

2 SAMUEL - A STUDY GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of 2 Samuel? Who do you think wrote this book which includes events scattered over many years?
2. In some of these stories, God seems to dialogue with David (1 Samuel 22:10; 23:1-4,9-13; 30:6-8; 2 Samuel 2:1,2; 5:17-25; 21:1; 24:10-18), in others, He dialogues with David through a prophet—Nathan (2 Samuel 7:1-17; 12:1-15,24,25) or Gad (2 Samuel 24:11-13)—and eventually someone writes the account down. How was inspiration operating in all this? Was David inspired, was his prophet inspired, or was the one writing it down inspired?
3. What should be our attitude toward God in these stories? If we have real “faith” should we accept these accounts without asking questions?
4. What is revealed about God by His dealings with David? If God has foreknowledge, how could He at any point choose David as “a man after His own heart?” (1 Samuel 13:14 Compare Acts 13:22) What is it about David that made him a “man after God’s own heart?” Do Psalms 32 and 51 give you any hints? Later we are told “David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and did not turn aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5, RSV; Compare 1 Kings 11:38,39; 2 Chronicles 7:17,18) Would you agree with these statements?
5. In the context of all that David was doing at this point, why did God strike Uzzah dead just for stepping forward to stabilize the ark? (2 Samuel 6:6; Compare 1 Chronicles 13:9-14; 15; 26:4,5) Doesn’t it seem that God acts with incredible severity over sins that we consider insignificant, while other sins that we consider to be really bad seem to be ignored? What effect did Uzzah’s death have on the onlookers? What is the meaning of “David was furious because the Lord had punished Uzzah in anger?” (2 Samuel 6:8) If God consumed every sinner, there would be no one left--so why does God seem to make such an issue of “irreverence?” Compare: she-bears (2 Kings 2:24); Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-11); but contrast David and the shewbread (1 Samuel 21:1-6) and Adonijah taking hold of the altar (1 Kings 1:50,51).
6. Who changed Nathan’s message to King David and why? (2 Samuel 7:1-17) Does this mean that Nathan was really not a very reliable prophet?
7. Did Michal’s despising of David dancing in the streets have anything to do with her not having children? Why hadn’t she had any before this? (She had already had two husbands; 2 Samuel 3:13-16) Did God curse her? (2 Samuel 6:14,16,20-23)
8. Why would an anointed King of God’s people measure off his enemies and kill 2/3 of them? (2 Samuel 8:2) These were his great grandmother’s kinsmen (Ruth 4:17-22) and they had protected his parents! (1 Samuel 22:3,4)
9. What is implied by the expression “the time of the year when kings usually go to war?” (2 Samuel 11:1)
10. There is plenty of evidence that David had many wives and many concubines. (1 Samuel 25:43,44; 2 Samuel 2:1,2; 3:2; 5:13; **12:8**; 15:16; 1 Chronicles 3:1-9; 14:3-7; Compare 1 Kings 3:1 and 1 Kings 11:1-3) Where did all these wives come from? What is a concubine? In light of all these wives why did God make such an issue about Bathsheba? (2 Samuel 12:1-15) Did the evils that befell David after his sin with Bathsheba occur just as a natural result of what he had done, or was God specifically punishing David? (2 Samuel 11-18) Did David’s sin lead to the death of that first child (2 Samuel 12:14-23), then the rape of Tamar and the death of Amnon (2 Samuel 13), then the whole conflict with Absalom? (2 Samuel 14-18) Why are these events largely ignored in 1 Chronicles?

11. How would you feel about your new king Absalom if you saw him lying with his father's concubines on the roof (2 Samuel 16:20-23; Compare 2 Samuel 12:8 and 1 Kings 2:13-23)? How well was Ahithophel representing the God that he served? Do you think God had anything to do with this advice? Was this an intentional ploy to lead to Absalom's eventual destruction? What could possibly be the use of the mixed and conflicting advice of Ahithophel and Hushai (2 Samuel 17:1-14)? What could possibly be the use of recording the whole story of Absalom and his rebellion?
12. What is suggested by the statement that more men died in the forest than fell in battle by the sword (2 Samuel 18:8)?
13. What do you think of David's picture of God as presented in the victory song (2 Samuel 22; Psalms 18)? Could God be our Savior and also have "smoke pour out of his nostrils and a consuming flame and burning coals from his mouth" (2 Samuel 22:2-13)? Was David really "right" and "innocent" (2 Samuel 22:21-25)? It seems more like David when he says, "You make my enemies run from me; I destroy those who hate me...I crush them...I trample them like mud in the streets" (2 Samuel 22:41-43) What do you think David was actually thinking about when he talked about "my salvation" and "my Savior" (2 Samuel 22:2-4)?
14. In the list of David's strong men it states that one man killed 800 men in one battle (2 Samuel 23:8). How is this even possible? Compare Samson with the jawbone (Judges 15:15,16), and Shamgar with his oxgoad (Judges 3:31).
15. What caused the Lord's anger to burn against Israel to incite them to take a census (2 Samuel 24:1 Compare 1 Chronicles 21:1)? Why should all those people die because of David's sin? Even David recognized that he was the one who had sinned (2 Samuel 24:10,17).
16. What do you think led to the eventual division into "Israel" and "Judah?" Who was included in each?
17. Has the Bible been written the way God really wanted it to be written or was He limited by the understanding and language of humans? Compare Early Writings vs. Desire of Ages

"Every chapter and every verse of the Bible is a communication from God to men. We should bind its precepts as signs upon our hands and as frontlets between our eyes. If studied and obeyed, it would lead God's people, as the Israelites were led, by the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night." *Patriarchs and Prophets* 504 (1890)
18. Is it possible that irreverence is more dangerous than other sins? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7; 9:10; Compare Psalms 46:10; 111:10). How is God to get our reverence and respect, while not scaring us to death?
19. After Uzzah's death, David apparently offered sacrifices every six paces to get the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:13)! Compare also Solomon's sacrifices at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:5,62-64). Is it true that in order to impress God, one should try to offer an enormous number of sacrifices? (But see Amos 5:21-24; Isaiah 1:10-17, Hosea 6:6) Samuel had already said essentially the same thing "To obey is better than sacrifice" (1 Samuel 15:22) Even David recognized that this was true in Psalms 51. So why did they do it? Did all these sacrifices please God? Did He smell a "sweet savor"?
20. How would things have been different if they had really cooperated with God and allowed Him to conquer the land in the way He wanted etc.? What if Adam had refused to eat the fruit Eve offered him? What if Lucifer had repented? Would Jesus still have had to die?
21. Have we learned the lessons the Jews were supposed to learn and apparently didn't? Do we make the appropriate application in our own lives? Will we allow God to lead us into the heavenly Canaan? Are we even trying to finish God's work the way He wants us to? How are we supposed to determine God's will in our day? Did the Israelites think that they were following God's directions for their lives? Is there a permanent record being kept in heaven so we will be able to compare our actual lives against God's ideal?
22. God got them out of Egypt without their help. So how would He have proceeded if they had allowed Him? How should we determine God's will in our day? Compare 2 Samuel 2:1.

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