

2 Samuel

RECAP:

Major events (tentpoles) of the Old Testament:

- Creation *unknown*
- Abrahamic Covenant ~2,100 B.C.
- Mosaic Covenant ~1,400 B.C.
- Davidic Covenant ~1,000 B.C.
- Exile ~ 600 B.C.

1 & 2 Samuel were *originally one book* (Hebrew text) and were probably written shortly after the death of King Solomon and the division of the kingdom. In the Septuagint, 1 Samuel – 2 Kings are labeled 1-4 “Kingdoms” or “Reigns”

Major figures in Samuel & Kings:

Saul	Samuel (<i>1st great prophet and last judge—watershed figure</i>)
David	Elijah
Solomon	Elisha

Approximate **chronology**:

1040	Birth of David
1025	David anointed as Saul's successor (1 Sam 16.1-13)
1010	Death of Saul and beginning of David's reign over Judah in Hebron (1 Sam 31 - 2 Sam 1.1; 2.1,4,11)
1003	Beginning of David's reign over Israel and capture of Jerusalem (2 Sam 5)
997-992	David's wars (2 Sam 8.1-14)
991	Birth of Solomon (2 Sam 12.24; 1 Kings 3.7; 11.42)
980	David's census (2 Sam 24.1)
970	End of David's reign (2 Sam 5.4f; 1 Kings 2.10f)

While Saul was a king just like the other nations had, “2 Samuel depicts David as a true (though imperfect) representative of the ideal theocratic king.... Under David’s rule the Lord caused the nation to prosper, to defeat its enemies and, in fulfillment of his promise (see Gen 15.18), to extend its borders from Egypt to the Euphrates (ch. 8).” (NIV)

Chapter 2

“We now begin those ‘political intrigues’ that plagued David throughout all his life. Even though David sought the mind of God, he could not escape the plots and plans of others; and because he was indebted to these men, it was difficult for him to oppose them. David’s march to the throne was a difficult one.” (Missler)

v.1 “Hebron. The city lay ~ 19 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem at the center of the territory of Judah; it was probably the most powerful city of the region.” (McCarter)

v.7 “David’s concluding statement to the men of Jabesh Gilead is a veiled invitation to them to recognize him as their king just as the tribe of Judah had done.” (NIV)

“David first established his kingship at Hebron, the traditional capital of the region and the seat of the powerful Calebite clan, with whom he had ties by marriage. He built diplomatic bridges to northern Gilead by his overture to the people of Jabesh and to the kingdom of Geshur in the present-day Golan Heights by marriage alliance (*cf.* 3.3). He thus set his own kingdom in direct conflict with that of...Saul’s son Ishbaal.” (McCarter)

v.8 “Saul’s army. His small standing army of professionals loyal to him and his family. Mahanaim. A Gileadite town in Transjordan and thus beyond the sphere of Philistine domination—a kind of refugee capital.” (NIV)

v.9 “As a [1st cousin] of Saul, Abner had both a family and a career interest in ensuring dynastic succession for Sauls house.” (NIV)

v.11 Because it appears that David was made king over all Israel shortly after Ish-bosheth’s death and moved his capital to Jerusalem not long afterward, reconciling the lengths of David’s and Ish-bosheth’s reigns is...best resolved by assuming that it took IshBosheth a number of years to be recognized as his father’s successor.” (NIV)

v.17 “The attempt to use representative combat to avoid the decimation of civil war failed.” (NIV)

v.18 Zeruiah was David’s sister (1 Chr 2.16), and it is presumably for this reason that Joab, Abishai, and Asael are identified by their mother’s name rather than their father’s” (McCarter)

Chapter 3

vv.2-5 “The list of six sons born to David in Hebron is given as an evidence of the strengthening of David’s house in contrast to that of Saul (v.1)....

The writer does not offer any direct criticism of [David’s] polygamous practice (see 5.13), which conflicts with Deut 17.17, but he lets the disastrous results in David’s family life speak for themselves (see ch’s 13-19; 1 Kings 1-2).” (NIV)

v.3 “David’s marriage to Maacah undoubtedly had political implications. With Talmai as an ally on Ish-Bosheth’s northern border, David flanked the northern kingdom both south and north” (NIV) “The bitter fruits of this alliance with a heathen prince [David] reaped in the life of the turbulent Absalom.” (Missler)

See 5.13-16 for David’s sons born in Jerusalem

v.7 “Ish-Bosheth suspects that Abner’s act was part of a conspiracy to seize the kingship. Great significance was attached to taking the concubine of a former king (see 12.8; 16.21; 1 Kings 2.22).” (NIV) Rizpah is Saul’s only concubine, and only one wife is mentioned (1 Sam 14.50).

v.13 “The request for the return of Michal was a political move to reinforce the claims of David to the kingship”. (Caird) As well as “proof of [Abner’s] good faith.” (McCarter)

vv.14-16 In Mesopotamian law “if a husband is forced to leave the country and give up his wife, she becomes legally a widow after a certain period of time and may remarry. If, however, the first husband subsequently returns, he may reclaim her and she must return to him.” (McCarter)

v.25 “Joab despised Abner for killing his brother and sought to discredit him in David’s eyes as a mere opportunist. Perhaps he also sensed that his own position of leadership would be threatened if Abner joined forces with David, since Abner was obviously a power among the northern tribes.” (NIV)

v.27 “Joab’s murder of Abner is not to be excused either as an act of war or as justifiable blood revenge. Asahel had been killed by Abner in the course of battle.” (NIV) “Joab’s hands continued to be stained with blood for he not only killed Abner, but also Absalom (2 Sam 18.14) and Amasa (2 Sam 20.10).” (Missler)

v.31 “Because Abner’s murder had the potential of destroying the union of the nation under David’s rule, David did everything possible to demonstrate his innocence to the people.” (NIV) “Abiner’s funeral procession was led by his assassin, Joab, accompanied by Joab’s army” (McCarter)

“It is the chief goal of this part of the story of David’s rise to demonstrate the new king’s innocence of the two assassinations (viz. of Abiner and Ishbaal) that opened the way to his kingship in the north.” (McCarter)

Chapter 4

v.1 “all Israel became alarmed. Civil strife threatened, and the northern tribes were now without a strong leader.” (NIV)

v.4 “The writer emphasizes that with the death of Ish-Bosheth (v.6) there was no other viable claimant to the throne from the house of Saul.” (NIV)

v.11 “an innocent man. In contrast to Saul, Ishbaal is not described as Yahweh’s anointed or even as a king. His kingship is not recognized by David, and thus...the crime is not regicide.” (McCarter)

“It would [have been] be very awkward politically for David to move toward the throne of Israel while a living son of Saul was sitting upon it.” (McCarter)