



2 SAMUEL

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QUIET TIME STUDIES

40 days in 2 Samuel

Over the next 40 days, let's dig deep into the book of 2 Samuel.

These quiet times use a fairly standard method of Bible reading with a series of questions to have in mind as you read and reflect. The aim of these questions is to keep your mind and heart engaged throughout, rather than just going through the motions. The standard questions we will ask are:

- ✍ What stands out?
- ❓ What questions do you have?
- ✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?
- 🙏 What could you pray?
- 🗣 Who could you encourage?

You may come to the end of a reading and think, *'wow, I cannot figure out how that points to Jesus and I have no idea how the passage would help me encourage anyone'*. That's fine! The standard questions we will use may not fit every passage. However, they are important to ask none the less, as they keep us open to the Spirit's leading as we read.

At times throughout the 40 days we will take a detour into the Psalms or the New Testament. This will give us some respite from the intensity of 2 Samuel (it's pretty full-on). More importantly, our detours into the Psalms will help us deepen our own devotional life and our detours into the New Testament will help us celebrate a kingdom greater than David's: the greater kingdom of Jesus. That, in the end, is our hope in opening up the Old Testament. Jesus opened these scriptures with the disciples after his resurrection to open their eyes to his glory. Make it your prayer that he will do the same with us as we delve into 2 Samuel together.

The Fall of Saul: Key Readings From 1 Samuel

This first series of readings focus on key moments from 1 Samuel. These moments will be important to set the back-story for our major focus, the book of 2 Samuel.

Day 1

The elders of Israel, prompted by the failure of Samuel's sons to judge righteously, demand a King like the nations. Samuel, following God's instruction, warns them about the reality of a King like the nations.

Read: 1 Samuel 8

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- Israel responds to Samuels poor leadership (the role of 'judge' was not hereditary) by rejecting God. Do we ever do the same?
- A bad King takes and takes and takes. What, therefore, is good leadership? Who exemplifies this?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 2

Israel rejects God and asks for a King like the nations to rule them. In answer, God gives them Saul. Is he the tyrant that Samuel warned them about, or is God treating them better than they deserve?

Read: 1 Samuel 9:1-10:8

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus (contrast Saul's appeal with Jesus as described in Isaiah 52:1-53:3)?

Notice

- Saul certainly doesn't appear to be the tyrant King of the nations. A little goofy perhaps, but still impressive, humble and able to save God's people. What does this tell us about God?
- For tomorrow's reading, what instruction does Samuel give in 10:8?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 3

Saul fails to recognise that while he may be a ruler of God's people, he is still a servant of the true King. He fails to follow the clear instruction of God, and fails to repent of his sin. The Kingdom is taken from him.

Read: 1 Samuel 13:1-15

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- God, through Samuel, had instructed Saul to wait. Yet he doesn't. How is such disobedience a fatal flaw for anyone leading God's people?
- Saul is confronted by his sin, yet he makes excuses. Do we do the same?
- The situation may have seemed dire to Saul, with his men beginning to scatter. Yet what episode from Israel's history should he have remembered to give him courage as he waited (cf. Judges 7)?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 4

Having seen King Saul's failure to wait upon the Lord's timing, spend some time reflecting on the temptations of our King, Jesus.

Read Matthew 4:1-17

✍️ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝️ How does Jesus prove himself to be the greater King?

Notice

- The temptations are centred around food, vindication and world rule. These are all things that Jesus would have in God's perfect timing. Jesus could grasp them now (like Saul) or he could wait upon the Lord.
- Consider how much God promises in the new creation: love, joy, pleasure and glory. Many of the sins we commit are due to our failure to wait. We grasp after these things now, rather than receiving them in God's timing.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣️ Who could you encourage?

Day 5

Saul has failed to listen to the true King, and so is rejected as King over God's people. Here we meet his replacement: the man God has chosen to be King.

Read: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus (perhaps consider Matthew 3:13-17)?

