

II SAMUEL

II Samuel tells the story of God's people under the reign of King David. II Samuel tells very personal stories about King David and his family. You will probably follow most of this book very easily. It is a continuation of the story begun in I Samuel. (I and II Samuel are really one book divided in half.)

Previously, in I Samuel, God raised a prophet named Samuel who brought God's message to the people. When they asked for a king, like all the peoples around them, Samuel told them why a king would create problems for them (such as taxes) and that they were better off with one allegiance and one rule: God. However, the people were insistent. God granted their desire. Under God's direction, Samuel anointed Saul as the first King Saul. When Saul proved disobedient to God, God directed Samuel to Bethlehem to the family of Jesse. The youngest son, David, was anointed king. Throughout the rest of I Samuel, Saul continues to reign. David gets Saul's (and everyone else's) attention when he kills the giant Philistine named Goliath. David becomes Saul's favorite because he can soothe Saul with music. However, Saul becomes jealous as he sees David, who is an exceptionally successful warrior, becoming more and more popular. David escapes Saul's attempts on his life and lives as an outlaw until Saul is killed in battle.

II Samuel begins when David becomes king following Saul's death. As you read, watch how David acts with honor in the midst of political intrigue. King Saul had tried to kill David, yet David mourns King Saul publicly and genuinely. When people bring David news of how they have killed or betrayed his competitors (such as King Saul's son), David has them killed. David treats the remaining members of Saul's family with kindness. Notice how his chief military person – Joab – does the political dirty work, often without David's knowledge and certainly without his approval. David never removes Joab, but his son Solomon does. King David acts from his heart rather than

conventional political expediency, even when his own son leads a revolt.

In temptation, King David also demonstrates that he operates from the heart. His affair with Bathsheba is willful, leading from one sin to another. (A lesson that may be easily overlooked: the temptation came while he was in the wrong place and not acting as a king. "In the spring, when kings go out to battle. . . David remained in Jerusalem." (II Samuel 11:1, 2). Repentance comes also when his heart is touched, and then he turns to God with all his heart. Although his sin might lead to impeachment in contemporary USA, I am grateful that David shows us true repentance. He is a truly helpful example for sinners who love God.

David is remembered as the greatest of all the kings of Israel and Judah (the country splits during his grandson Rehoboam's reign). Why?

1. Expansion of borders fulfilling the land distribution promised when the Israelites entered the Promised Land after leaving Egypt.
2. Unifying the 12 tribes (note the tribal tensions after Saul's death).
3. Establishing the capital Jerusalem on the border of the northern and southern groups of tribes.
4. Establishing Jerusalem as the center of worship. Although David, as a man of war, was not allowed by God to build a house for God, God approved his desire. David brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. This traveling altar box was the untouchable sacred center for worship during the 40 years of wilderness. Two hundred years later, David gives it a permanent home
5. Most importantly, **GOD'S COVENANT THAT A SON OF DAVID WILL ALWAYS BE KING**. Although the time did come when no son of David ruled Israel or Judah, we now live under the rule of the son of David who is greater than David: Jesus, our Lord. Matthew and Luke are careful to show that Mary and Joseph are descended from David.

David is known as a musician and psalm writer. Which Psalms are associated with events in II Samuel?

Psalm 51 when he repents from his affair with Bathsheba; Psalm 3 when his son Absalom tries to take the throne; and Psalm 18 which is also in II Samuel 22. Other Psalms have introductions which identify them with events in I Samuel.