

2 Samuel

Covenant Kindness Towards the Davidic Dynasty

Establishment		Sin		Consequences		Appendix	
Triumphs		Transgressions		Troubles		Tribute	
Obedience		Disobedience		Judgment		Summary	
Chapters 1–10		Chapter 11		Chapters 12–20		Chapters 21–24	
Faith	Blessing	Adultery	Murder	Family	Politics	Humility	Pride
1–4	5–10	11:1-5	11:5-27	12–14	15–20	21–23	24
Over Judah	Over All Israel						
From Hebron	From Jerusalem						
7 1/2 Yrs. (1011-1004 BC)	33 Years (1004-971 BC)						

Key Word: Covenant

Key Verse: “When your [David’s] days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever” (2 Samuel 7:12-13).

Summary Statement:

God’s covenant kindness to David revealed his faithfulness to David’s dynasty and justice to punish his sin.

Application:

God blesses the obedient but judges the disobedient.

2 Samuel

Introduction

Note: The introduction in some part reiterates the introduction to 1 Samuel.

- I. **Title** "Samuel" (שְׁמוּאֵל *semuel*) means "name of El [God]" or "his name is El [God]" (BDB 1028d 1) from שָׁמַר "name," plus אֵל "El," the singular form of אֱלֹהִים "Elohim." It sounds like the Hebrew for "ask, inquire" (from שָׁאַל 1 Sam 1:20). The Books of Samuel originally formed a single scroll called "Samuel" after its first key character. The Septuagint first divided the book into two with the titles First and Second Kingdoms. First and Second Kings then followed with the titles Third and Fourth Kingdoms.

II. Authorship

- A. **External Evidence:** The Jewish Talmudic tradition ascribed the authorship of First and Second Samuel to Samuel, but he could not have written beyond 1 Samuel 25:1 since this verse records his death. First Chronicles 29:29 refers to "the Book of Samuel the Seer," "the Book of Nathan the Prophet," and "the Book of Gad the Seer." This may refer to the threefold authorship of the Books of Samuel that may have been compiled in their final form by a member of the prophetic school. Since they originally formed a single scroll entitled "Samuel," this may account for his name being attached to both books.
- B. **Internal Evidence:** The book provides little, if any, evidence to identify the author(s).

III. Circumstances

- A. **Date:** Although Samuel wrote 1 Samuel 1–24 at the end of his life (born ca. 1105 BC, died ca. 1015 BC), the rest of the Books of Samuel must have been composed over 85 years later after the division of the kingdom between Israel and Judah in 931 BC. This is seen in references to the divided monarchy (1 Sam 11:8; 17:52; 19:16; 2 Sam 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:42-43; 24:1, 9) and the reference to Ziklag, a Philistine city that the writer says, "has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day" (1 Sam 27:6). In regard to the *latest* possible date of composition, the absence of reference to the fall of Samaria in 722 BC is notable. Therefore, the time of final composition most likely falls between 931 BC and 722 BC.
- B. **Recipients:** As the Books of Samuel mention the divided monarchy (see above), those who read the books in their final form must have lived shortly after the reigns of David and Solomon. As inhabitants of a divided kingdom, this account of the nation unified under one king would have proved valuable from a historical context.
- C. **Occasion:** Second Samuel picks up where the first left off. There is no real break between 1 Samuel 31:13 and 2 Samuel 1:1. God's approval of the Davidic dynasty is veiled in 1 Samuel 1–15, but it is clear in 1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel 24. Therefore, in 2 Samuel the purpose is to defend the Davidic dynasty (cf. 2 Sam. 7), especially when two reigns coexisted in the north and the south. Whereas nine dynasties eventually reigned in the northern kingdom, God, true to his promise (2 Sam 7:4-17), sustained the southern kingdom under one dynasty—David's.