Notice

- God's choice of King is a surprise to Samuel. How does this fit with the broader pattern of God's choosing (cf. Deuteronomy 7:7-8)?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 6

Yesterday we saw God choosing a King for his people. Spend some time today reflecting on Psalm 78. This Psalm offers a history of God's people depicting God's anointing and later crowning of David as the great climactic moment.

Read: Psalm 78

✍️ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝️ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣️ Who could you encourage?

Day 7

Saul, the rejected King pursues David, the Lords anointed. Saul was rejected as King because, when under pressure, he chose a path of unfaithfulness. This is contrasted with David who is faithful even when the opportunity to kill Saul arises. David is prepared to wait upon the Lord's timing, rather than force his own rise to power.

Read 1 Samuel 23:7-24:22

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David's mercy inspired Saul's change of heart, temporary though it may be. What can we learn from this in regards to how we treat those who have wronged us?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 8

Yesterday we saw Saul's murderous pursuit of David and David's betrayal at the hands of the Ziphites. Meditate today on Psalm 54 and consider how David's faith in God allows him to leave right judgement in God's hands, rather than seeking his own vengeance on Saul.

Read Psalm 54

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 9

Here we see the tragic end to the reign of Saul and the beginnings of a transfer of power to David.

Read 1 Samuel 31:1 - 2 Samuel 1:16

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- One again the Philistines occupy the land (1 Samuel 31:7). Israel's pursuit of 'a King like the nations' has gained them nothing.
- There is a sense in which Saul is here reaping what he has sown: the violence he inflicted on others returns to him. What can we learn?
- David mourns for Saul, even though Saul has been hunting him throughout the land.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

The rise of David: 2 Samuel 1-10

We now turn our attention to the rise of King David, the Lord's anointed. In chapter one of 2 Samuel, God's people are in a terrible condition. They are fractured: north and south. Their enemies have a foot-hold in the land. By the end of chapter 10, David will have united God's people and driven out God's enemies. However, throughout David's rise to power we will see the seeds of his downfall being planted. David leaves us longing for a greater King: one who will be faithful, even unto death.

Day 10

David publically laments over the death of Saul and Jonathan, and leads his people to lament as well. He is soon anointed as King over the southern tribe of Judah.

Read 2 Samuel 1:17-2 Samuel 2:7

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David leads his men in a lament for Saul, their enemy. David inquires of the Lord before attempting to assume power. How is this different from Saul and pre-emptive of the reign of Jesus?

🗣 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 11

David is King of Judah (Southern Tribes) and Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, is King of Israel (Northern Tribes).
David's lament over Saul is forgotten as his men initiate war with the house of Saul.

Read 2 Samuel 2:8-3:5

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- 2:16 gives an indication of what side God is on in this day of violence.
- David is remarkably absent from this battle: neither initiating it, engaging in it or calling it to a halt.
Is this a good sign or bad sign for his Kingdom?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 12

Having seen the ruthless violence of the men surrounding David, take a moment to reflect on the following Psalm of David.

Read Psalm 5

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 13

Day 11's reading concluded with the acknowledgement that Saul's house was in decline while David's house grew strong. In a number of ways, this trend continues in today's reading. Yet our passage will end with a troubling confession from David that he is too weak to contain the violence of his subordinates.

Read 2 Samuel 3:6-39

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David leadership is a mixed bag here: he shows his wisdom in distancing himself from Joab's crime yet also fails to treat Joab according to God's law. Indeed, though David acknowledges Joab's tendency towards ruthless violence, he fails to do anything to stop it.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 14

The reigning King of the Northern Tribes, Ish-bosheth is murdered. David is crowned King over all Israel.

Read 2 Samuel 4:1-5:5

✍️ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝️ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David is again angered at the unjust death of an enemy. He refuses to obtain the throne through lawless actions. He gains the crown in God's timing, without resorting to unfaithfulness.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣️ Who could you encourage?

Day 15

Having seen David's exultation to the throne of Israel, consider Jesus' exultation to the right-hand of God.

