

2 Samuel

**FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
SCRIPTURE STUDY CLASS
REV. JULES GRISHAM
FALL 2026**

Scripture Study Schedule

2 Samuel – Fall 2026

Week	Date	Chapter	Title
1	Sept. 6, 2026	2 Sam. 1:1-2:7	David Mourns Saul, Becomes King of Judah
2	Sept. 13, 2026	2 Sam. 2:8-5:5	Civil War & Consolidation of David's Rule
3	Sept. 20, 2026	2 Sam. 5:6-6:23	Jerusalem Made the Capital of the Kingdom
4	Sept. 27, 2026	2 Sam. 7:1-29	God's Covenant with David
5	Oct. 4, 2026	2 Sam. 8:1-10:19	David's Kingdom at Its Height
6	Oct. 11, 2026	2 Sam. 11:1-27	David's Sin with Bathsheba
7	Oct. 18, 2026	2 Sam. 12:1-31	Confrontation, Repentance, Consequences
8	Oct. 25, 2026	2 Sam. 13:1-39	Sin within David's House: Amnon & Tamar
9	Nov. 1, 2026	2 Sam. 14:1-15:12	The Return of Absalom & Growing Division
10	Nov. 8, 2026	2 Sam. 15:13-17:29	David in Exile During Absalom's Rebellion
11	Nov. 15, 2026	2 Sam. 18:1-19:43	Absalom's Defeat & David's Grief
12	Nov. 22, 2026	2 Sam. 20:1-21:22	Final Rebellions & National Crisis
13	Nov. 29, 2026	2 Sam. 22:1-23:7	David's Song & Final Reflections
14	Dec. 6, 2026	2 Sam. 23:8-24:25	David's Census & the Altar of Mercy

Description:

2 Samuel chronicles the turbulent, forty-year reign of King David, tracing his rise to kingship over a unified Israel and his establishment of Jerusalem as the nation's capital, then presenting us with the awful consequences of his moral failures. But through it all, we see God's faithfulness to his covenant promise concerning the House of David, through which the Promised One, the son and greater-than David, would come.

Recommended Commentary:

Davis, Dale Ralph. *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*. Fearn, Ross-shire, Scotland: Focus on the Bible Commentaries, 2013.

Other Commentaries on 2 Samuel:

Tsumura, David T. *The Second Book of Samuel*. (New International Commentary on the Old Testament.) Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2019.

Baldwin, Joyce G. *1 & 2 Samuel*. (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries.) Lisle, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

**See the Adult Discipleship webpage (4thpres.org/adultdiscipleship)
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and audio recordings (at the bottom of the page)**

WEEK 1 – 2 SAMUEL 1:1-2:7

DAVID MOURNS & BECOMES KING OF JUDAH

SEPTEMBER 6, 2026

1. Read 1:11-12 and 17-27. How does David respond when he hears of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, and what does his response reveal about his character? (See Prov. 24:17-18.) David had repeatedly refused to kill Saul even when he had the opportunity (see 1 Sam. 24:5-7; 26:8-11). What does David's lament for Saul, despite Saul's persecution of him, tell us about forgiveness, loyalty, and honoring those who have wronged us?
2. It is clear from 1 Samuel 31:1-6, that Saul had killed himself when faced with defeat by the Philistines. Why do you think that the Amalekite lied about killing Saul (1:4-10)? Obviously, this proved to be a bad idea, given the result in verse 15. What was David's rationale for killing the Amalekite (1:13-16)? What did David believe about Saul's position as "the LORD's anointed"? Why is it important that David refused to take God's judgment into his own hands?
3. There is a deeper dynamic at work here. Recall God's anger at Saul for not killing Agag, the king of Amalek (1 Sam. 15:17-19, 23). Why was God angry at Saul? (Ex. 17:8-16; and Deut. 25:17-19.) What do you think is the significance of Amalek in Scripture, with whom "the LORD will have war... from generation to generation," and concerning whom he would "blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven"?

4. In 2:1-3, why does David seek the LORD's direction before moving to Judah? (See 1 Sam. 23:1-5, 9-12; and compare this with Saul's failure to do so, per 1 Chron. 10:13-14.) David could reasonably have assumed that he should immediately go to Judah. Why does he nevertheless ask God first? What does this tell us about David's dependence upon God at a significant turning point in his life? How might we apply this principle when we face decisions where the "obvious" course seems clear? (See Proverbs 3:5-6 and James 1:5.)

