



1 & 2 Samuel

*1 Sam. 16:1 - 2 Sam.
1:27*

“Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” --1 Samuel 16:7

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The Rise of David and the Fall of Saul (16-31)

Chapter 16 begins with the Lord's rejection of Saul as king over Israel and YHWH announcing to Samuel, "I have provided for myself a king." The second half of the book of 1 Samuel will outline the sad fall of Saul and the ascent of David to the throne. The key comparison between the two is the character of their hearts and the quality of their relationships with the Lord.

Structure²⁸:

1. David's Success and Troubles in Saul's Service (16:1-18:30)
2. David's Help as he Flees from Saul (1 Samuel 19:1-22:5)
3. David's Innocence and Saul's Guilt (1 Sam. 22:6 - 2 Sam. 1:27)

David's Success and Troubles in Saul's Service (1 Sam 16:1-18:30)

David's Anointing by Samuel (1 Sam 16:1-23)

When Saul was anointed, the emphasis was on his stature and appearance. He was "taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward." (10:23) However, his outward appearances masked the deep insecurity of his self-hiding. (10:22) In this scene, we have exactly the opposite. Samuel is called to anoint one of Jesse's sons from the tribe of Judah. The appearance of the first of his sons, Eliab, made Samuel exclaim: "Surely the LORD's anointed is before him!" (16:6). But, he was wrong, "the LORD looks on the heart!"

The selection of David would be by divine choosing. Samuel, listened to the divine appointment and was faithful to the voice: "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." (16:12) The external sign of anointing with oil was accompanied with the internal filling of the Holy Spirit.

Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David from

²⁸ For this section we are using an outline provided by Third Mill Ministries: <http://www.thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/41772>



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that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the LORD tormented him. --1 Samuel 6:13-14

“You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head.

And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly may know that the LORD saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hand.” 1 Sam. 17:45-47

The stage was set for the rise of King David and the fall of King Saul. The Lord is sovereign and in control even over sin and the evil scheming of men.

David's Success and Saul's Initial Approval (1 Sam 17:1-18:5)

Through the workings of divine providence, YHWH would place David within the Kings court. The troubling spirit given to Saul would only be consoled by David and his lyre. David rose to champion status when he defeated the Philistine champion, Goliath, when no one else would. Rejecting the mantle of Saul's armor, David bests the giant with an unassuming shepherd's confidence in the armor of YHWH's name. The story reveals the total trust and confidence that David has in the LORD to contend with any adversary. David's strength is YHWH.

Following the victory over the Philistines, Saul would place David at the head of his troops! (18:5) The relationship between Saul and David began well. However, the people's favor of David over Saul in their battle victories would be a source of bitter jealousy for Saul.

David's Success and Saul's Jealousy (1 Sam 18:6-16)

While David's confidence was in his relationship with YHWH, Saul's came from the opinions of the people. The people began to exalt David above Saul: "Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands."

And Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, “They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?” And Saul eyed David from that day on. --1 Sam. 18:7-9



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

David's Success and Saul's Snare (1 Sam 18:17-30)

At first, Saul's bitterness toward David manifest in a desire to see David killed at the "hand of the Philistines" (18:17) Saul plotted a snare for his prey. In order to provide a motivation for David to attack the Philistines in battle, Saul offered his daughter, Michal, in marriage with the bride-price of 100 Philistine foreskins. The plot was foiled when David returned with 200!

The battle successes of David over Israel's enemies, only served to make Saul "David's enemy continually". (18:29)

Saul would take matters into his own hands.

David's Help as He Flees From Saul (1 Sam 19:1-22:5)

David is set to flight after Saul tried to pin David to a wall with his battle spear. (19:1-10)

The narrative progresses with a series of six stories of the Lord's provision for the protection of David from Saul's murderous efforts by various people. The first to help David is his wife, Michal. (19:11-17) With a bit of trickery and deception, she allows David the time to escape her father's designs. David is then aided by Samuel and the spirit of Prophecy (19:18-24). Samuel stops Saul in his tracks in the power of God.

With a secret sign using arrows and a covenant of friendship, David is helped by Jonathan (1 Sam 20:1-42). Out of a character of integrity and love for his friend, Jonathan proves to be loyal to his friend over his father's purposes.

David is fed from the bread of Presence when he is aided by the priest Ahimelech (1 Sam 21:1-9) Later, in the story 85 priests would pay the ultimate price for this kindness to David when Saul took vengeance on them through the ruthless Edomite, Doeg.(22:18) One priest would escape and flee to David. This faithful servant of the Lord would become one of David's trusted men. Jesus would use this story as justification for his disciples gleaning grain on the Sabbath. (Matt. 12:4)

*And Jonathan made
David swear again his
love for him, for he
loved him as he loved
his own soul.
--1 Sam. 20:17*



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David would temporarily flee to the aid of two gentile rulers: Ashish of Gath (1 Sam 21:10-15) the King of Moab and by Gad (1 Sam 22:1-5)

David's Innocence and Saul's Guilt (1 Sam. 22:6-2 Sam 1:27)

As 1 Samuel draws to a close, the author draws a distinct contrast between the character of David and the character of Saul. David is one who rightly consults the Lord, Saul consults the dead through a medium. David is humble in heart and will not strike the LORD's anointed, Saul seeks to do that very thing. Saul shows no mercy, David is merciful to the risk of his life.