Read Philippians 2:1-18

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How is David and Jesus' rise similar? How are they different?

🧠 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 16

Having been proclaimed King over all Israelite tribes, David sets out to claim Jerusalem as his capital and drive the Philistines from the Promised Land.

Read 2 Samuel 5:6-25

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- The reason for David's success is consistently attributed to God's faithfulness to him (5:10).
- God issues a strange command to David (5:23-24), but David obeys all the same. How does this contrast with Saul, and perhaps our own experience?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 17

Having taken Jerusalem as his political centre, David now brings the Ark that it may become the centre for the nations worship as well.

Read 2 Samuel 6:1-23

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David and Israel's lack of reverence for the Ark is quickly corrected. What differences do you notice between the first unsuccessful attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem and the second successful attempt?
- Michal is referred to as 'the daughter of Saul', rather than 'the wife of David'. What is the author emphasizing?
- Before the Ark, the King dresses as a servant.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 18

With the Ark in Jerusalem and the land experiencing peace, the King turns his thoughts to God, through whom all his victories have been won. However, God's response to David's plans is unexpected.

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-29

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus (consider Luke 1:26-33)?

Notice

- The word 'house' in the passage refers to a temple and a dynasty.
- The promise God makes to David has similarities and differences to the one made to Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).
- David hears the promise from God, and then prays for its fulfilment. How could imitating this practice change the way we pray?

🗣️ What could you pray?

🗣️ Who could you encourage?

Day 19

Read the following Psalm and reflect. What themes and episodes from 2 Samuel 1-7 do you detect in this Psalm of ascents?

Read Psalm 132

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 20

The following reading lists a number of David's victories and his brutal treatment of his enemies. It comes as a jarring note after hearing God's gracious promises in chapter 7.

Read 2 Samuel 8:1-18 and 1 Chronicles 22:6-10

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- According to Chronicles, the sort of brutality displayed by David in chapter 8 is why he will not be permitted to build God's temple. God gives the victory, yet David is still held responsible for his conduct within, and after, the battle.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 21

The story turns from a list of David's victories and his brutality on the field of battle, to a moment of kindness to a remaining member of the house of Saul.

Read 1 Samuel 20:13-15 and 2 Samuel 9:1-13

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- God's unmerited kindness to David, and God's covenant faithfulness, is here reflected in the King's treatment of Mephibosheth.
- As we see David's calling of a crippled young man from an enemy house to his table, we should think of Jesus, the son of David, who does the same for us.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 22

As was the case in chapter 9, David seeks again to show kindness to the son of someone who has treated him well. However, his good intentions lead to another battle. David's consistent success up until this point in the book will form an important contrast with the chapters that come next.

Read 2 Samuel 10:1-19

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David's success has been remarkable up to this point in the narrative. What temptations can arise for us when success and prosperity come our way?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 23

Read the following Psalm and reflect. What themes and episodes from 2 Samuel 1-10 do you detect in this Psalm of David?

Read Psalm 18

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

The fall of David: 2 Samuel 11-20

The next series of readings focus on the sin of King David, and the resulting fracture of his home and Kingdom. It is a chilling picture of the effects of sin, and a reminder of the temptations inherent in power and authority. David's failure turns our hearts to a greater King who came not to be served but to serve: not to take lives but to give his own as a ransom for many.

Day 24

The people are united under David and he has established his capital in Jerusalem. The Ark has been returned to God's people and God has given David victory over his enemies. David's house has been promised an eternal throne. Yet at the height of his power, temptation rears its ugly head. Some enemies can be driven away with the sword, but the enemy of sin remains in every heart.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-27

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David should be elsewhere (11:1).
- Uriah is the only one behaving like a righteous King in the passage.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 25

David has gone to great lengths to cover up his adultery, yet he has not escaped the eye of the true King. Just as David sent (11:4), and sent (11:6), and sent (11:14), now God does some sending of his own. The Lord sends his prophet to bring a word of judgement to David.