IV. Characteristics

- A. Second Samuel paints a very real picture of David—both strengths and weaknesses. While it lists his greatest achievements (2 Sam 1–10), it also does not hide his greatest failures (2 Sam 11). This chapter is the turning point of the book after which it's mostly downhill.
- B. David in 2 Samuel is one of the most important types of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament. In particular, David seeks to build a house *for God*, which the LORD refuses in order to build a "house" *for David* (7:4-17), called the Davidic Covenant. The Davidic Covenant also finds its source in the Abrahamic Covenant and further expands the original seed promise to Abraham (cf. notes, 61). God's promise of a seed to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3) from his own body (Gen 15:1-9) that will become a great nation is further explained in his promise to David (2 Sam. 7:10-16). The Davidic Covenant guarantees David that each king who will sit on the throne of Israel will be one of his direct descendants. Also, since this covenant is eternal (v. 16), it guarantees Israel that in the future a descendant of David will again occupy the throne in the kingdom—none other than our King Jesus (see. also p. 218b).

Argument

Second Samuel continues the argument of First Samuel—that God is working out his divine purposes through his covenant kindness to David and his seed. This is seen in David's triumphs as ruler over a renewed kingdom (2 Sam 1–10) and God's faithfulness despite David's sin (2 Sam 11). God judges this sin (2 Sam 12–20), but never takes away the dynasty like he did with Saul. This is because the Davidic Covenant amplifies the unconditional Abrahamic Covenant and thus is also unconditional. A final section (2 Sam 21–24) is an appendix of David's final years with more accounts of his failures and successes to show God's continued blessing upon his line while still punishing sin. Throughout the account God delegates dominion or sovereignty first to David, which sets the stage for the same authority delegated to his descendants who later also sit on the throne in Jerusalem in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

In regard to spiritual truths in 2 Samuel, the most prominent one reiterates the cause and effect principle stated in every book since Genesis: obedience (2 Sam 1–7) always brings God's blessings (2 Sam 8–10), but disobedience (2 Sam 11) always brings his judgment (2 Sam 12–24; *TTTB*, 78).

Synthesis

Covenant kindness towards Davidic dynasty

1–10	Establishment	
1–4	Over Judah at Hebron	
1	Respect for Saul	
2:1-11	Ish-Bosheth crowned	
2:12–4:12	Rivals eliminated—refusal of force	
5–10	Over all Israel at Jerusalem with new...	
5	Capital	(Jerusalem)
6	Worship center	(Ark moved)
7	Dynasty	(Davidic Covenant)
8	Boundary	(Kingdom Expansion)
9	Son	(Mephibosheth)
10	Vassals	(Ammon and Syria)
11	Sin	
11:1-5	Adultery	
11:6-26	Murder	
11:27	Illegitimate son	
12–20	Consequences	
12–14	Family troubles	
12	Son dies	(Solomon chosen)
13	Amnon (immorality)/Absalom (murder)	(Rival eliminated)
14	Estrangement	
15–20	Political troubles	
15–18	Absalom's rival	(Rival eliminated)
15:1–16:14	Absalom's self-coronation	
16:15–17:29	Hushai's bad advice	
18	Joab kills Absalom	
19–20	David's restoration	
19	Returned but divided	
20	Joab kills Sheba	
21–24	Appendix	
21:1-15	Famine over Gibeonite oath	
21:16-22	Victories	
22:1–23:7	Song/Last words	
23:8-39	Mighty men	
24	Census	

Outline

Summary Statement for the Book

God's covenant kindness to David revealed his faithfulness to David's dynasty and justice to punish his sin.

I. God established David as king over a renewed, perpetual kingdom to bless him and his dynasty (2 Sam 1–10).

- A. David reigned over Judah at Hebron after Saul's death and trusted God to prepare the entire kingdom without force (2 Sam 1–4).
 - 1. David received word of Saul and Jonathan's deaths, killed the messenger, and lamented to respect God's inaugurated kingship (2 Sam 1).
 - 2. David became king of Judah at Hebron, but Saul's commander Abner crowned Saul's son Ish-Bosheth king over Judah against God's purpose (2:1-11).
 - 3. David refused to take the kingdom by force but trusted God to judge rivals to his throne (2:12–4:12).
 - a) Abner initially fought David's commander Joab but then defected to David's side and Joab killed him to remove a potential rival to the throne (2:12–3:39).
 - b) David killed Ish-Bosheth's murderers to punish seizing his kingdom for him by force (2 Sam 4).