5. Think about David's actions in this chapter and what they reveal about his character. Now read Rom. 12:17–21. What practical lessons can we draw from David's response to Saul's death and his actions at the beginning of his reign? Consider how David demonstrates grief without bitterness, restraint without revenge, dependence upon God, patience in waiting, and respect for others. Which of these areas is most difficult for you personally: letting go of resentment, refusing revenge, waiting on God's timing, seeking God's direction, or honoring someone who has hurt you? What specific step can you take this week to respond more like David did?

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WEEK 2 – 2 SAMUEL 2:8-5:5

CIVIL WAR & THE CONSOLIDATION OF DAVID'S RULE

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

1. Abner was Saul's cousin, and had been the commander of the army during Saul's reign. What motivated Abner to make Ish-bosheth as king of Israel (2:8-9)? We see that Abner had killed Joab and Abishai's brother, Asahel, when the latter refused to stop pursuing him with intent to kill him. When Asahel's brothers, Joab and Abishai, pursued Abner to exact revenge, Abner convinced them to cease from their pursuit when he said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that the end will be bitter? How long will it be before you tell your people to turn from the pursuit of their brothers?" (2:26) Abner then switched his loyalty from Ish-bosheth to David and met with David, agreeing to gather all Israel to covenant with David as the rightful king (3:6-21) Then, despite the fact that David sent Abner away in peace, Joab recalled Abner and killed him in revenge for Asahel's death, without David's permission to do so (3:22-26). How does David respond to Abner's murder (2:22-39)? What does this reveal about David's character and leadership? Why was David so determined to demonstrate that he had no part in Abner's death? Assess Abner's character and his role in these events. Joab's?
2. What do the murders of Ish-bosheth and Abner teach us about the difference between God's providence and human ambition? (4:1-12; see also Gen. 50:20 and Rom. 8:28.) Rechab and Baanah apparently believed that killing Ish-bosheth would benefit David. Why did David reject their actions? What does David's response teach us about refusing to accomplish God's purposes through sinful means?

3. In 5:2, the elders of Israel acknowledge that the LORD has indeed said to David that “you shall be shepherd of my people Israel.” Why is this acknowledgment important? In Scripture, God is often portrayed as a shepherd (e.g., Psalm 23:1-2; Ps. 77:19-20), and Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-15). What does the biblical picture of a king as a shepherd teach us about godly leadership?

4. Read 2:1-4; 3:1; and 5:1-5. Why was Hebron significant in David’s journey toward becoming king over all Israel? (See 2:1-4 and 5:1-5.) What happened at Hebron before David became king over all Israel? (Gen. 13:18; Gen. 49:29-33.)

5. In this passage, what practical lessons can we learn from the events of David’s life, from being anointed by Samuel to becoming king over all Israel? (See Ps. 37:3-7; Prov. 3:5-6; and James 1:2-4.) Consider David’s patience, his refusal to seek revenge, his dependence upon God, his integrity in leadership, and his willingness to wait for God’s timing. Where are you currently being asked to wait on God, to resist taking matters into your own hands, or to remain faithful in a difficult situation? What would it look like this week to trust God’s timing rather than trying to force the outcome yourself?

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WEEK 3 – 2 SAMUEL 5:6-6:23

JERUSALEM MADE THE CAPITAL OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

1. Why was Jerusalem such a significant city for David to capture (5:6-10)? Consider two events from Genesis that happened in Jerusalem, specifically, at the future site of the Temple (see Gen. 14:17-20 and Gen. 22:2, 9-14). Why were the Jebusites still in control of the city, centuries after the Israelite conquest of the rest of the land? (See Jdg. 1:21.) (Side quest, a.k.a. extra credit! It is interesting that this (5:7) is the first use of the word “Zion” in Scripture. Originally associated with the fortress of the City of David, track the meaning of Zion as it developed from the physical fortress of the City of David to the spiritual dominion of the Kingdom of God. See Ps. 2:6; 9:11; 50:2; Isa. 60:14; Heb. 12:22; and Rev. 14:1.)
2. In 6:1-11, why did David and the Israelites bring the ark of God to Jerusalem, and what happened when Uzzah touched the ark? What was good and commendable about David’s desire to bring the ark to Jerusalem? What was wrong with the way the ark was transported (see Ex. 25:10-22; Num. 4:5-15.)? Why do you think Uzzah’s death was such a difficult lesson for David and Israel? What does this event teach us about the holiness of God and the importance of approaching God according to his instructions rather than merely according to our good intentions?

