BIBLE TOPICS · OLD TESTAMENT

King David

Shepherd, Psalmist and King · c. 1040–970 B.C.

Bethlehem
Born the son of Jesse

40 Years
King, c. 1010–970 B.C.

Jerusalem
The city of David

73 Psalms
Bear his name

TIMELINE

Timeline of David's Life

1 · c. 1040 B.C. · Ruth 4:17–22
Born in Bethlehem
The youngest son of Jesse, great-grandson of Boaz and Ruth.

2 · 1 Samuel 16
Anointed by Samuel
God chooses the shepherd boy, and the Spirit comes upon him.

3 · 1 Samuel 17
Goliath Defeated
In the valley of Elah, one stone in the name of the Lord.

4 · 1 Samuel 18–20
Saul's Court
Jonathan's friendship, Michal's marriage, Saul's jealous spear.

5 · 1 Samuel 21–30
Years on the Run
Adullam, En-gedi, Ziklag; he spares Saul twice.

6 · c. 1010 B.C. · 2 Samuel 2
King of Judah
Anointed at Hebron at thirty; reigns there seven and a half years.

7 · c. 1003 B.C. · 2 Samuel 5
King of All Israel
Takes Jerusalem and makes it the city of David.

8 · 2 Samuel 6
The Ark Comes Home
David dances before the Lord as the ark enters Jerusalem.

9 · 2 Samuel 7
God's Covenant
A house, a kingdom and a throne established for ever.

10 · 2 Samuel 11–12
Sin and Repentance
Bathsheba and Uriah; Nathan's "Thou art the man"; Psalm 51.

11 · 2 Samuel 15–18
Absalom's Revolt
David flees Jerusalem; Absalom dies in the wood of Ephraim.

12 · c. 970 B.C. · 1 Kings 1–2
Solomon Crowned
David charges his son, dies, and is buried in the city of David.

KEY VERSE

"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after Mine own heart, which shall fulfil all My will."

Acts 13:22 (KJV)

Places in David's Life

1 SAMUEL 16 – 1 KINGS 2

Places in David's Life

From the fields of Bethlehem to the throne in Jerusalem

c. 1040–970 B.C. · Positions approximate



THE PLACES IN ORDER

1 Bethlehem — 1 Samuel 16:1–13
Born, and anointed by Samuel

2 Valley of Elah — 1 Samuel 17
David defeats Goliath

3 Gibeah — 1 Samuel 18–19
Saul's home; David serves at court

4 Gath — 1 Samuel 21:10–15; 27
Flees to Achish, king of Gath

5 Cave of Adullam — 1 Samuel 22:1–2
400 men gather to David

6 En-gedi — 1 Samuel 24
Spares Saul in the cave

7 Carmel — 1 Samuel 25
Abigail turns David from revenge

8 Ziklag — 1 Samuel 27; 30
Home in exile; town raided and won back

9 Mount Gilboa — 1 Samuel 31
Saul and Jonathan fall in battle

10 Hebron — 2 Samuel 2:1–4; 5:1–5
King of Judah for seven and a half years

11 Jerusalem — 2 Samuel 5:6–10
Taken from the Jebusites; the city of David

12 Mahanaim — 2 Samuel 17:24–29
Refuge during Absalom's revolt

"And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him."

2 SAMUEL 5:10

Sites such as Ziklag, Adullam and Mahanaim cannot be located with certainty; positions are approximate.

Family and People

FAMILY

David’s Family

David came from a faithful family in Bethlehem, and his own family shaped both the joys and the sorrows of his reign.

His Family Line

GREAT-GRANDPARENTS
Boaz and Ruth
The kinsman-redeemer and the faithful Moabite widow.
RUTH 4:13

GRANDFATHER
Obed
“He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.”
RUTH 4:17

FATHER
Jesse
A man of Bethlehem with eight sons; David was the youngest.
1 SAMUEL 16:10–11

DAVID
David
Shepherd, warrior, psalmist and king of Israel.
RUTH 4:22

Wives Named in Scripture

Michal
Saul’s daughter, who loved David and saved his life.
1 SAMUEL 18:20; 19:11–17

Abigail
The wise widow of Nabal of Carmel.
1 SAMUEL 25:39–42

Ahinoam
Of Jezreel, mother of Amnon, his firstborn.
2 SAMUEL 3:2

Bathsheba
Wife of Uriah, later the mother of Solomon.
2 SAMUEL 11:3; 12:24

Sons Who Shaped the Story

Amnon
The firstborn; his sin against Tamar began the family’s troubles.
2 SAMUEL 13

Absalom
Handsome and proud; he led a revolt and died in battle.
2 SAMUEL 15–18

Adonijah
Tried to make himself king as David grew old.
1 KINGS 1:5

Solomon
Loved by the Lord, crowned king, and builder of the temple.
2 SAMUEL 12:24; 1 KINGS 1:39

Nathan
Through him Luke traces the family line to Jesus.
2 SAMUEL 5:14; LUKE 3:31

Joab, Abishai, Asahel
Sons of his sister Zeruiah and leaders of his army.
1 CHRONICLES 2:16

FRIENDS AND FOES

People in David’s Life

The men and women around David show God’s hand in his life, for good and for correction.