- B. David reigned over all Israel at Jerusalem and renewed the kingdom as evidence of God's blessing on him and his dynasty (2 Sam 5–10).
 - 1. David reigned over all Israel and defeated the Jebusites and Philistines, establishing Jerusalem as the new capital (2 Sam 5).
 - 2. Jerusalem became the new worship center when David brought the ark into the city (2 Sam 6).

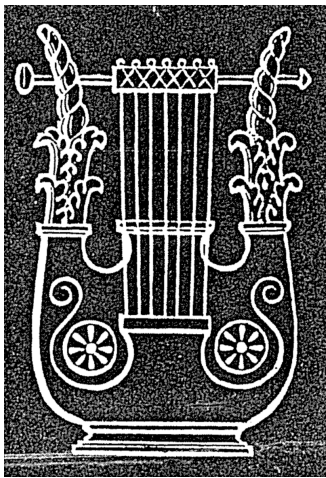
Service	Man's Way	God's Way
Mode of Transporting the Ark	Dishonored God by use of cart (6:3)	Honored God by having priests carry it by hand (6:13)
David's Role	King who forces priests to go against biblical commands	King who honors priests
Results	Uzzah dies trying to stabilize the cart (6:6); blessing goes to Obed-Edom instead of David (6:11)	Rest from enemies (7:1, 11) Nation united under God

- 3. When David tried to build a temporal house for God, the LORD promised to build an eternal "house" for him as the father of a new dynasty in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7).
- 4. David expanded the kingdom with a new boundary through military victories in the north and south as God's fulfillment of his promise to give Israel rest from its enemies (2 Sam 8).
- 5. David honored Jonathan's son Mephibosheth as a new son to show loyalty to Saul (2 Sam 9).
- 6. David's victory over ungrateful Ammon and Syria acquired them as new vassals (2 Sam 10).

- II. David's adultery and murder showed his sinful, fallen nature, despite God choosing his dynasty (2 Sam 11).**
- A. David's adultery with Bathsheba resulted in a problem pregnancy (11:1-5).
 - B. David's murder of Uriah the Hittite—a loyal husband and soldier—shows that even God's servants can sin greatly (11:6-26).
 - C. David's marriage to Bathsheba bore him an illegitimate son (11:27).
- III. David's family and political penalties for his sin actually purged all rivals to his throne due to God's kingdom promise to show both God's justice and faithfulness (2 Sam 12–20).**
- A. David's sin led to family troubles in the deaths of two sons, incest, and estrangement to teach both the costs of disobedience and God's means to remove Amnon as a rival to the throne (2 Sam 12–14).
 - 1. David and Bathsheba's son died to fulfill Nathan the prophet's words, but God gave them Solomon to fulfill the covenant promise to show both the severity and grace of God (2 Sam 12).
 - 2. Amnon's rape of Tamar repeated David's immorality with Bathsheba and Absalom's murder of Amnon repeated David's murder of Uriah to show the costs of disobeying God (2 Sam 13).
 - 3. David was estranged from Absalom two years even after his return to Jerusalem (2 Sam 14).
 - B. David's sin led to political troubles from Absalom and Sheba's rebellions, yet God restored his kingdom to protect David's dynasty by purging Absalom as a rival to David's throne (2 Sam 15–20).
 - 1. Absalom rivaled his father's throne but David refused to protect his kingdom by force, resulting in Absalom's death and the protection of David's dynasty (2 Sam 15–18).
 - a) Absalom won over many in Israel to become king, forcing David from Jerusalem into exile since he was unwilling to protect his kingdom by force (15:1–16:14).
 - b) Absalom followed Hushai's bad advice to wait to fight David instead of Ahithophel's good advice to attack David immediately as God's design to protect David (16:15–17:29).
 - c) David's army defeated Absalom's and Joab killed his cousin Absalom but David mourned his death, showing how God protected David's dynasty since Absalom had no sons (2 Sam 18).
 - 2. God restored David's kingdom in Jerusalem and subdued Sheba's rebellion in the north to show his faithfulness to protect David's dynasty (2 Sam 19–20).
 - a) David returned to a restored kingdom in Jerusalem but the north-south division persisted (2 Sam 19).
 - b) The northern tribes followed Sheba the Benjamite's rebellion and Joab regained his commander position by murdering Amasa and Sheba, thus restoring David's rule over all Israel (2 Sam 20).
- IV. An appendix of David's failures and successes in his final years gives more proof of God's continued blessing on his line while still punishing sin (2 Sam 21–24).**
- A. David ended a three-year famine in Israel due to Saul breaking the Gibeonite covenant by David's killing seven of Saul's sons to show his commitment to fulfill oaths (21:1-14).
 - B. David's victories over the Philistines and the rest of Goliath's family in his later years shows the completeness of David's victories due to God's blessing on his life (21:15-22).

