

## Blended Plan 2026

April 26: 2 Samuel 13-14 and Luke 20:1-26

Nathan proclaimed judgment against David and his family after the Bathsheba incident. Now we see some of that judgment coming to fruition. David, though he was a man of God, has brought tragedy into his home through his sinful act with Bathsheba. Amnon, David's son by Ahinoam, is infatuated with Tamar, David's daughter by Maacah. Amnon makes himself sick over her to the point that his friend Jonadab wants to know why the king's son is so upset. Jonadab comes up with a ruse for Amnon to take Tamar by force. He pretends to be sick and requests that she enter his room so that he can eat from her hand. When she enters, he overpowers her and has his way. Immediately after this heinous act, he despises her more than he ever "loved her". Absalom, Tamar's brother, wants to take vengeance, but he must bide his time. He waits two years for the time to be right.

After Amnon has been killed, somehow word makes it to David that all his sons had been killed by Absalom. Jonadab explains that it was only Amnon that was murdered. This does not bring any real relief to David. He mourns the loss of Amnon. Absalom has fled.

Joab sees that David's mind is on Absalom. He devises a plan to get Absalom to come back. He hires a clever woman to pretend to be in mourning. The woman approaches David and tells him exactly what Joab told her to. Eventually, he realizes that Joab put the scheme together. Joab is happy to have played a part in it, so he bows down in verse 22 paying homage and praising David. However, Joab's part in this will cost him. Absalom orders that Joab's field be burned. This might seem odd, but Joab had been avoiding Absalom. Absalom knew that if he burned the field, Joab would be forced to come to him. Joab does just that. When he confronts Absalom, he requests an audience with the king. Absalom approaches David and bows down with his face to the ground. David kisses Absalom, signifying that they were reconciled. That reconciliation is only going to last so long, though.

In the New Testament reading the elders and scribes challenge Jesus's authority. Jesus tells them that He will tell them where He gets His authority if they tell Him where John's baptism came from, men or heaven. They don't know how to answer since if they answer it is from heaven, that will give John credit. However, if they say from man, the people will be upset because the people consider John a prophet.

Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard owner. He leased the land to tenant farmers. He sent servants to check on the vineyard, but when the servants arrived, they were beaten. Finally, the owner sends his son thinking that they will respect him. Instead, the tenant farmers kill the son. The tenant farmers stood for the Israelites. The servants that were beaten represent the Old Testament prophets. They had been sent by God, but were rejected by them. The Son stands for Jesus, who the people will ultimately kill because of the threat He poses to their power.

April 27: 2 Samuel 15-16 and Luke 20:27-47

Even though David and Absalom have reconciled, Absalom causes more trouble for David. Absalom seeks to put himself in the place of David, by listening to grievances from the people. When they finished their complaints, Absalom would say that they are upset for good reason, but it is too bad that the king does not have anyone to listen to them. Absalom is hoping that this will give him favor in the people's sight. To further gain popularity among the people, Absalom brings in Ahithophel, one of David's wisest advisers to his side. Ahithophel's reputation for wisdom is so great that many regarded his words as words from The LORD. Absalom's case is getting stronger, while David's is getting weaker.

David has a different approach. He marches into Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant. He has it placed in Jerusalem stating that the ark belongs there. He also puts his kingship in God's hands. If God wants him to continue to be king, God will make it so. If not, then God will replace him. David does not retaliate against Absalom. Instead, he prays and lets The LORD handle it.

Absalom does not know what to do, so he consults Ahithophel. His advice was for him to sleep with his father's concubines. It was an outward expression to show that he was taking over as king. This action sharpened the divide between David and him even greater. The thought was that when the people saw this, they would leave their loyalty to David to support Absalom.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus is asked a question about the resurrection by the Sadducees, a group that did not believe in the resurrection. They want to know who will be the husband of a woman that was widowed and married several times while on earth. Jesus responds that people in heaven are not given in marriage. The scribes were amazed that Jesus answered so well. They even tell Him that He has answered well.

Jesus then asks the hard question of how He can be both the son of David and the Son of God. He does not give the answer to us in this text. However, Jesus is both fully human and fully God. This is known as the hypostatic union. Since Jesus was fully human, He felt the pain of hunger and thirst as He grew up. He knew what it was like to be tempted. When we take our trials and tribulations and pour them out to Jesus, He knows what we are going through, He has been through it before. How privileged are we to serve the God that understands us and can relate to us?

April 28: 2 Samuel 17-18 and Luke 21:1-19

Ahithophel wants to choose 12,000 men to pursue David. His plan is to attack David and his men when they are at their weakest. At first the proposal seemed good. Absalom seeks a second opinion from Hushai. Hushai disagrees with Ahithophel and gives a different plan. Absalom decides to reject Ahithophel's plan and go along with Hushai. This will prove deadly for him.

Hushai sends word of the plan back to David through Zadok and Abiathar. Absalom's servants come to Bahurim looking for some of David's men. A woman informs him that Ahimaaz and Jonathan had already passed through. The men searched for Ahimaaz and Jonathan, but when they could not find them, returned to Jerusalem. In all this Ahithophel realizes that his advice has not been taken. He knows that since Absalom did not take his advice, David would retain the

rule. Since David would remain king, Ahithophel hangs himself. He rebelled against David, the true king, making him a traitor.