3. What changed when David brought the ark to Jerusalem a second time (6:12-19), and what does this teach us about obedience and worship (see Ps. 24:3-6; John 4:23-24)? Why was David able to celebrate and worship when the ark finally entered Jerusalem? What does David's dancing "with all his might" before the LORD reveal about his attitude toward worship? How can we maintain both reverence for God and genuine joy in worship?

4. Why did Michal despise David when she saw him celebrating before the LORD (6:16, 20-23)? What offended her about David's behavior? How does her response contrast with David's desire to honor the LORD? What dangers arise when concern about appearances, dignity, or the opinions of others becomes more important than genuine devotion to God? Are there ways in which we can become more concerned with how worship looks to other people than with whether our hearts are truly honoring God?

5. What practical lessons does this passage give us about living in the presence of a holy God? (See Rom. 12:1; Heb. 12:28-29; 1 Pet. 1:15-16.) Think about the major themes of the passage and consider which of these areas most needs attention in your life right now: seeking God's direction before acting, obeying God's Word rather than relying on good intentions, approaching God with reverence, worshiping with genuine joy, caring too much about the opinions of others? What specific change can you make this week in response to what God has shown you?

This image shows a full page of a handwriting practice worksheet. It consists of multiple sets of three horizontal dashed lines, evenly spaced across the entire page. These lines are designed to help children learn letter formation and alignment by providing a guide for the height and placement of their writing. The background is plain white, and there are no other markings or text present.

WEEK 4 – 2 SAMUEL 7:1-29
GOD’S COVENANT WITH DAVID
SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

1. What motivated David to want to build a house for the LORD, and what does his desire reveal about his relationship with God? (See 7:1-7; see also Ps. 132:1-5 and Acts 7:46-50.) Why did David think it was inappropriate for him to live in a house of cedar while the ark of God remained in a tent? Was David’s desire a good one? Why then did God tell him that he would not be the one to build the temple? What does this teach us about the difference between having a good desire and being given permission by God to fulfill that desire? Are there times when God may redirect something good that we want to do for him?
2. What does God remind David about where he found him and what he had done for him, and why is this important to the covenant that follows? (7:8-11; see also 1 Sam. 16:11-13; Ps. 78:70-72; and 89:20-24.) Notice the repeated emphasis on what God has done: “I took you,” “I have been with you,” “I have cut off all your enemies,” “I will make for you...” What does this teach us about grace? How might remembering God’s faithfulness in the past strengthen our faith when we face uncertainty about the future?

3. In 7:12-17, what did God promise David concerning his “house,” his kingdom, and his throne? What is the significance of the LORD’s promise to establish David’s “house”? It is Solomon, David’s son and successor, who will technically build God’s “house,” so in a partial sense, this passage looks ahead to Solomon. But it also looks beyond Solomon, to Christ. Toward what does the promise of an enduring throne point? (See Luke 1:32-33; Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14.) How does this passage help us understand the biblical connection between David’s kingdom and the coming Messiah?

4. How does David respond when he realizes what God has promised to him, and what does his prayer teach us about humility (7:18-21)? David asks, “Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?” Why is this an appropriate response to God’s grace? Why does David spend so much of his prayer talking about what God has done rather than what David has done? What does genuine humility look like when we recognize God’s blessings in our lives? (See Ps. 8:3-9 and Eph. 2:8-10.)

5. In 7:28, David says, “And now, O Lord GOD, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant.” Think about these words and apply them to your own situation. Consider the practical, yet profound import of taking to heart the reality that our Lord is in fact God and that his words are in fact true! Take a moment to think of what God has promised you, then lean into that promise with a hearty Amen, i.e., “It is true, I believe it. It is true, so let it be.”

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WEEK 5 – 2 SAMUEL 8:1-10:19
DAVID’S KINGDOM AT ITS HEIGHT
OCTOBER 4, 2026

1. What does David’s military success reveal about the source and purpose of his victories? (8:1-14; compare 2 Sam. 7:9-16; see also Deut. 7:1-2; Ps. 18:32-50.) Notice the repeated statement that “the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went.” Why is this important? How does this chapter demonstrate God’s faithfulness to his promises in 2 Samuel 7? How should recognizing God as the source of our success affect the way we use what he gives us?
2. What does David’s administration of his kingdom teach us about godly leadership (8:15-18)? See especially verse 15, “And David administered justice and equity to all his people.” What does this tell us about his priorities as king? What *is* justice, and why is justice particularly important for a leader who understands that his authority ultimately comes from God? What can Christian leaders, and all believers with responsibility over others learn from David’s example? (See Prov. 29:2, 4; Mic. 6:8; and Amos 5:24.)