- C. David's song of praise and last words supplement the story to display his faithful and humble trust in God's deliverance—not in his own power (22:1–23:7).
1. David's song of praise for deliverance from his enemies and Saul shows his faithful and humble trust in the LORD's deliverance rather than in his own power (2 Sam 22).
 2. David's last words supplement the history to reveal his faithful and humble trust in the LORD's deliverance rather than in his own power (23:1-7).
- D. A list of David's famous soldiers concludes the military summary of his reign (23:8-39).
- E. David's prideful census of his army to boast in his military might brought God's judgment in a plague that killed 70,000 Israelites up to where the temple would soon be built (2 Sam 24).

Note: Adonijah, the third and final rival to the Davidic throne, was also eliminated by Solomon to protect the Davidic dynasty in 1 Kings 1–2.



Geography of David's Jerusalem

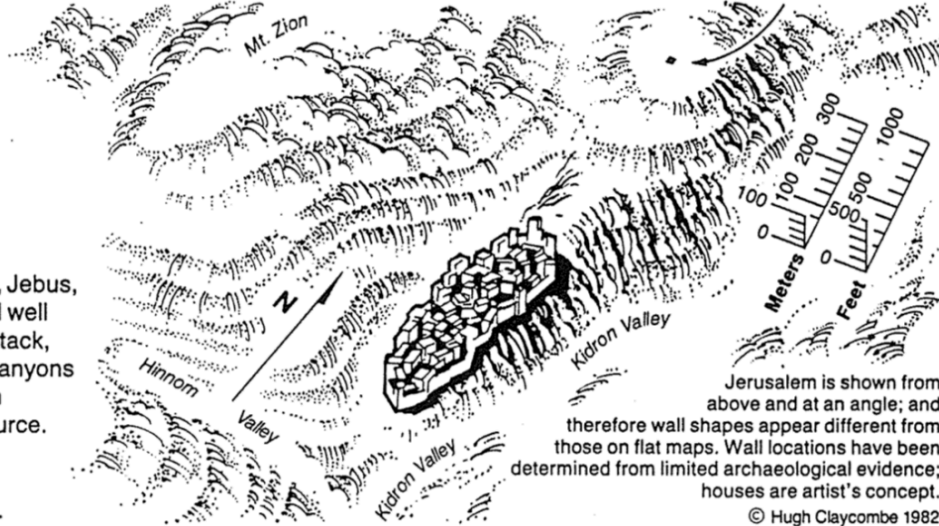
The Bible Visual Resource Book, 63; Biblical Archaeology Review (July/Aug '94): 24

