

Study No.11 King Saul and the Rise of David



Timeframe of events:
c.1050-1000 B.C.

Summary: This study focusses on the initial days of the kingdom of Israel, as portrayed in 1 Samuel chapters 8 to 31. Three short time periods are covered: (1) King Saul's reign until his rejection, (2) King Saul's gradual decline and David's rise in popularity and power, and (3) King Saul's eventual downfall and death. Also included in the readings are the first ten chapters of 1 Chronicles. These include the death of Saul, but are mostly comprised of genealogical lists and served as a directory of names, for the benefit of Jewish exiles returning from Babylon about 500 years later, thereby linking their situation to their past.

Main Reading / Listening



Read and/or listen to the following passages at least once. Twice is better for taking it all in!

As a minimum, please read or listen to:

1 Samuel 8

To read or listen to the entire Bible systematically, this study's passages are:

1 Samuel 8 to 31

1 Chronicles 1 to 10

(Because 1 Chronicles 1-9 contains many lengthy lists of names, it will be much easier to read these passages than listen to them).

Relevant Charts:



The Books of the Kings

Samuel:

1 Samuel: (Samuel)
"1 Kings" **King Saul**
King David

2 Samuel: **King David**
"2 Kings"

Kings:

1 Kings: **King Solomon**
"3 Kings" **Divided kingdom**

2 Kings: **Divided kingdom (continued)**
"4 Kings" **North kingdom exiled**
South kingdom exiled

Chronicles:

1 Chronicles (genealogies)
King Saul's death
King David

2 Chronicles **King Solomon**
Divided kingdom
Exile
Decree to return

Main sections of this study's readings

1 Samuel 8-15 - King Saul's reign until his rejection

Saul's selection, coronation, battles and disobedience

1 Samuel 16-27 - King Saul's gradual decline & David's rise

- ch.16-20 - David's selection, advancement, his acceptance by Saul, and Saul's growing jealousy
- ch.21-27a - David on the run from King Saul
- ch.27b - David's alliance with the Philistines

1 Samuel 28-31 - King Saul's final downfall

- ch.28 - The prelude to Saul's death
- ch.29 - Philistine rejection of David
- ch.30 - David's battle with Amalekites
- ch.31 - The death of Saul at the hands of the Philistines

1 Chronicles 1-9 - Judah's genealogical history

A documentation from Adam up until the Jewish return from exile (c.535 B.C.)