3. In 9:1-13, why did David seek out someone from Saul's household, and what does his treatment of Mephibosheth reveal about covenant faithfulness? (See 2 Sam. 4:4 and Ps. 103:8-13.) Mephibosheth might reasonably have expected David to harm him rather than help him, yet David declares, "I will show kindness for the sake of Jonathan your father." Why is it significant that David restored Saul's land to Mephibosheth and gave him a permanent place at the king's table? In what ways does this story illustrate God's grace toward people who cannot repay him?

4. How did Hanun and his advisers misunderstand David's intentions (10:1-5), and what does their response teach us about suspicion and mistrust? David's original action toward Hanun was intended as kindness. Why did Hanun's advisers interpret it as an act of hostility? How did their assumptions influence Hanun's actions? What damage can occur when we interpret another person's actions according to suspicion rather than seeking to understand their intentions (see Ps. 18:25-26)? How does love, according to 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, challenge our tendency to assume the worst about others?

5. In 10:6-19, Joab says to his troops, "Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him." How does Joab combine responsible action with trust in God's sovereignty? What is the difference between trusting God and using "trust in God" as an excuse for passivity?

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WEEK 6 – 2 SAMUEL 11:1-27
DAVID’S SIN WITH BATHSHEBA
OCTOBER 11, 2026

1. Read 11:1-4. Why is it significant that David remained in Jerusalem while his army was at war, “in the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle”? Notice the progression from temptation to sin: having remained in the city, David saw, inquired, sent for, then took Bathsheba. What does this progression teach us about how temptation can develop into sin? At what point could David have stopped the slide into sin? How does James 1:13-16 help us understand what happened in David’s heart?
2. How did David (ab)use his position and authority to pursue his own desires (11:2-5), and why does this make his sin especially serious? David was not simply acting as an ordinary man; he was Israel’s king! How did his authority affect Bathsheba’s ability to refuse him? What does this passage teach us about the danger of power when it becomes disconnected from obedience to God? How should those who have authority over others guard against using their position for personal advantage? What responsibilities accompany influence and leadership? (See Deut. 17:14-20; 1 Sam. 8:10-18; and Matt. 20:25-28.)

3. In 11:6-13, how did David attempt to conceal his sin, and what does his behavior reveal about the nature of sin? Why did David summon Uriah from the battlefield? What does Uriah's conduct reveal about his character in contrast to David's behavior? Why does one sinful act often require additional sinful actions to conceal it? What does Psalm 32 teach us about the spiritual consequences of attempting to hide sin? (See Ps. 32:3-5; Prov. 28:13; and Luke 12:2-3.)

4. How did David's attempt to cover his sin ultimately lead to Uriah's death, and what does this reveal about the seriousness of unchecked sin? (11:14-25; see also Genesis 4:6-10; James 1:15; and Romans 6:12-14.) What began with David's lust ultimately resulted in the death of Uriah and other soldiers. What does this progression teach us about the consequences of sin? Why is it dangerous to think of a "small" sin as something that will remain isolated? What warning does this provide about allowing sinful desires to remain unchallenged?

5. In this passage, what practical safeguards can we learn from David's failure, and how should we respond when we recognize sin in our own lives? (See Ps. 51:10-13; Matt. 5:27-30; and 1 Cor. 10:12-13.) What warning does David's story give us about idleness, unchecked desire, secrecy, and the misuse of authority? What practical steps can we take when we recognize that we are being tempted? Why is confession preferable to concealment? And finally, how does the promise of forgiveness in 1 John 1:8-2:2 differ from minimizing or excusing our sin?

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WEEK 7 – 2 SAMUEL 12:1-31
CONFRONTATION, REPENTANCE & CONSEQUENCES
OCTOBER 18, 2026

1. Why did Nathan use a parable to confront David, approaching him indirectly rather than directly accusing him of his sin? (12:1-6; see also Matt. 7:1-5; Rom. 2:1-3; and Ps. 36:1-2.) Why was David so outraged by the rich man's treatment of the poor man's lamb? How did David unknowingly condemn himself through his response? What does this teach us about how easily we can recognize sin in others while overlooking similar or greater sin in ourselves?¹
2. What specific sins did Nathan identify when he confronted David, and what does God's accusation reveal about the seriousness of David's actions? (12:7-12; see also Ex. 20:13-17.) Nathan emphasizes that David despised the word of the LORD and did what was evil in God's sight. Why is David's sin an offense against God, even though Uriah and Bathsheba were directly affected? What does this teach us about the danger of allowing dissatisfaction or entitlement to overcome gratitude?