Substantial historical evidence, both Biblical and extra-Biblical, places the temple of Herod (and before it the temples of Zerubbabel and of Solomon) on the holy spot where King David built an altar to the Lord. David had purchased the land from Araunah the Jebusite, who was using the exposed

bedrock as a threshing floor (2Sa 24:18-25). Tradition claims a much older sanctity for the site, associating it with the altar of Abraham on Mount Moriah (Ge 22:1-19). The writer of Genesis equates Moriah with "the Mountain of the LORD," and other OT shrines originated in altars erected by Abraham.

c. 1000 B.C.

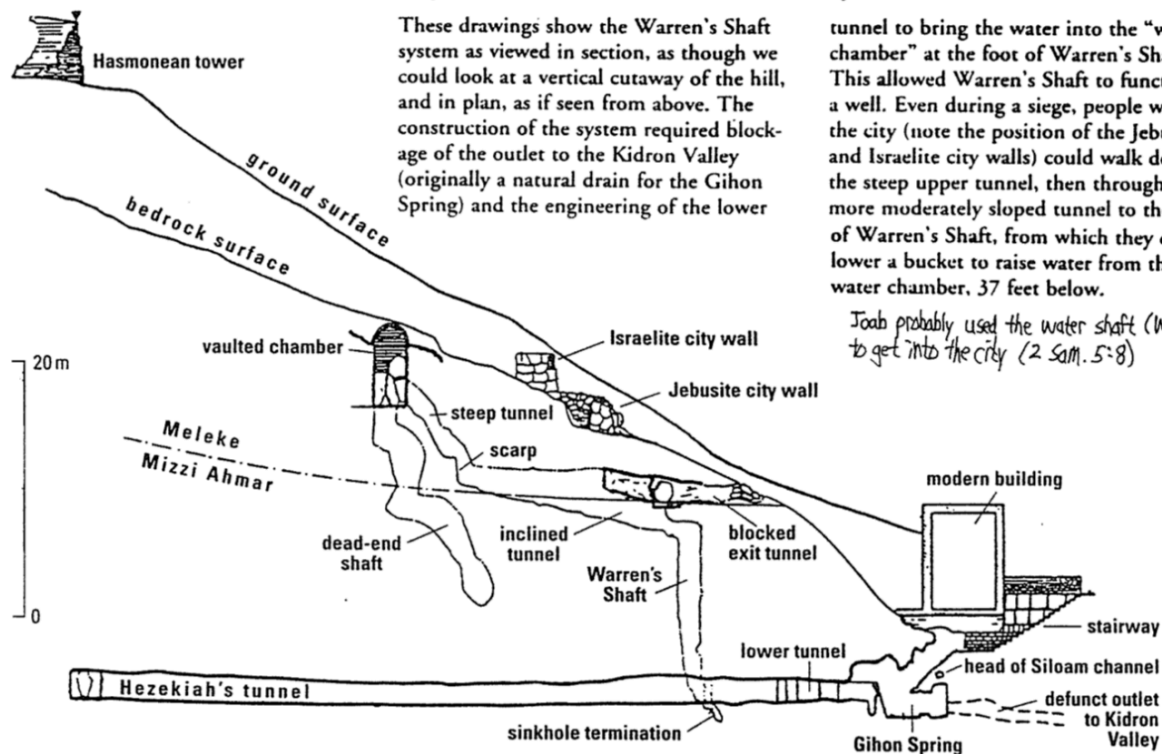
Barely 12 acres in size, Jebus, a Canaanite city, could well defend itself against attack, with walls atop steep canyons and shafts reaching an underground water source. David captured the stronghold, c. 1000 B.C. and made it his capital.



Jerusalem is shown from above and at an angle; and therefore wall shapes appear different from those on flat maps. Wall locations have been determined from limited archaeological evidence; houses are artist's concept.
© Hugh Claycombe 1982

For further reference to the development of Jerusalem see: page 73, *Solomon's Jerusalem*; page 99, *Jerusalem of the Returning Exiles*; page 139, *Jerusalem During the Time of the Prophets*.