Absalom rides on his mule when it walked under the branches of a large oak tree. Absalom's head gets stuck and the mule keeps walking. For all intents and purposes, he would essentially die by hanging. However, one man sees this and reports it to Joab. Joab asks if the man had killed Absalom since he was in such a compromising position. The man replies that even if he had the riches in his hand, he would still not raise up a sword against Absalom since he is the king's son. They saw how David treated the man that claimed Saul's death. Why would anyone think David would react differently to a person claiming to kill his son?

In the Luke reading, all the rich folks are dropping a lot of money in the temple treasury. However, one poor woman comes in and drops two coins. Jesus explains that she had given more than all of these other people. This woman gave to God in her poverty. The other people gave to God in their excess. Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple. Eventually, His prophecy of one stone not remaining on top of the other happens. Today, only the Western Wall of the temple complex remains.

Jesus is asked about the end of the times. Jesus tells them not to worry. Folks are going to come and claim to be Him, they are not to follow them. Wars and rumors of war will be spread. Regardless, they should not worry. God is sovereign. He is in control. No need to worry about what happens in the future, God has it all under control!

April 29: 2 Samuel 19-20 and Luke 21: 20-38

David is victorious, but at the cost of his son's life. Rather than be jubilant at the fact his kingdom is safe, he is beside himself with grief. We would think most folks would give David a pass. However, Joab is frustrated with David's reaction. Rather than entering the city with shouts of triumph, David's victorious army marches in as if they had lost the battle. Joab goes to David's home and accuses him of loving his enemies more than the people that love him. Joab demands that he go to encourage the returning soldiers.

To show that David has no animosity toward the folks that followed Absalom, he makes Amasa the commander of the army. This position was previously held by Joab. Joab does not take this lightly.

Later, David sends the troops to fight against Sheba. He has determined that Sheba will do more harm to them than Absalom did. Joab approaches Amasa. Somehow, Joab makes it appear that his sword accidentally becomes unsheathed in front of Amasa. It had to have looked accidental because Amasa senses no hostility from Joab. That is why he would not think anything of Joab bending over to pick up his sword as Joab was making the motion of greeting Amasa with a kiss. Joab takes the sword and stabs him in the stomach. He only stabs him once, knowing that the first strike dealt a death blow. From there, Joab goes into the city seeking Sheba's head.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus continues to warn about the destruction of Jerusalem. He also tells the people to be on the lookout for His return. Since they do not know when it is, it could happen at any time. Likewise, we do not know when it is going to happen. It could be

today or it could be 7,000 years from now. We do not know. However, we are supposed to keep our wits about us, expecting that it might happen at any given moment. As believers, we can keep vigilant, doing God's will for our lives, just like the disciples and apostles did during their lifetimes.

April 30: 2 Samuel 21-22 and Luke 22: 1-30

The land experiences a famine for three years. David asks The LORD where the famine came from. The famine is retribution for the Gibeonites, a group that Saul had brutalized while he was king. David sets to make it right asking the Gibeonites what he can do to make atonement. The Gibeonites do not want money. Instead, they want seven males from Saul's lineage. They are going to execute these men and hang them in the presence of the LORD. Gibeah was Saul's hometown. Saul had killed the Gibeonites in their hometown of Gibeon. Hanging Saul's descendants in Gibeah was another form of retribution for the Gibeonites. David ensures that Mephibosheth is spared. The others are selected and executed. When David finds out the bodies had been left up, with Rizpah protecting them from carrion birds, he sends his men to retrieve them and gives them a proper burial.

The Philistines wage war again. David goes with them this time. Unfortunately, he becomes exhausted and becomes a bit of risk to his men. They request that he stay home next time they go to fight. Several battles are fought between the Philistines and the Israelites. The LORD delivers them every time. David sings a song of praise, thanking God for the victory that He delivers. He knows that the only reason they have success is because of God, not anything he has done. My prayer is that we live lives giving God praise for the great and wonderful things He does for us.

In the New Testament reading, we see that the religious leaders are starting to plot against Jesus. This text tells us that Satan enters Judas' heart and that is why he enters a deal with the Sanhedrin. Jesus sends Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal. They are unsure where He wants it prepared, so Jesus gives them directions on how to find the right spot. While at the dinner, Jesus confides that He has been looking forward to this meal before His suffering. Jesus knows He is about to go through some serious agony. Before He suffers the cross, He takes the time to fellowship with His disciples, give more instruction, and show the example of true leadership.

May 1: 2 Samuel 23-24 and Luke 22:31-53

David sings a song of praise to God. He understands that God has carried him to this point. David reminds us of the covenant that God set up with him. Since God has made this covenant with him, he knows he is secured. We read an account of military exploits from David's men. They pull off some truly amazing victories. For instance, Abishai kills 300 men by himself!

