuel 8 to 10; 21:15-22), with some significant outcomes:

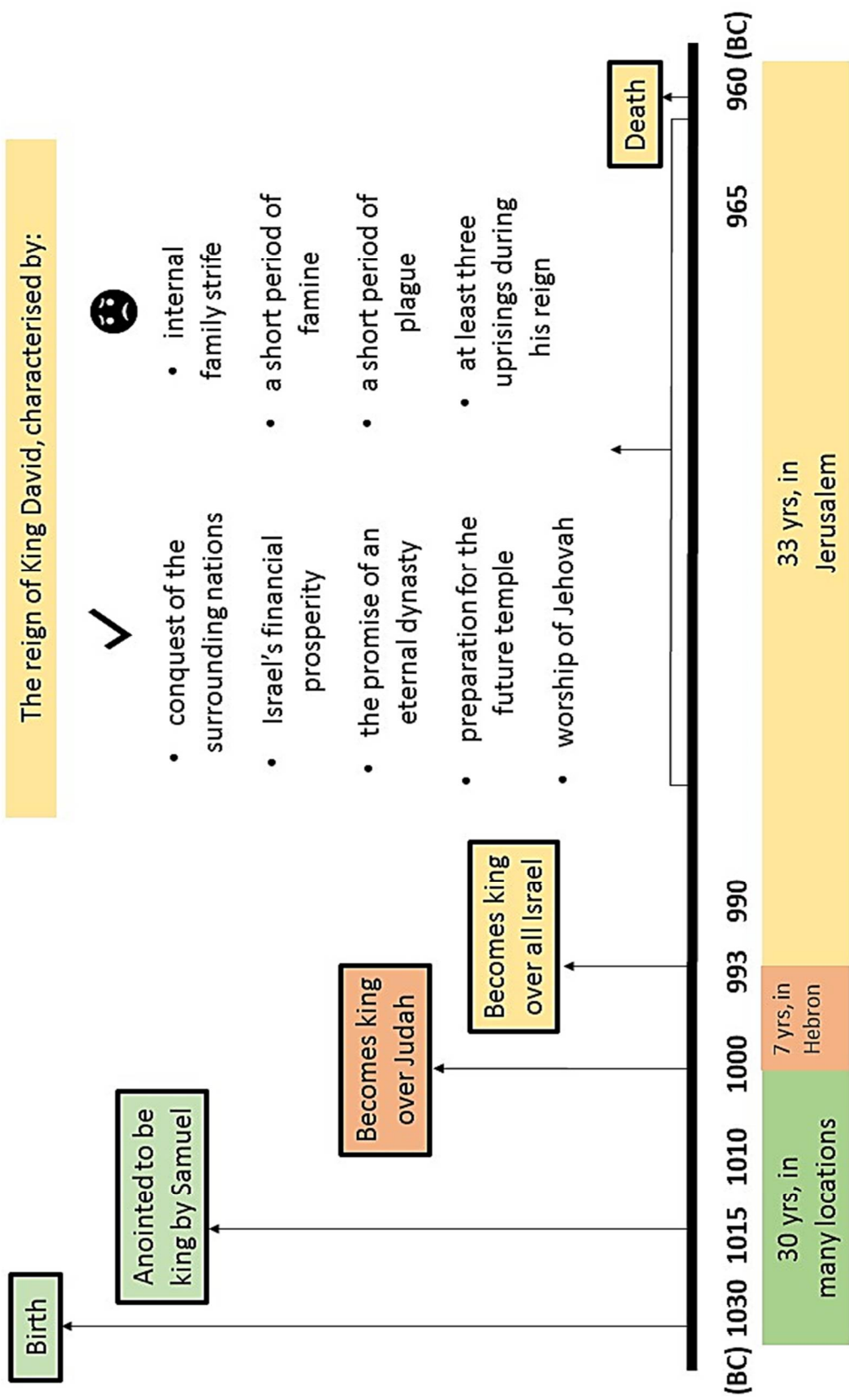
- (a) The "Promised Land" area, promised to Moses and Joshua's generations but never occupied (Joshua 13:1-13), came largely under Israel's control (1 Kings 4:21).
- (b) Israel became a dominant force in the region for about 50 years or so.
- (c) Several of the nations bordering Israel became "vassal" states, paying tribute to Israel (1 Kings 4:21).
- (d) This led to financial prosperity for David's and, in time, Solomon's, kingdom. Cp Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

Ideally, King David's success should have led to a time of social, political and personal stability. David's reign was glorious in many ways, but it was not without problems:

- i. For three years (probably early in David's reign), the land was in famine. David sought and obtained atonement from some Gibeonites wronged earlier by King Saul, after which the famine was lifted (2 Samuel 21:1-14).
- ii. During the time of war against other nations, David sent out his army commander Joab to fight against Ammonites at Rabbah. It was at this time that he committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged to have her husband Uriah killed at the front line of the war (2 Samuel 11 & 12). The first child from this union died as an infant.
- iii. After this, two uprisings took place - one led by David's son Absalom (2 Samuel 13 to 19), and the other led by Sheba, a Benjamite (2 Samuel 20). Both coups would eventually prove to be unsuccessful, but not before causing great instability amongst the nation of Israel.
- iv. The transition of the kingdom from this king to the next did not go smoothly. King David appointed Solomon, one of his sons from Bathsheba, as his successor (1 Kings 1:11-40; 1 Chronicles 22:9,10; 23:1; 28:5). However, one of David's other sons, Adonijah (from Haggith) exalted himself for a time and unsuccessfully tried to take the throne when David was in his final days or months.

**At the age of 70**, David died (1 Kings 2:10,11; 1 Chronicles 29:28), having reigned over Judah for 7 years, and all of Israel for 33 years. Despite the imperfect nature of his kingdom, he was able to leave Solomon a relatively prosperous, stable and peaceful nation to reign over. This was thanks largely to the blessed state achieved by David's hard work (but really provided for by God), and God honouring the promises He had made to David (1 Kings 11:11-13). Solomon ascended to the throne of Israel as intended (1 Kings 2:12; 1 Chronicles 29:28) and ruled Israel for the next forty years.

# David's Life - simplified summary



# David's Life

- in more detail