Mysteries of the Warren's Shaft System



These drawings show the Warren's Shaft system as viewed in section, as though we could look at a vertical cutaway of the hill, and in plan, as if seen from above. The construction of the system required blockage of the outlet to the Kidron Valley (originally a natural drain for the Gihon Spring) and the engineering of the lower

tunnel to bring the water into the "water chamber" at the foot of Warren's Shaft. This allowed Warren's Shaft to function as a well. Even during a siege, people within the city (note the position of the Jebusite and Israelite city walls) could walk down the steep upper tunnel, then through the more moderately sloped tunnel to the top of Warren's Shaft, from which they could lower a bucket to raise water from the water chamber, 37 feet below.

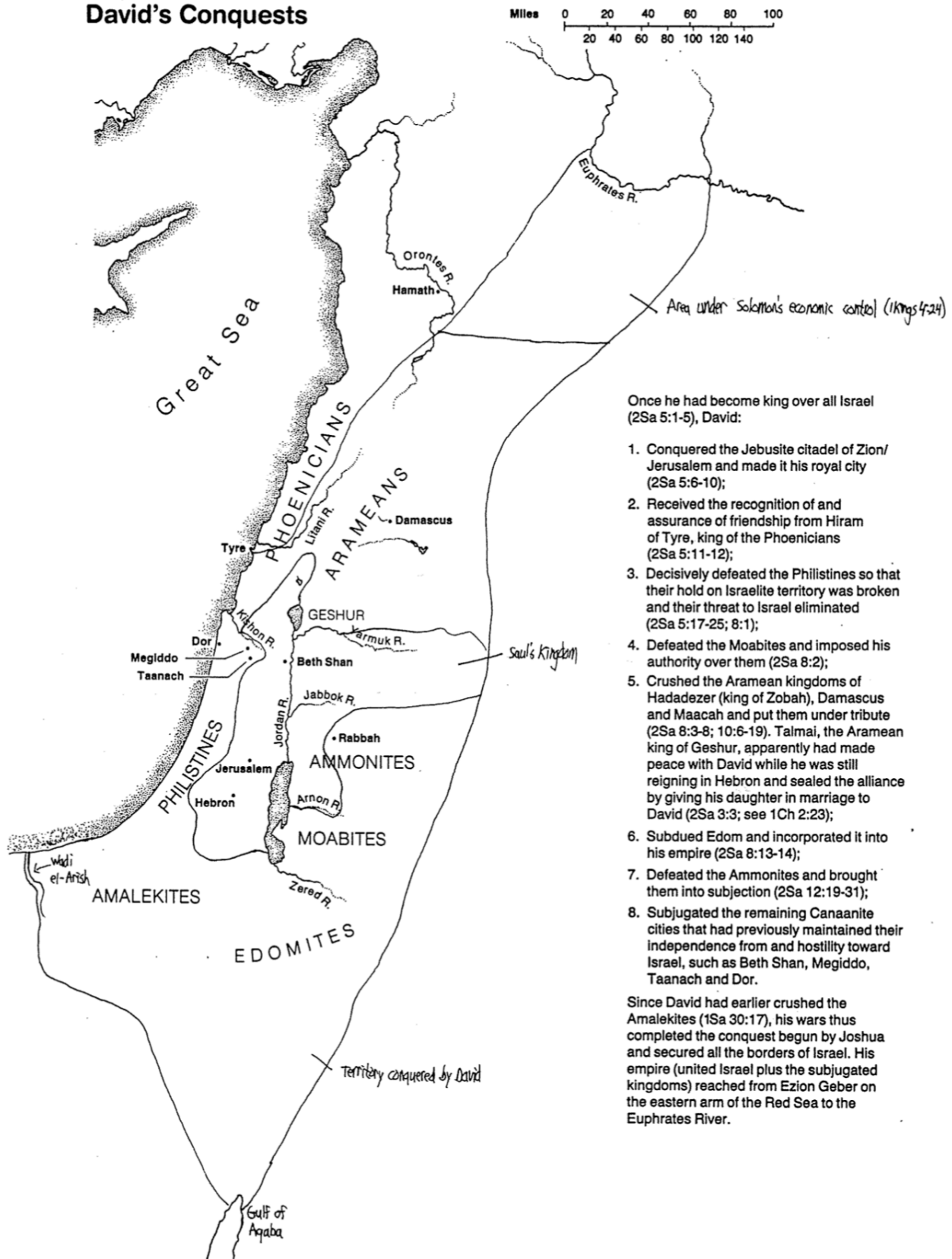
Toab probably used the water shaft (Warren's Shaft) to get into the city (2 Sam. 5:8)