In chapter 24, we read about David's sin. We are not told exactly what is sinful about taking a census of the fighting men in Israel. The census itself was not sinful, but the intent was. David was looking to see how many people he commanded because he was putting his faith into his military might. We would think that after one of his men is able to destroy 300 men single

handedly, he would have kept his faith on the source of his actual strength. Unfortunately, in that act, David is showing his faith in man and not in God. He realizes the error of his ways. God gives David one of three choices for punishment. David chooses to be under the punishment of God and not of man because he knows that God is more merciful than people. David watches his people suffer because of his mistakes.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus and His disciples wrap up the Last Supper. Peter proclaims that he will follow Jesus to the bitter end, but Jesus tells him that he will deny Christ three times that night. They go to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. While He is there on the Mount of Olives, Judas shows up with the temple police to arrest Jesus. Jesus goes with them quietly, even though they sent a mob after Him. Up to this point, Jesus has not fought back physically, He would not start now even though His disciples tried to take up swords against the aggressors. That was not part of the plan, though. Jesus knew the Father's plan and He will see it to completion.

May 2: 1 Kings 1-2 and Luke 22: 54-71

Spoiler alert! As we go through 1 and 2 Kings, the books will end with the exile of the Israelites. These books catalog the actions of the kings before the exile. First and Second Kings will focus more on what the nation did to earn their judgment. First and Second Chronicles focuses on the same time period as Kings, but they will focus more on the good things Israel did that caused their return to Jerusalem after the exile.

David is nearing the end of his life. His reign lasted 40 years. He is so old that he can no longer keep warm, so they find a young woman named Abishag to serve him and keep him warm at night. As David's life is coming to a close, his son Adonijah decides to make himself king. He has a premature coronation for himself, marking his reign by conducting it at a revered place, witnessed by a military leader, a priest, and loyal followers. David is completely unaware.

Nathan approaches Bathsheba, letting her know that Adonijah has become king. He reminds her that David promised the throne to Solomon. Bathsheba approaches David with this new information and David has a coronation celebration for Solomon. His coronation was so close to Adonijah's feast that they were able to hear Solomon's celebration.

Adonijah, having lost his opportunity for the throne, sees another opportunity. He goes to Bathsheba asking her to persuade Solomon to give him Abishag as his wife. Bathsheba takes the request to Solomon. He is incensed by it. From our vantage, the request probably does not seem like that big of a deal. However, Abishag was the very woman that was in David's court, serving him and keeping him warm at night. If Adonijah had been granted his request for Abishag as a wife, it would have communicated to the people that Adonijah was the king. The social norm at the time was for the new king to confirm his position by taking the wives of the former king. Solomon sees through the ruse and has Adonijah put to death.

In the New Testament reading, Peter is being pressed for his association with Jesus. Even though he had earlier sworn his allegiance, he denies Christ three times. When he hears the rooster crow, he falls in grief, realizing what he had done. Meanwhile, Jesus's head was covered while

the men struck and mocked Him. They tell Him to prophecy who was hitting Him. Jesus remains silent. Jesus then faces the Sanhedrin. They want to know if Jesus is the Messiah. His response is that if they do tell Him, they won't believe Him anyway. They ask if He is the Son of God. Jesus replies that they have said it. As far as the Sanhedrin are concerned, they now have enough evidence of blasphemy to bring charges.

May 3: 1 Kings 3-5 and Luke 22:1-26

Solomon makes a treaty with Egypt by marrying Pharaoh's daughter. At this point, people are worshipping all over the place because there is no temple to worship. The LORD appears to Solomon asking him what he wants since he is now king. Solomon asks for wisdom to lead God's people. God responds that since Solomon did not ask for riches, long life, or the defeat of his enemies, God will grant him his request of wisdom. Additionally, God will grant him riches, long life, and the defeat of his enemies.

Solomon displays his wisdom by making the correct judgment on a seemingly impossible situation. Two women claim ownership over one child. Since there were no DNA tests or anything like that, Solomon uses some trickery to determine the real mother. He orders the child be cut into two pieces. The woman that requested the child be given to the other lady and not be harmed is given the child. Clearly she is the mother since she did not want any harm to befall the baby.

The Israelites are living in times of great abundance. There is rejoicing all around. Since they are enjoying such prosperous times, it is time to build a temple for God. Solomon has logs brought in from Lebanon and puts a work force together to build the temple. They gather the materials, quarry the stone, and prepare the timber and stone for construction.

In the New Testament reading, Jesus is brought before Pilate. Pilate cannot find anything to charge Jesus on. He finds out that Jesus was Galilean, so he sends Him to Herod, who just happens to be visiting. Herod was excited to have the chance to meet Jesus. He was under the impression that maybe Jesus would do a trick for him. Herod becomes frustrated when Jesus remains silent and does not perform any miracles for him. So he sends Jesus back to Pilate. Pilate still does not have anything to charge Jesus with, but he is in a hard spot. These people will not stop crying out for Jesus' blood regardless of his findings so far. He tries to placate the crowd by having Jesus beaten, thinking that when they see Him bloodied and bruised they will have sympathy for Him. Pilate was wrong in that assumption. The people cry for Barabbas a murderer and a thug to be released. They chose a murderer over the Messiah.