

## **BIG WORD: 2 Samuel**

Homework for Chapters 1—4

Discussion Dates: 26 September 2012 (in house)  
and 27 September 2012 (online)

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### **DAY ONE: Overview**

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 2 Samuel 1—4.

If possible, read all four chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

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### **DAY TWO: Saul's Death**

The Bible offers three different accounts of Saul's death.

- 1 Samuel 31
- 2 Samuel 1
- 1 Chronicles 10

What differences do you see in these three passages?

How do you explain those variances?

What was David's first act upon hearing of Saul's death?

Why is this significant?

What do you find most interesting about David's song for Saul and Jonathan (1:17—27)? Try to list three things.

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**DAY THREE: Two Kings**

One might assume that since Samuel anointed David as King of Israel over 15 years prior, the death of Saul would offer an automatic "shoo-in" for David. Unfortunately, the people so committed to King Saul were unaware of Samuel's private coronation. In fact, they had spent the last ten years hunting him down and trying to kill him!

And so, upon Saul's death, the nation had two kings.

**READ 2 Samuel 2:1—7.**

What was David's first act after his mourning for Saul and Jonathan ended (2:1)?

What does this say about his character?

Who anointed David as king this time? (See verse 4.)

Over what regions?

What was David's first act as king (2:5—7)?

Why is this significant?

**READ 2 Samuel 2:8—11.**

Who initiated this coronation?

What do we know about Ishbosheth?

Over what regions was Ishbosheth made king?

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#### **DAY FOUR: Who's who and for whom?**

Israel had two kings, both of whom wanted to rule it all. Enter civil war. Let's take a look at the major players and how their stories intertwine.

**DAVID'S ARMY:** Joab, Abishai and Asahel were all David's nephews, sons of his sister Zeruah. These three men were counted among David's Mighty Men. We'll learn more about the Mighty Men in chapter 23. You can also read a full list of those included in 1 Chronicles 11-12.

**Joab** (*whose name means 'the LORD is his father'*) was David's commander-in-chief. However, he may not have earned that position until the events recorded here. 2 Samuel 2 is the first time he's mentioned directly in Scripture. (*He is mentioned in 1 Samuel, but only as a familial identifier for Abishai.*) After this he continues to resurface in 2 Samuel, 1 Kings and 1 Chronicles. He was loyal to David, but mostly in those endeavors that promised bloodshed. He assisted his king with the murder of Uriah, yet disobeyed his instructions of mercy (with Abner, 2 Sam. 3, and with Absalom, 2 Sam. 18). Joab led successful campaigns against the armies of Syria, Ammon and Edom. He was a brilliant military man, but failed to embrace, perhaps comprehend, compassion or forgiveness.

**Abishai** is first mentioned in 1 Samuel 26. There we learn of Abishai's courage. He volunteered to join David on a secret mission into Saul's camp. Take a moment to read that chapter. It is a significant event because it reveals Abishai's passionate allegiance to David as well as David's devout loyalty to God's anointed. Abishai's devotion to his king continues throughout the book of 2 Samuel. We can read additional accounts of his deeds in 1 Chronicles 18 and 19.

**Asahel** was likely the youngest of these three brothers. He was a commander in David's army, but not of the same rank. While Joab was the commander-in-chief and Abishai led an entire regiment, Asahel's leadership was seasonal. There were 24,000 men in his division; they served only during the fourth month of each year (1 Chron. 27:7). His son Zebadiah succeeded him to this post.

**ISHBOSHETH'S ARMY:** Saul's son has only one person in his militia mentioned by name: Abner.

**Abner** is a significant character, one present since the monarchy was born and is first mentioned in 1 Samuel 14. He served as commander of Saul's army and, in that role, transferred the crown to the king's son, Ishbosheth. He was esteemed by King Saul, so much that he often dined at the king's table. It was Abner who looked after David during the Philistine battle with Goliath (1 Sam 17). The two crossed paths a number of times during Saul's pursuit of David. David publicly mocked Abner at one point (1 Sam.

26:13—16), but only to emphasize his (David's) allegiance to God's anointed. Later in David's reign, Abner's son, Jaasiel, is appointed leader of the tribe of Benjamin (1 Chron. 27:21).

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### **DAY FIVE: The Battle of Gibeon & for the Throne**

Abner challenged David's army to a battle at the pool of Gibeon. The cistern is actually about twenty-three miles north of Gibeon which puts the battlefield nearly equidistant from David's headquarters in Hebron and Ishbosheth's in Mahanaim.

Originally the plan was to send out twelve warriors from each army and let them duke it out. The logic reminds me of the Philistines' methods and Goliath's challenge back in 1 Samuel 17. It didn't end well for them then and it didn't end well here either.

#### **READ 2 Samuel 2:24—28.**

What do you make of this? Why would Abner suggest a truce and why would Joab accept it so easily?

While that one bloody battle lasted only a day, 2 Samuel 3:1 tells us that the war was long. According to 2:10, Ishbosheth reigned for only two years. It is safe to assume the war had about the same lifespan. During that time, David had five sons, each from a different wife (see 3:2—5).

Chapter 3 describes the major turning point in the war and, indeed, the battle for the throne of Israel.

#### **READ 2 Samuel 3:1—21.**

Of what did Ishbosheth accuse Abner?

Why is this significant?

What was Abner's response? What vow did he make before Ishbosheth?

David accepts Abner's defection, but with what conditions?

#### **READ 2 Samuel 3:22—39.**

Joab was not as eager as David to accept Abner. What reasons did he have had to kill him, against the king's wishes?

David takes mourning very seriously, even when mourning his enemies. What does this say about his character?

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**DAY SIX: The Death of Ishbosheth**

Before Abner defected, he had increased power within Ishbosheth's kingdom (3:6). This helped in his attempts to garner the support of Israel and the tribe of Benjamin for David. (See 2 Sam. 3:17—19). When news of Abner's death reached Ishbosheth, the son of Saul, panic rose within the kingdom.

READ 2 Samuel 4:5—12.

Two men, brothers, seized opportunity. With their kingdom crumbling, they surely wanted to gain favor within the coming regime. What were their names?

What did they do?

What was David's response?

Verse 4 offers an odd interruption to the narrative. Why do you think this is here?

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**DAY SEVEN: David's Heart**

David has been called "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). This does not mean that he is perfect. It means he values God's will above His own; he has a right, humble standing before Him. He exhibits characteristics that delight God.

How did David exhibit each of these traits throughout what we studied this week?

- Wisdom

- Patience
- Trust in God
- Compassion
- Mercy

Which of these attributes do you struggle to exhibit?

What might happen to the situations you currently face, if you improved in these areas?