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-31

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David's admission is a long time coming, yet we should acknowledge that he is admitting to a capital crime. To say 'I have sinned' in this context is to accept the death penalty.
- As with Adam, sin brings down curses upon the earth. So here, sin brings down curses upon David's family. Ask yourself whether you are growing complacent about sin.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 26

David's admission of guilt seems brief. Reflect upon the following psalms as we consider David's sincerity in repentance. Take a moment to consider your own sincerity in repentance.

Read Psalm 32 and Psalm 51

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 27

David may be forgiven for the sin he has committed, yet that does not mean the consequences for his actions are magically erased. The flame of such sins can create a forest fire, as we see in the chapters to come.

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-39

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- David's sin is imitated by his son Amnon.
- Notice David's lack of initiative in the passage. Neither his fury nor his grief result in any righteous action to restrain the evil of his sons.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 28

David's decline as a King continues. Joab, a man of violence, traps David into allowing Absalom to return. David feebly keeps his son at arms-length, a strategy that will have its own consequences in later chapters.

Read 2 Samuel 14:1-33

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- The King allows 2 deceivers to occupy positions of trust in the chapter. There are serpents loose in the King's Eden.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 29

In the previous chapter Absalom returns and David offers him nothing but a kiss. Now David reaps the reward of his failure to exercise proper rule.

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-37

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- Absalom's handsome appearance has been described in chapter 14. Now we see it matched by the power of his deceptive words. He encourages the long standing suspicion of the Northern Tribes that David does not have their best interest at heart.
- The curses upon David's household following his sin with Bathsheba continue to become a reality. However, we should note that they are the result of David's failure, rather than the direct intervention of God. David has been given over to the consequences of his sin.

💡 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 30

David's exile from Jerusalem continues. He finds himself being publically humiliated. Spend some time reflecting on this passage and the psalm David wrote as he fled Absalom.

Read 2 Samuel 16:1-14 and Psalm 3

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 31

David's flight from Jerusalem, through the Kidron valley to the Mount of Olives, mirrors Jesus own on the night he was betrayed. David, the Lord's anointed, experiences a kiss with a betrayer (14:33), the defection of those close to him (16:3) and public humiliation (16:13). These too are mirrored by Jesus. Read the following passage and reflect on the 'Davidic' themes throughout.

Read Matthew 26:1 – 27:44

✍ What stands out?

✝ What Davidic themes do you find throughout?

🧠 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 32

The result of David's sin continues to spread through his family and the nation. The peace he forged amongst the tribes evaporates as the nation implodes in the court of the new King. Yet the chapter ends with expressions of fealty to King David. Perhaps God will yet keep his promise to the failed King.

Read 2 Samuel 16:15-17:29

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 33

With Absalom's death, David returns to the throne, yet there is no gloating victory here. David is the broken-hearted father. His failure to restrain Joab now leading to the unnecessary death of his son.

Read 2 Samuel 18:1-19:8

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- Joab's assessment of the situation in 19:5-7 reads also as a veiled threat. He is, after all, the leader of the army that he warns will leave David.
- David accepts Joab's rebuke, yet does not follow his advice fully. He sits at the gate, rather than going out to the disenfranchised army.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 34

Yesterday we left David in a state of great grief and anguish over the death of his son. Reflect on the following Psalm of David where we see him compose from a place of anguish. What truths about God help him cope throughout his grief?

Read Psalm 22

✍ What stands out?

❓ What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 35

The tribes of Israel are in turmoil and even David's own tribe is resistant to his re-instatement as King. David shrewdly replaces Joab with Amasa, Absalom's army commander in an effort to win back the tribe of Judah. David's slow exodus from Jerusalem as he fled Absalom is here reversed. As he returns he meets many of the same characters he encountered as he left.