1 Chronicles 10 - The death of King Saul

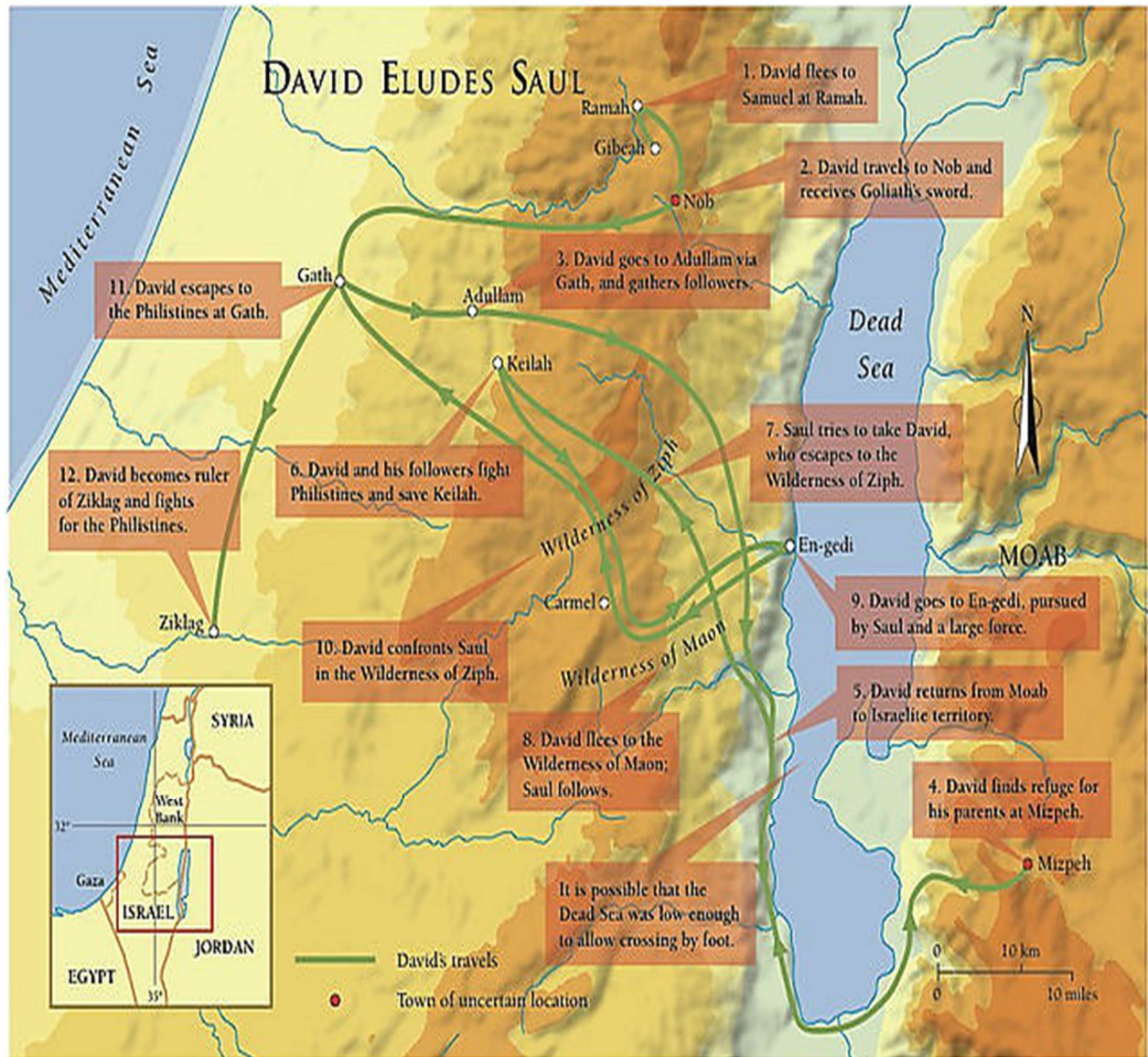
The "Promised Land" (left), and the actual land area under Saul's reign (right):



The Books of the Kings - a comparison

1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings compared with 1 & 2 Chronicles

1 & 2 Samuel and 1 & 2 Kings	1 & 2 Chronicles
<p><u>Purpose:</u> To tell the continuing history of the descendants of Israel during the period of the kings. Probably finally compiled around the time of Judah's exile c.585 BC.</p>	<p><u>Purpose:</u> To provide those Jews (i.e. Israelites from the tribe/nation of Judah), who had returned from exile c.535 BC, with a link to their past. These books "chronicle" their history all the way back to Adam. Emphasis is given to the royal lineage of David (i.e. the kings of Judah).</p>
<p>Originally known as "The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel", as referenced in 2 Chronicles 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32; etc.</p>	<p>Portions may have been known as "The Book of the Kings of Judah", as referenced in 1 Kings 14:29; 15:7; 2 Kings 8:23; 12:19; etc.</p>
<p>Known sometimes as "1, 2, 3, 4 Kings".</p>	<p>Known sometimes as "Chronicles".</p>
<p>The Hebrew Scriptures place these books in the "Prophets" section, along with Joshua and Judges.</p>	<p>The Hebrew Scriptures place these books in the "Histories" portion of the "Writings" section, along with such books as Ezra, Nehemiah and Daniel.</p>
<p>Reads largely as a narrative of historical events.</p>	<p>"Chronicles" many historical events, but reads more like a reference book or directory in many sections.</p>
<p>Picks up the historical narrative starting during the last days of the Judges.</p>	<p>Picks up the historical narrative starting with the death of King Saul, and the institution of Judah's first king - David.</p>
<p>Portrays David and Solomon "warts and all".</p>	<p>Portrays David and Solomon mostly positively.</p>
<p>Narratives of the divided kingdom give equal coverage to the kings of both Israel and Judah.</p>	<p>Narratives of the divided kingdom focus on Judah's kings only. Israel's kings are only mentioned when dealing with Judah. Several of Israel's kings are not mentioned at all.</p>