¹ Note that David's sentence, that the man should pay back four lambs for the theft of the one, shows that he knows the law as a king should (Ex. 22:1), and would now be judged by that very principle, as David would lose four sheep – four sons – in the course of subsequent events.

3. David's confession in 12:13 is remarkably brief: "I have sinned against the LORD." What is significant about the absence of excuses or attempts to shift blame? What is the difference between admitting that we have made a mistake and genuinely confessing that we have sinned against God? How does Psalm 51 give us a fuller picture of David's heart after this confrontation? (See Ps. 51:3-17.) What does Nathan's statement, "The LORD also has put away your sin," teach us about God's willingness to forgive genuine repentance?
4. Review 12:10-23. If David was forgiven, why did God still allow serious consequences to follow his sin? (See Num. 14:18; Gal. 6:7-8; Heb. 12:5-11; and Prov. 22:8.) What consequences did Nathan announce as a result of David's actions? How do these consequences demonstrate that forgiveness does not necessarily eliminate earthly consequences? Why did David fast and pray for his child while the child was sick? What does David's response after the child's death teach us about accepting God's sovereignty even when we do not understand his decisions?
5. After his sin and Nathan's confronting him for it, David eventually returned to his responsibilities as king (see 12:26-31). What does this suggest about the possibility of serving God after serious failure? What is the difference between forgiveness and the removal of every consequence of sin? How should someone who has genuinely repented approach responsibility and service afterward? How can God's grace transform a person's failure into an opportunity for humility and renewed faithfulness? (See Ps. 51:12-13; John 21:15-19; and 1 Timothy 1:12-16.)

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WEEK 8 – 2 SAMUEL 13:1-39
SIN WITHIN DAVID’S HOUSE: AMNON & TAMAR
OCTOBER 25, 2026

1. What does Amnon’s desire for Tamar reveal about the difference between genuine love and sinful lust? (13:1-5, 10-14; see also Matt. 5:27-30 and James 1:13-16.) Why does biblical love seek another person’s good rather than treating that person as an object for personal gratification, even in the context of love between a man and woman that entails desire? (See 1 Cor. 13:4-7; Song 6.3; and 7:10.) What does this teach us about the importance of confronting sinful desires before they become sinful actions?
2. Read 13:3-6, 32-35. Jonadab is described as “very crafty.” How did the scheme of Jonadab and Amnon develop, and what does this teach us about the influence of counsel? (See also Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:10-19; 1 Cor. 15:33.) Why is it important to distinguish between wise counsel and advice that merely helps us accomplish what we already want to do? How can the people we listen to either strengthen or weaken our resistance to temptation?

3. Note how quickly Amnon's supposed "love" for Tamar turns into hatred once he has gotten what he wanted. What does his treatment of Tamar reveal about the self-deception involved in sinful desire? What does the passage teach us about the devastating effects of sexual sin and the abuse of power? What responsibility do God's people have toward those who have been deeply wounded by the sinful actions of others? How can we learn to "weep with those who weep" (Rom. 12:15) rather than offering quick explanations or judgments?

4. In 13:20-29, how did Absalom respond to Tamar's violation? What was wrong with Absalom's decision to take revenge himself? (See Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:17-21; and 13:1-4.) How does Scripture distinguish between legitimate justice and personal vengeance? What happens when legitimate anger over injustice becomes a desire for personal retaliation?

5. What does David's response, or lack of response, to the events in his family teach us about the consequences of sin and the responsibility of leadership (13:21-39)? How do the previous events in David's life, i.e., those recorded in 2 Samuel 11-12, provide a painful backdrop for what happens in chapter 13? What does this chapter teach us about the importance of confronting wrongdoing rather than allowing anger, silence, or avoidance to govern a family? How can unresolved sin and injustice create additional wounds in succeeding generations?

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WEEK 9 – 2 SAMUEL 14:1-15:12
THE RETURN OF ABSALOM & GROWING DIVISION
NOVEMBER 1, 2026

1. Why did Joab arrange for the wise woman of Tekoa to appeal to David, and what does her story reveal about justice, mercy, and David's own situation? (14:1-20; see also Deut. 19:1-13; Num. 35:9-34.) What argument did the woman make concerning the death of her son and the preservation of her family line? Why did her story cause David to recognize that mercy was appropriate in her situation? What does her statement, "God devises ways so that a banished person may not remain banished from him," suggest about reconciliation?
2. Read 14:21-33. What was accomplished, and what remained unresolved, when David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem? Why did David permit Absalom to return but initially refuse to see him? What does this reveal about the difference between physical reconciliation and genuine relational restoration? What does this teach us about the importance of dealing honestly with the underlying issues in broken relationships rather than simply restoring outward appearances? (See Matt. 5:23-24 and Col. 3:12-14.)