Read 2 Samuel 19:9-43

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- Shimei's mockery of David now turns to a plea for forgiveness. David chooses the path of mercy.
- Mephibosheth's rebellion now turns to contrition. David chooses the path of mercy.
- Barzillai's loyalty continues. Yet in his declining of David's invitation we hear a subtle critique of the royal court's hedonism. Here we see the wisdom of a man who has seen the entire Ark of David's career.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 36

Just as it seems stability will return to the nation, another rebellion breaks out, led by Sheba from the tribe of Saul. In the midst of the rebellion, Joab seeks his revenge Amasa, the man who replaced him as army commander. Armies meet again at “the large stone in Gibeon”, where the civil war between the house of David and Saul began. Bloodshed ensues and the rebellion is put down. This section ends with David reigning, once again, as King in Jerusalem.

Read 2 Samuel 20:1-26

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- Nathan the prophet is strangely absent from the list of David’s inner circle (20:23-26), even though he will remain into the reign of Saul. What may this indicate?

🧠 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Epilogue: 2 Samuel 21-24

The final four chapters of 2 Samuel form an epilogue to the book offering some important perspectives on the Kingdom of David and its relationship with the Kingdom of God. These chapters are not arranged chronologically. It is probable the events described occurred during the middle years of David's reign. Rather, these chapters are arranged thematically. John Woodhouse arranges them as follows.

A) 21:1-14 A Problem in David's Kingdom: God's wrath, part 1.

B) 21:15-22 The strength of David's Kingdom: his mighty men, part 1.

C) 22:1-51 The hope of David's Kingdom: the Lord's promise, part 1.

C) 23:1-7 The hope of David's Kingdom: the Lord's promise, part 2

B) 23:8-39 The strength of David's Kingdom: his mighty men, part 2

A) 24:1-25 A problem in David's Kingdom: God's wrath, part 2.

Day 37

The epilogue begins with a story referring to a time of national famine and the terrible sequence of events that follow. When this event occurred is unclear, yet the appearance of Mephibosheth may indicate it was after 2 Samuel 9. The second section of the epilogue, also covered today, considers the strength of those surrounding David.

Read 2 Samuel 21:1-22

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus (consider Romans 5:6-11)?

Notice

- Saul and his house have blood on their hands for their betrayal of the Gibeonites; Canaanite people who had been granted clemency and mercy (cf Joshua 9:3-27).
- David enquires of the Lord regarding the reason for the famine, yet God is forgotten as David figures out how to atone for the actions of Saul.
- God ends the famine after David honours those executed, rather than after the Gibeonites grisly execution. David thought he knew how to make atonement, yet it appears he did not.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 38

The centre of the epilogue are two songs or poems where David honours God. The first written before David's sin with Bathsheba and the second after. They provide an interesting contrast. In the first David sees God's faithfulness as a result of his own righteousness. In the second, having proved he is anything but 'blameless', David acknowledges his only hope is in God's 'everlasting covenant'.

Read 2 Samuel 22:1-23:7

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 39

As 2 Samuel comes to a close we see the mirror image to how the epilogue began. Again we see the exploits of the mighty men surrounding David, and a chilling story where David must deal with the righteous wrath of God.

Read 2 Samuel 23:8-24:25

✍ What stands out?

? What questions do you have?

✝ How does the reading point to Jesus?

Notice

- For all the brave exploits of David listed, the role-call of mighty men ends with Uriah. Even here David sin is remembered.
- As with the first story of the of the epilogue, God's wrath runs its course according to God's own timing rather than David's attempts to atone. God calls the angel to withdraw his hand well before David builds and altar and makes a sacrifice.

🙏 What could you pray?

🗣 Who could you encourage?

Day 40

In our reading yesterday, as 2 Samuel came to an end, David cries out *“I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family.”* David is wrong to assume God’s punishment of the people had no basis. Chapter 24 begins with God’s anger burning against Israel. Yet in his plea to stand in the place of the people we see the heart of a true King. David, a sinner himself, could not stand in the place of the people. Yet the day would come when King David’s greater son would fulfil both David’s longing and ours.

Read Mark 15:1-39 and Romans 5:1-11

🗣️ What could you pray?

🗣️ Who could you encourage?