Enhancing your reading:

Attempt one or more of the following tasks for a better appreciation of the subjects covered by the main readings for this study.



- Jot down any questions arising from this study's readings. Ask someone else for help, or conduct your own research to try and answer these questions.

- Note any passages, verses, themes or lessons that have stood out to you from this study's readings. Write down or verbalise your reasons.

- Read or listen to these other Bible passages that relate to the content of this week's readings:

A number of Psalms are generally thought to have emerged from David's time of being persecuted by King Saul (cp. 1 Samuel ch.21-27). Some of these include:

Psalm 52; 54; 56; 57; 59.

Note the inscriptions at the head of these Psalms, added later, but generally accepted to be relevant to the period of persecution.

**Consider and discuss
the following questions:**



King Saul's reign until his rejection (1 Samuel 8 to 15)

- (1) How would Samuel's sons have been in a position to take bribes and pervert justice? (8:1-3)
- (2) Why did the tribal elders approach Samuel about instituting a king? Why did they feel the need to consult Samuel? (8:4-6)
- (3) What does the LORD's response tell us about the governmental system in Israel at that time? (8:6,7) i.e. what was happening at the time, and what should have been happening?
- (4) How was the people's request a fulfillment of the prophecy of Deuteronomy 17:14?
- (5) What does it say about Israel at the time that they wanted to be like all the other nations (8:5,20)? Cp Exodus 19:5,6; Deuteronomy 4:5-10

- (6) From which tribe did Saul descend? (9:1,2)
- (7) What striking physical feature did Saul possess? (9:2)
- (8) What was a seer? (9:9)
- (9) Why were people sacrificing in a "high place"? (9:12-14)
- (10) If Samuel was a prophet of God, why was he not sacrificing at the tabernacle? (9:12-14)
- (11) What do you think the group of prophets were prophesying? (10:5)
- (12) What do you think Saul prophesied in 10:6?
- (13) The people asking for a king was a form of rejecting God as their king. (8:7). How does this relate to David being blessed with promises of an eternal kingdom? (2 Samuel 7:12,13)
- (14) Why did God bless Saul with His spirit? (10:19)
- (15) Why was Saul reluctant or even shy about being declared king? (9:21; 10:16,21,22)
- (16) If Saul was now king, why was he in the field? (11:5)
- (17) Why did the Spirit of Jehovah come upon Saul in Gibeah? (11:6)
- (18) Did God's spirit remain with Saul during the early part of his reign? Didn't God's spirit come upon Saul earlier in 10:6?
- (19) Which verse describes Saul being made king - 10:1; 11:15; or some other verse?
- (20) Who were Jerubbaal and Bedan? (12:11)
- (21) Compare 13:1 in the NIV and the KJV/NKJV. What are the significant variances between the different translations of this verse? Why this difference?
- (22) 13:4 tells us that Israel had become an abomination and obnoxious to the Philistines, causing them to attack (v.5). What prompted this renewed animosity?