3. In 14:25-27 and 15:1-6, what does Absalom's conduct reveal about his character and his growing ambition? (See also Prov. 16:18 and Phil. 2:3-4.) Why does the author of 2 Samuel emphasize Absalom's appearance and popularity? What methods did Absalom use to gain the people's loyalty, and how in this process did he subtly undermine David's leadership without openly declaring himself king? What is the difference between legitimate leadership and the pursuit of power for personal ambition?

4. How did Absalom win the hearts of the people, and what warning does this provide about leadership and discernment (15:2-6)? What does Jesus' teaching about recognizing people by their fruits add to our understanding of the passage (see Matt. 7:15-20)? How can we guard against being unduly impressed by charisma, appearance, promises, or criticism of existing leadership without examining a person's character?

5. What can we learn from the dynamics of David's family about the importance of addressing sin, conflict, and leadership problems before they become destructive? (Review 2 Sam. 12:10-12; 13:20-39; 14:21-33; and 15:1-12. See also Eph. 4:25-27 and Heb. 12:14-15.) What might have happened differently if David had dealt more directly with the issues surrounding Amnon and Absalom? How can unaddressed resentment, injustice, ambition, or broken relationships eventually affect an entire family, church, or community?

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WEEK 10 – 2 SAMUEL 15:13-17:29
DAVID IN EXILE DURING ABSALOM'S REBELLION
NOVEMBER 8, 2026

1. Why did David choose to leave Jerusalem rather than immediately fight Absalom there (see 15:13-23)? What does David's willingness to leave the city reveal about his concern for the people and the city itself (vs. 14)? Now read Psalm 3. How does this Psalm help us understand David's spiritual response to this crisis? What can we learn from Psalm 3 about what to do when events seem to be collapsing into disarray and disaster?
2. Why did David tell Zadok to return the ark to Jerusalem, and what does his response teach us about surrendering to God's will (15:24-29)? Consider David's words: "If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back." What does this reveal about his attitude toward God's sovereignty? How is this different from treating the ark as a talisman that guarantees victory? What situations in our own lives require us to say, in effect, "Let God decide what is best"?

3. Read 15:19-29, 32-37, and 16:15-19. What do Hushai, Ittai, and the priests Zadok and Abiathar demonstrate about loyalty, and what does David's treatment of them reveal about his leadership? What do Hushai's willingness to return to Jerusalem and the priests' willingness to serve David reveal about faithful friendship and service? What qualities make someone a trustworthy friend or leader during a crisis? How can we demonstrate that kind of loyalty without confusing loyalty with blindly supporting wrongdoing?²

4. How did David respond to Shimei's cursing, and what does this reveal about his understanding of God's sovereignty and personal responsibility (16:5-14)? Why did Abishai want to kill Shimei, and why did David refuse? What did David mean when he suggested that perhaps the LORD had told Shimei to curse him? Was David saying that God approved of Shimei's behavior? What does David's response teach us about receiving criticism or insult without immediately responding in anger? (See Ex. 22:28; Rom. 12:17-21; and 1 Peter 2:23.) How does David's humility here compare with the pride and ambition demonstrated by Absalom?

5. In 17:1-14, 21-29, how did God use the counsel of Hushai to frustrate Ahithophel's advice, and what does this teach us about God's providence? (See also Prov. 19:21; 21:30; and Romans 8:28.) Why was Ahithophel's counsel considered so effective? Why did Absalom choose Hushai's counsel instead? Verse 14 says that the LORD had ordained to defeat Ahithophel's good counsel. What does this teach us about God's ability to work through ordinary decisions and circumstances?

² As an aside, it is interesting that 15:30 is the first reference to the Mount of Olives in Scripture.
2026 Fall Scripture Study—2 Samuel

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WEEK 11 – 2 SAMUEL 18:1-19:43
ABSALOM'S DEFEAT & DAVID'S GRIEF
NOVEMBER 15, 2026

1. Why was David concerned about Absalom's safety even though Absalom had rebelled against him (18:1-5)? What does David's command reveal about the conflict between his responsibilities as king and his love for his son? How does David's response demonstrate the complicated nature of forgiveness and parental love? When might compassion and justice appear to be in tension with one another? (See also 2 Sam. 13:37-39.)
2. What happened to Absalom, and what does the account teach us about the consequences of rebellion and unresolved sin (18:6-18)? What does the pillar in the King's Valley, called "Absalom's monument," suggest about Absalom's desire for remembrance and reputation? How does this passage warn us about the destructive consequences of pride, ambition, and unresolved bitterness? (See also Prov. 16:18 and Gal. 6:7-8.)