Toward Other Israelites (1 Sam 22:6-23:6)

The loyalty of the people has shifted to David. As Saul commands the people to reveal David's whereabouts, only a Gentile Doeg responds. Saul's command to slaughter the priests loyal to David is disobeyed. Doeg becomes the executioner of 85 priests and their families. (22:19)

David is loyal to the priests in their danger and offers them refuge. Further, when the Israelite city of Keilah is attacked by a group of robbing Philistines, David and his men rush to defend the city and save its inhabitants. (23:1-5) David shows himself to be loyal to Israel, Saul proves to be the enemy and murderer of God's people.

Toward Each Other (1 Sam 23:7-26:25)

David will also prove to be loyal to the office of the King, even though the man holding the office "seeks his life". (23:15)

David Barely Escapes Saul (1 Sam 23:7-29)

As David fled Saul with his 600 men, there were several moments where Saul nearly captures him. To make matters worse, there were groups within Israel which would betray David. The Ziphites were members of David's own tribe of Judah and went and told Saul, "Is not David hiding among us?" (23:19) Were it not for a Philistine raid to distract Saul's attention, David would have been caught. Many of the Psalms were written during this time of flight. Psalm 54 was written on this particular occasion.

*O God, save me by your name, and vindicate me by your might.
2 O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.*

*3 For insolent men have risen against me; ruthless men seek my life they do not set God before themselves. Selah
--Psalm 54:1-3*



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

David Spares Saul (1 Sam 24:1-26:25)

In spite of Saul's persistence in pursuing David to take his life, David demonstrates tremendous restraint. On two occasions David has an opportunity to dispatch his enemy. However, he restrained himself and his men.

On both occasions, Saul responds with repentance:

He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

--1 Sam. 24:17-20 (cf. 26:21-25)

"I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed."

--1 Sam. 24:10

Now then, my lord, as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, because the LORD has restrained you from bloodguilt and from saving with your own hand, now then let your enemies and those who seek to do evil to my lord be as Nabal.

1 Sam. 25:26

While these occasions demonstrated to Saul the nature of David's loyalty and mercy. They also serve to reveal the unrighteous character of Saul.

Sandwiched between the two accounts of David sparing Saul's life is the occasion of David's betrayal and rebuff by Nabal another member of his own tribe--a descendant of Caleb of all people! (Chapter 25) David asked for provisions from this wealthy man, and yet was sent packing. Were it not for the thoughtfulness of Nabal's wife Abigail, David might of struck his fellow Israelite down.

Again and again, David is spared the bloodguilt of becoming an enemy to his own people and YHWH. Nabal died of his own folly by way of a heart attack and Abigail became one of David's wives.



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

Toward the Philistines (1 Sam. 27:1-2 Sam 1:27)

Ironically, the very enemies of YHWH and Israel are used to provide mercy and protection to David and justice and judgment against Saul.

The narrative diverges at the end of 1 Samuel into two parallel story lines. One tracks with David and the other Saul. In a dramatic "cliffhanger" fashion, the narrator oscillates between the two story lines until they converge with the announcement of Saul's death by the Amalekite man who assisted in his suicide.

David Fools the Philistines	(1 Sam 27:1-28:2)
Saul Sins for Fear of the Philistines	(1 Sam 28:3-25)
David Is Feared and Victorious	(1 Sam 29:1-30:31)
Saul and His Sons Die in Battle With the Philistines	(1 Sam 31:1-13)
David Reacts Innocently to Saul's Death	(2 Sam 1:1-27)

The last several chapters are filled with irony. David pretends to make himself a stench to the Israelites while living in refuge in Philistia. Instead he is going out and finishing the job of the conquest. When the Philistine leaders gather to go to war against Israel. They ask "What are these Hebrews doing here?" (29:3) David is feared among them and they expel him from their midst.

Saul on the other hand, greatly fears the Philistines. The Lord's silence and rejection becomes unbearable. In desperation, he consults a medium in Endor and summons the prophet Samuel from the dead.

David is given a great vindication over the Amalekites who had plundered his family's village. While that victory is taking place, Saul and the Israelites fall in battle to the Philistines at Gilboa. Saul dies an ignoble death in taking his own life. He and his sons become trophies for the Philistine kings in their victory.



The Bible Challenge

A daily guide to reading the Bible in a year

In 2 Sam 1, David hears of Saul's death from the Amalekite who assisted in Saul's suicide. After David, justly dispatches the slayer of the Anointed of YHWH, David raises his voice in a song of lament.

2 Sam 1:19 “Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!

²⁰ Tell it not in Gath,
publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.

²¹ “You mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor fields of offerings!^[a]
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.

²² “From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan turned not back,
and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

²³ “Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles;
they were stronger than lions.

²⁴ “You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen
in the midst of the battle!

“Jonathan lies slain on your high places.

²⁶ I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
very pleasant have you been to me;
your love to me was extraordinary,
surpassing the love of women.

²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!”