- (23) How had Saul acted foolishly? (13:13,14) What severe consequence did this have?
- (24) What does 13:20,21 suggest was the recent relationship between the Israelites and the Philistines?
- (25) Based on what we read in ch.14, how would you describe Jonathan's character?
- (26) Should Saul have committed the Israelite warriors to the oath in 14:24? Give reasons for your answer.
- (27) Saul first built an altar in 14:35. Wasn't sacrificing only to be carried out at the sanctuary, or was that law obsolete by now?
- (28) What event does 15:2 refer to? (cp Exodus 17:8-13)
- (29) Which commandments, referred to in 15:11, had Saul not obeyed? How does this compare with v.13?
- (30) What did Samuel mean by the phrase, "to obey is better than sacrifice"? (15:22)
- (31) Saul was rejected by the Lord as king (15:23), yet he remained king for many more years. Explain this seeming anomaly.
- (32) Saul confessed his sin and worshipped the Lord in 15:24-31, but was still rejected as king by the Lord. Could not the Lord have forgiven him?
- (33) What was the significance of the torn garment in 15:27,28?
- (34) 15:35 tells us that "the Lord regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel." If God knows the end from the beginning, why did He pick Saul in the first place? (9:15-17).

King Saul's gradual decline and David's rise (1 Samuel 16 to 31)

*David's selection, advancement, acceptance by King Saul,
and Saul's growing jealousy (ch. 16-20)*

- (35) Should Samuel have mourned for Saul? (16:1)
- (36) What is meant by "fill your horn with oil"? (16:1)

(37) Why might Bethlehem's elders have been frightened of Samuel's arrival there? (16:4)

(38) How would Samuel have "consecrated Jesse and his sons"? (16:5)

(39) Consider the statement from 16:7, "the LORD does not see as man sees; a for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." (a) What did it mean in that context? (b) What might it mean in today's world?

(40) What did David's anointing (16:13) signify?

(41) What were the contrasting actions of the Spirit of the LORD in 16:13,14?

(42) In 16:14, we read that the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, but in 19:23, we read that the Spirit was upon him again. (a) Explain this situation. (b) Does God's Spirit come and go from believers today? Cp. Ephesians 1:13,14; 4:30.

(43) What was the "distressing spirit" (NIV reads "evil spirit", with a footnote saying "harmful spirit") in 16:14-16, 23 etc.? Was it a demonic spirit, a condition like anxiety or depression, or something else? Give reasons for your answer.

(44) In 16:18, David is given the description of being not only a skilled player of the harp, but also a brave warrior. On what might the accolade of bravery have been based at this early stage in David's life? (17:33-37)

(45) From what nation was Goliath? (17:4)

(46) In modern measurements, approximately how tall was Goliath? (17:4)

(47) What made him a "champion"? (17:4)

(48) What is the significance of Goliath presenting himself for 40 days? (17:16)

(49) Why has the "David vs. Goliath" story become so famous?

(50) Was it God or David who killed Goliath, or was it both? (17:45-50) Give reasons for your answer.

(51) What was the meaning of the song, "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands."? (18:7,8)

- (52) Over chapters 18-27, Saul pursues David and tries to have him killed. What was Saul's primary reason?
- (53) In 18:10, we read that Saul prophesied. What was this about, and how could this have been so?
- (54) Where did Saul tend to keep his spear? (18:10; 19:9; 20:33; 22:6; 26:7) Why?
- (55) Saul offers his daughter to David as a wife in 18:17-30. If he was trying to kill David, why did Saul make such a personal gesture?
- (56) Explain Saul's contrasting behaviour in 19:6-10.
- (57) What was the "image" (KJV/NKJV) or "idol" (NIV) used by Michal (19:13)?
- (58) To whom was Michal, Saul's daughter, aligned? (19:11-14)
- (59) If the Spirit of God had earlier departed from Saul (16:14) why did the Spirit come upon him again later in 19:23?
- (60) Why did Saul strip off his clothes? (19:23,24) Did he remove all or just some of his clothes?
- (61) Do you think Jonathan was being naive in thinking that Saul might once again show kindness to David? (ch.20) Give reasons for your answer.
- (62) What was the feast at the centre of the events in ch.20? Where in the Bible might we find the laws about it being a multi-day feast?
- (63) 20:26 What caused Saul to think that David may have been unclean?