David's Conquests

The Bible Visual Resource Book, 64
(Newspaper Sources and Dates Unknown)

2 Samuel

David's Conquests



Once he had become king over all Israel (2Sa 5:1-5), David:

1. Conquered the Jebusite citadel of Zion/ Jerusalem and made it his royal city (2Sa 5:6-10);
2. Received the recognition of and assurance of friendship from Hiram of Tyre, king of the Phoenicians (2Sa 5:11-12);
3. Decisively defeated the Philistines so that their hold on Israelite territory was broken and their threat to Israel eliminated (2Sa 5:17-25; 8:1);
4. Defeated the Moabites and imposed his authority over them (2Sa 8:2);
5. Crushed the Aramean kingdoms of Hadadezer (king of Zobah), Damascus and Maacah and put them under tribute (2Sa 8:3-8; 10:6-19). Talmi, the Aramean king of Geshur, apparently had made peace with David while he was still reigning in Hebron and sealed the alliance by giving his daughter in marriage to David (2Sa 3:3; see 1Ch 2:23);
6. Subdued Edom and incorporated it into his empire (2Sa 8:13-14);
7. Defeated the Ammonites and brought them into subjection (2Sa 12:19-31);
8. Subjugated the remaining Canaanite cities that had previously maintained their independence from and hostility toward Israel, such as Beth Shan, Megiddo, Taanach and Dor.

Since David had earlier crushed the Amalekites (1Sa 30:17), his wars thus completed the conquest begun by Joshua and secured all the borders of Israel. His empire (united Israel plus the subjugated kingdoms) reached from Ezion Geber on the eastern arm of the Red Sea to the Euphrates River.

Did God Approve of David's Polygamy?

Thomas S. Piper, *Good News Broadcaster* (Feb. 1977): 28

(See also page 246 of these notes)

Bible Questions Answered ■ Thomas S. Piper

2 Samuel

Did God Condone Polygamy?

Q. While reading in II Samuel 12, I noticed that Nathan said to David, "I gave thee . . . thy master's wives into thy bosom" (v. 8). David already had multiplied wives unto himself, and here the Bible says God gave him more women! This all seems contrary to God's law in Deuteronomy 17:17 and what Jesus said in Matthew 19:9. Why would God seem to go against His own word? I know God wouldn't be inconsistent, so I know there must be an answer! The idea of polygamy seems abhorrent to me.

A. It helps to consider the whole context of II Samuel 12. According to the opening verses, Nathan was giving David a lesson from God in the form of a parable—that is, a story which carries a central truth alongside it. Nathan presented the parable so effectively that David thought it was a true incident, and he even became angered at the story's villain, only to find that the story was a parable about himself and his evil treatment of Uriah.

Then Nathan twisted the knife, so to speak, by emphatically denouncing David. I can just hear Nathan speaking out in crisp and clear statements for God. They are short but pungent. Notice verses 7-12.

Nathan points out that God, who chose and made David king in the first place, had demonstrated His ability and power in the process. He had given David all he needed to carry out his reign for God over this whole people who are special and dear to the heart of God.