3. Review 18:24-19:4. Why was David's grief so overwhelming even though Absalom had caused the rebellion and threatened David's life? What does David's repeated cry, "O my son Absalom, my son," reveal about the depth of a parent's love and grief? How can we make room for grief without allowing grief to prevent us from fulfilling responsibilities? Then, in 19:1-8, how does Joab confront David about his grief? Was Joab's rebuke wrong? What truth was he trying to communicate? (See also Prov. 27:5-6 and Gal. 6:1-2.)

4. In 19:9-30, how did David take steps to regain the loyalty of the people who had abandoned him? Consider David's treatment of Amasa, Shimei, Mephibosheth, and Barzillai? How does David demonstrate both mercy and discernment in these encounters? What can we learn about restoring relationships after conflict without pretending that the conflict never happened? What is the difference between forgiveness and automatically restoring trust or responsibility? (See Prov. 25:21-22 and Rom. 12:18-21.)

5. What does the dispute between Judah and Israel at the end of the chapter reveal about the continuing consequences of division (19:40-43)? Why did the people begin arguing over who had the greater claim to David? How does this argument demonstrate that the return of the king did not immediately eliminate the divisions created by the rebellion? What does this teach us about how quickly old rivalries can reappear even after a major crisis has passed? What principles from these two passages could help prevent such divisions in a family, church, or community? (See Phil. 2:1-4 and Eph. 4:1-6.)

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WEEK 12 – 2 SAMUEL 20:1-21:22
FINAL REBELLIONS & NATIONAL CRISIS
NOVEMBER 22, 2026

1. What caused Sheba's rebellion, and what did his challenge to David reveal about the danger of division within God's people (20:1-2)? Why were the men of Israel so quickly influenced by Sheba while the men of Judah remained loyal to David? How does this incident demonstrate how easily unresolved disagreements can become deeper divisions? What can churches, families, and Christian communities do to prevent disagreements from becoming destructive factions? (See 1 Cor. 1:10; Jude 19; and Titus 3:9-11.)
2. What does Joab's treatment of Amasa and his leadership reveal about the difference between effectiveness and godly character? (20:4-13; review and compare 2 Sam. 3:26-30 and 18:9-17; see also Prov. 16:32.) Why is Joab able to accomplish David's military objectives while repeatedly acting in morally questionable ways? Why is accomplishing a desired outcome not enough to make an action righteous? How should Christians go about evaluating leadership, not merely by results, but also by character, motives, and faithfulness to God?

3. How did the wise woman of Abel persuade Joab to withdraw from the city (20:14-22)? What does her statement, “I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel,” tell us about her character? How did she use wisdom to accomplish what military force could not? Where might a calm and wise voice help resolve a conflict in your own family, place of work, or community? In this church? (See also Prov. 11:14; 15:1; and James 3:13-18.)

4. What had Saul done to the Gibeonites, and why did Israel’s violation of the covenant have consequences generations later (21:1-9; see also Josh. 9:3-27)? What does this passage teach us about the seriousness of keeping promises and honoring covenants? How should this influence our attitude toward promises we have made to God and to other people? (See Eccl. 5:4-6.)

5. What do the battles with the Philistines reveal about God’s continuing faithfulness to Israel? (21:15-22; see also 1 Sam. 17:45-47; 2 Sam. 5:17-25; Ps. 18:1-3, 31–50; and Heb. 11:32-34.) Why is it significant that David’s men, not David alone, are now the ones defeating the Philistine warriors? What does the aging of David and the need for his men to protect him reveal about changing seasons of leadership? How does this passage demonstrate that God’s purposes are not dependent upon one individual leader? What can we learn about the importance of developing and encouraging others to carry on God’s work?