David on the run from King Saul (ch.21-27)

- (64) 21:1-6 tells the story of David taking the shewbread. (a) Why did he do this? (b) Was it right for David to be given this bread? (c) Why did David lie about his reason for being there? (d) What roles did the words holy, common, clean and unclean play in this story. It may help to review worksheet 6, pages 12 & 13, regarding laws of purity and dedication. (e) What is the New Testament's comment on this incident? (Mark 2:25,26)
- (65) Where was the tabernacle located at this time? (21:1)

(66) How are Psalms 52, 54, 56, 57 and 59 related to Saul's pursuit of David in chapters 21 to 27?

(67) David spared Saul's life at least twice (ch. 24 & 26). Why didn't he just kill Saul when he had the chance? See 24:6,10; 26:9,11,16,23.

(68) Regarding 24:17-22, do you think that Saul was truly repentant of his pursuit of David on this instance and later changed his mind again (26:2), or was Saul trying to deceive David? Cp. 26:2,22 - 27:4. Give reasons for your answer.

(69) The death of Samuel is recorded in 1 Samuel 25:1. With seven more chapters in this book and the entire book of 2 Samuel still ahead, why are these books called 1 & 2 Samuel?

(70) Summarise the events of ch.25 involving David, Nabal and Abigail.

(71) What part did the Lord play in these events? (25:36-39)

(72) How many wives did David have at this time? (25:42-44)

(73) When and why did Saul stop his pursuit of David? (27:4)

(74) Was David truly allying himself with the Philistines? (27:5-28:2; ch.29) Give reasons for your answer.

King Saul's final downfall against the Philistines (ch.28-31)

(75) In chapter 28, Saul visited a medium (or spiritist). What did the Law say about this? cp. Deuteronomy 18:9-14.

(76) In 28:11-20, Saul converses with Samuel, who had died quite some time previously. (a) Did the spirit of Samuel foretell the fate of Saul accurately (cp ch.31)? (b) Was this really the spirit of Samuel? Give reasons for your answer.

(77) Why did the medium prepare a meal for Saul and his servants? (28:23-25)

(78) With which nation was David aligned in the battles of ch.30?

(79) Why were certain men looking to stone David? (30:6)

(80) After Saul's death, why was he buried in Jabesh? (31:11-13)

Documentation of Israel's (and especially Judah's) genealogical history up to, and beyond, David's anointing as king. (1 Chronicles 1 to 10)

(81) 1 & 2 Chronicles from 1 & 2 Kings both provide detailed accounts of the kings of Israel and Judah. How are these accounts different from each other?

(82) What are the books of 1 & 2 Chronicles chronicles of? (1 Kings 14:29; 15:7; etc.)

(83) 1 Chronicles is set out in two distinct sections. What is the primary subject of each section?

(84) What time span is covered by 1 Chronicles 1:1-9:34?

(85) What time span is covered by the rest of this book? (i.e. 9:35-29:30)

(86) 1 Chronicles 1 to 9 is comprised mainly of genealogical lists. When the narrative section begins at chapter 10, it commences with the end of Saul's life, mentioning little of his reign, and nothing at all of how he ascended to the throne. Why do you think this is?

(87) Which later events (e.g. the royal successors to David, the exile and the return from exile) are spoken of in the first 9 chapters before we are given the details of King David's reign?

(88) The early chapters of 1 Chronicles are not strictly in chronological order. Is there any structure to these chapters?

(89) Two and a half chapters of the first nine chapters of 1 Chronicles are dedicated purely to the families of Judah. Why might this be?

(90) The prayer of Jabez is in 4:10. Conduct a Google search for "Prayer of Jabez merchandise". What do you find? Why do you think this particular verse is loved by so many Christians?

(91) The tribe of Judah's genealogies (2:1-4:23) are then followed by the tribe of Simeon's (4:24-42). Simeon was neither the firstborn nor his descendants a dominant tribe; so, of all the 12 tribes, why might Simeon's lineage be listed earlier than others?

(92) What does 9:2 mean by "the first inhabitants"?

(93) What reasons does 10:13,14 give for the death of Saul?