In verse eight, about which you asked, Nathan quotes God as saying that He had given David his master's wives into David's "bosom." I think Nathan was speaking in general terms here. He was saying that God had given David the general power to dispose of, or to govern, even the

most intimate and/or cherished aspects of the previous king's household and empire. Only a sovereign God could accomplish such a thing for someone of such lowly birth as David.

This was to startle David into realizing more vividly that his position and ministry to Israel as king had been brought about *only* by the power of God. None of the credit could go to David or to his ability in climbing the ladder to success and leadership.

I have three main reasons for thinking that we should interpret this passage in this way. The *first* is the *context*. It is true that the translation "wives into your bosom" is a good one. But remember that we must always try to understand Bible word meanings in harmony with the overall meaning or purpose of the writer.

We must ask ourselves, What was the basic reason for Nathan's speech? It was to communicate to David that, as God's appointed leader for that era, he had made a bad mistake. David needed to understand that God had witnessed every wrong action he had taken. By this parable God was demanding that it be straightened out immediately so that David could be cleansed and continue to lead Israel in a spiritual manner.

So then, to interpret verse eight in light of this overall meaning, "bosom" must simply refer to the fact that David was given a general responsibility for these wives. It doesn't imply any kind of intimate relationship or marriage in this instance. If we understand this, we see that God did not go against His own word, as it at first appears.

I found it interesting that the New American Standard Bible translators must also have taken this as the meaning, for they translated "bosom" as "care." This shows that they too must have felt that, although the Hebrew word

literally means "bosom," it was used in this passage to convey the meaning of general care of these wives.

My *second* reason for interpreting the passage in this way is my understanding of the *customs* of that day. Many of the conquered peoples became the possessions of the victors, who could do with them as they wished. It was the custom of the conquering king to fully demonstrate his victory by even taking control of the defeated king's household. Sometimes much of the household, including the wives and children, was given away to the conquering king's captains and friends.

Very seldom would these new possessions be thought of as being on the same level as the victor's own wives and children. The new possessions were relegated to an inferior level and often became common slaves. This helps us get a better insight into this ancient culture and its inhumane (to today's free peoples) treatment of conquered peoples. And if we can force our minds to envision these uncivilized methods of forced subjugation, we should also see that God did not give David a bunch of beautiful wives with whom to enter into intimate relationships. If we can, in our mind's eye, put ourselves back into that day, we will realize that this passage has nothing to do with polygamy but only with God's sovereignty and grace.

The *final* reason for my interpretation is the teaching in *all other Scripture*. You mentioned Deuteronomy 17:17 and Matthew 19:9 as verses which teach that God does not condone polygamy, and I agree that they are appropriate. Our God is unchanging. When He reveals a principle about His values in one part of the Bible, we can be assured that this will be consistently reflected throughout the Word. ■

Saul-David-Solomon Contrasts

John H. Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of the OT*, 2d ed., 29

Narrative Emphasis in the History of the United Monarchy			
	SAUL	DAVID	SOLOMON
APPOINTMENT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By Samuel 2. Public process 3. Activated by the Spirit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By Samuel 2. Long process 3. By people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By David 2. By Zadok and Nathan
SUCCESSSES AND POTENTIAL	<p>Victory over Ammonites</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taking of Jerusalem 2. Defeat of Philistines 3. Bringing ark back 4. Covenant 5. Expansion of empire 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dream and request for wisdom 2. Wisdom and administration of empire 3. Building of temple
FAILURES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impatient offering 2. Placing people under improper oath 3. Disobeying instructions in Amalekite war 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah 2. Wrongful taking of census 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreign wives' religious practices accommodated 2. Labor and tax on people
RESULTS OF FAILURES	<p>Bad judgment, incompetence, and jealousy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bloodshed within family (Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah) 2. Rebellion in kingdom (Absalom, Sheba) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Military problems 2. Division of kingdom