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WEEK 13 – 2 SAMUEL 22:1-23:7
DAVID’S SONG & FINAL REFLECTIONS
NOVEMBER 29, 2026

1. In 22:1-7, David calls God his “rock,” “fortress,” “deliverer,” “shield,” “stronghold,” and “refuge.” What does each description communicate about God’s character? (See also Ps. 18:1-6; Ex. 15:1-2; Ps. 46:1-3; and 61:1-3.) How does David’s language of deliverance help us understand the relationship between God’s protection and our circumstances? What names or descriptions of God have been especially meaningful to you during difficult seasons?
2. How does David describe God’s response when he cries out to him, and what does this teach us about God’s power and presence? (22:8-20; see also Ex. 19:16-19; Ps. 29:3-9; and Heb. 12:28-29.) How does David use dramatic images of earthquakes, smoke, fire, thunder, and lightning to describe God’s intervention? What do these images communicate about God’s holiness, majesty, and power? How can remembering God’s power give us confidence when we feel overwhelmed?

3. In 22:21-25, David speaks about his righteousness. How should we understand these statements in light of David's serious sins? (Recall the events from chapters 11 and 12.) Surely, David is not claiming that he has never sinned! But then, if not that, what kind of righteousness is he describing? How does David's repentance in Psalm 51 help us understand his relationship with God? (See Ps. 51:1-4, 10-12.) What is the difference between sinless perfection and walking faithfully with God through repentance and obedience? How does the New Testament deepen our understanding of righteousness through faith in Christ? (See Rom. 3:10-12, 21-24.)

4. According to David's final words, in 23:1-7, what kind of ruler does God desire, and how does this passage point beyond David himself? What characteristics does David associate with a ruler who governs justly and in the fear of God? What does David mean by "one who rules over people justly, ruling in the fear of God"? In what ways does the ideal ruler described here point beyond David to Jesus Christ? (See 2 Sam. 7:12-16; Ps. 72:1-7; Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-5; and Luke 1:32-33.)

5. How should David's song of deliverance and final words shape the way we respond to God's faithfulness in our own lives? (Review 22:47-51 and 23:1-7; see also Ps. 40:1-3; 103:1-5; Phil. 4:4-7; and Heb. 13:15-16.) David looks back over his life and sees God's faithfulness through danger, failure, conflict, and deliverance. What might God want us to remember when we look back over our own lives? Why is remembering God's faithfulness an important part of worship? How can we give God glory not only for the victories but also for the ways he sustained us through difficult seasons? What can we do to pass on the testimony of God's faithfulness to the next generation?

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WEEK 14 – 2 SAMUEL 23:8-24:25
DAVID’S CENSUS & THE ALTAR OF MERCY
DECEMBER 6, 2026

1. What do the accounts of David’s mighty men teach us about courage, loyalty, and God’s role in giving victory (23:8-23)? What characteristics stand out in the lives of these men? What does this section teach us about the difference between trusting in human strength and recognizing God as the source of victory? (See also 1 Sam. 17:45-47; Jdg. 7:2-7; Ps. 20:7; 144:1-2; Heb. 11:32-34.)
2. Why was David’s desire to number Israel considered sinful, and what does Joab’s response reveal about the seriousness of David’s decision? (24:1-9; see also Ex. 30:11-16; Num. 1:1-4; 1 Chron. 21:1-7; and Deut. 8:10-18.) Why do you think David wanted to know the number of fighting men in Israel? Why did Joab question the king’s command? How might David’s census reflect a temptation to place confidence in military strength, national power, or personal accomplishment rather than in God? What forms of “numbering” or measuring success can tempt us to rely on ourselves rather than God?

3. What does David's response after the census reveal about genuine conviction and repentance? (24:10-17; see also Ps. 32:3-5; 51:1-4; Prov. 28:13; and 1 John 1:8-9.) What is significant about David recognizing that he had "sinned greatly" after the census was completed? Why is it important that David accepts responsibility rather than blaming Joab or someone else? What does this teach us about the difference between feeling bad about consequences and genuinely recognizing our sin before God?

4. Why did David choose the option of falling into the LORD's hands rather than into the hands of his enemies? (24:11-17; see also Deut. 32:35-39; Ps. 103:8-14; Heb. 10:30-31; and Ps. 130:3-4.) Specifically, what does David's statement, "Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great," reveal about his understanding of God's character? How can God's holiness and mercy exist together? Why is it significant that David's repentance includes both acknowledgment of God's justice and confidence in God's mercy? How can this perspective help us when we experience the consequences of our own failures?

5. Why did David refuse Araunah's offer to give him the threshing floor and sacrifices without cost? (24:18-25; see also Gen. 22:1-14; 1 Chron. 21:18-26; Ps. 51:16-17; and Rom. 12:1.) David insisted, "I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." What does David's willingness to pay full price reveal about genuine repentance and worship? What does costly worship look like for a Christian today?

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