PROPHET
Samuel
Anointed David king and sheltered him at Ramah.
1 SAMUEL 16:13; 19:18

KING
Saul
Israel’s first king; he loved David, then hunted him.
1 SAMUEL 16:21; 18:11

FRIEND
Jonathan
Saul’s son, loyal to David at the cost of his own crown.
1 SAMUEL 18:1–4; 20:42

GIANT
Goliath
The Philistine of Gath who defied the living God.
1 SAMUEL 17:4, 50

PEACEMAKER
Abigail
Her wise words kept David from shedding blood.
1 SAMUEL 25:32–33

COMMANDER
Joab
David’s nephew and general, fierce and often ruthless.
2 SAMUEL 8:16; 18:14

PROPHET
Nathan
Brought God’s covenant and later God’s rebuke.
2 SAMUEL 7:4; 12:7

KINDNESS
Mephibosheth
Jonathan’s lame son, who ate at the king’s table.
2 SAMUEL 9:7, 13

COUNSELLOR
Hushai
David’s friend who defeated Ahithophel’s advice.
2 SAMUEL 15:32–37; 17:14

Psalms and God’s Covenant

THE SWEET PSALMIST

The Psalms of David

Seventy-three psalms carry David’s name in their titles, and the New Testament names him as the writer of others too (Acts 4:25; Hebrews 4:7). Many were born out of real moments in his life: fleeing Saul, hiding in a cave, confessing his sin. Here are six to know.

PSALM 23

The Shepherd Psalm

The shepherd king sees the Lord as his Shepherd.

“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”

PSALM 23:1

PSALM 51

A Prayer of Repentance

Written after Nathan came to him.

“Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned”

PSALM 51:4

PSALM 18

A Song of Deliverance

Sung when God delivered him from Saul; also in 2 Samuel 22.

“The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer”

PSALM 18:2

PSALM 27

Confidence in God

Courage in the face of enemies.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?”

PSALM 27:1

PSALM 139

Known by God

God sees and knows us completely.

“I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made”

PSALM 139:14

PSALM 110

David’s Lord

Quoted by Jesus about Himself (Matthew 22:43–45).

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.”

PSALM 110:1

For all 150 psalms, book by book, see our Psalms page.

2 SAMUEL 7

God’s Covenant with David

When David wanted to build a house for God, God promised to build David a “house,” a royal family that would never end. This promise, the Davidic covenant, runs through the rest of the Bible and is fulfilled in Jesus.

GOD PROMISED	FULFILLED
“I will set up thy seed after thee” 2 SAMUEL 7:12	**Solomon followed David, and Jesus came as David’s greater Son** 1 KINGS 2:12; MATTHEW 1:1
“He shall build an house for My name” 2 SAMUEL 7:13	**Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem** 1 KINGS 6:14; 8:20
“I will be his father, and he shall be My son” 2 SAMUEL 7:14	**Hebrews applies these words to Jesus, the Son of God** HEBREWS 1:5
“Thy throne shall be established for ever” 2 SAMUEL 7:16	**“And of His kingdom there shall be no end”** LUKE 1:32–33

> *“I have made a covenant with My chosen, I have sworn unto David My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations.”*
>
> Psalm 89:3–4 (KJV)

KING DAVID AT A GLANCE · PART 5 OF 5

David and Jesus, Lessons and Themes

THE SON OF DAVID

David and Jesus

The New Testament opens by calling Jesus “the son of David” and closes with Jesus calling Himself “the root and the offspring of David.” Here is how David’s life points to Christ.

The Son of David

Jesus is born into David’s royal line.

“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.”

MATTHEW 1:1

Born in David’s City

Like David, Jesus is born in Bethlehem.

“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

LUKE 2:11

Heir to David’s Throne

The angel tells Mary that her Son will reign for ever.

“and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David”

LUKE 1:32

David’s Lord

David called his descendant “Lord,” for He is God the Son.

“If David then call Him Lord, how is He his son?”

MATTHEW 22:45

The Good Shepherd

David risked his life for his sheep; Jesus gave His.

“I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.”

JOHN 10:11

The Root of David

Jesus is both David’s ancestor as God and his descendant as man.

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”

REVELATION 22:16

> *“Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.”*
>
> Isaiah 9:7 (KJV)

FOR TODAY

Lessons from David’s Life

David was not perfect, but his heart kept turning back to God. His life still teaches us how to walk with the Lord.

1

Face Your Giants with God

David remembered how God had helped him before.

“The LORD that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me”

1 SAMUEL 17:37

2

Find Strength in the Lord

When all seemed lost at Ziklag, David turned to God first.

“but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.”

1 SAMUEL 30:6

3

Be a True Friend

David and Jonathan kept faith with each other, and David kept it with Jonathan’s son.

“The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever.”

1 SAMUEL 20:42

4

Confess Sin Quickly

David did not excuse himself when Nathan spoke; he confessed.

“I have sinned against the LORD.”

2 SAMUEL 12:13

5

Give God Your Best

David would not offer God what cost him nothing.

“neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing.”

2 SAMUEL 24:24

6

Serve Your Generation

David prepared the way for Solomon and the temple.

“For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep”

ACTS 13:36

KEY THEMES

Six Themes of David’s Life

These six threads run through David’s story from the sheepfold to the throne.

1

God Looks on the Heart

God passed over David’s taller brothers and chose the youngest, out with the sheep.

“for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.”

1 SAMUEL 16:7

2

The Battle Is the Lord’s

David faced Goliath trusting God, not armour or size.

“for the battle is the LORD’s”

1 SAMUEL 17:47

3

Waiting for God’s Time

Anointed as a youth, David waited years and twice refused to kill Saul.

“The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD’s anointed”

1 SAMUEL 24:6

4

Wholehearted Worship

David brought the ark to Jerusalem with joy and gave Israel its songs of praise.

“And David danced before the LORD with all his might”

2 SAMUEL 6:14

5

Sin, Repentance and Mercy

David fell badly, confessed honestly, and found forgiveness, though sin’s sorrow followed.

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.”

PSALM 51:10

6

God Keeps His Covenant

God promised David a house and a throne for ever, fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

“thy throne shall be established for ever.”

2 SAMUEL 7:16