

## Lesson 20 II Samuel 1 - 12:25

### STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Can you imagine with your present Christian conscience meeting David? What things about him would be attractive? What things about him would be hard to understand or accept?
2. Before David's reign is established, we see the north (Israel) and the south (Judah) reacting like two separate countries with different loyalties. Note how this happens and how it is temporarily resolved.
3. Before you read Samuel, how many of David's wives had you ever heard of? Which one is the "mother of Israel" in the line of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Ruth? Why is she chosen? Tradition says Proverbs 31 was written by her as a gift poem to her son Solomon at his marriage. What does it reveal about her? Contrast her with Abigail, David's earlier wife.
4. There is much treachery recorded. Is David different?
5. What do you make of the "breaking out of God against Uzzah? What is David's reaction? The Church fathers see in the words of the incident of David's rejoicing in front of the ark similarities to Mary's visitation of Elizabeth (Luke 2). In what way?
6. In its significance to Salvation History, why is chapter 7 of II Samuel the high point of David's reign?

### Psalm 89 and prayer

**David is told of Saul's death.** After the death of Saul on Mt. Gilboa, the men of Jabesh-gilead courageously go up to Beth-shean, recover the bodies from the wall and take them back for decent burial. An Amalekite (note the nationality) comes to David and claims responsibility for dispatching Saul. He thinks David will be glad that he is dead. It is implied that he saw what really happened there – Saul's suicide, then thinks he will capitalize on the situation. He takes the crown and armbands and runs to David, only to be killed for having anything to do with the death of the Lord's anointed. As a liar and mercenary, he may have had it coming. If he really was the one to run

Saul through, David's judgment is on him for having killed God's king. David's loyalty to Saul is complete, he eulogizes him in a poem song,

**David is crowned king of Judah.** After Saul's death, David moves from Ziklag to Hebron. Here he is crowned king of Judah. There has been a natural division of the tribes into south and north for some time. Now the Scripture is no longer presenting names of the tribes and their territories, but in general they speak of two major divisions - Judah on the south, and Israel on the north. Rivals, they seem always to want to divide along a line which in time to come even threatens David's united kingdom with fracture.

**Ishbosheth (Ishbaal) rules Israel.** Saul's son, Ishbosheth ( or Ishbaal) is set up as king over Israel in Mahanaim. Perhaps he has some disability, or is too young, because he was not with his father and brothers in the battle at Mt. Gilboa. Saul's uncle and commander of Israel's army, Abner, stands behind him as the real power. From Mahanaim in the Trans-Jordan, Ishbosheth rules the north, or what is left of the north; really the Philistines control most of the territory. David, recently anointed by the elders of Judah, rules the south, or serves as the Hebrew head of the south which is also under domination of the Philistines. Because David has had a good relationship with the kings of the Philistines, he is treated as a tolerable tribute-paying vassal as he rules from Hebron. Always a good politician, he woos Jabesh-gilead by sending an envoy to congratulate them on their allegiance and loyalty to Saul. A look at the map shows Jabesh-gilead in the neighborhood of Mahanaim. Was he looking for allies there under Saul's son's nose? The attempt seems to fall flat.

**War begins between David and Saul's house.** The battles begin between Saul's forces under Abner and David's men under the command of Joab. David's three nephews by his sister Zeruah: Abner, Asahel and Abishai are a handful. He often complains that he can't control them. On their part they are fiercely loyal to him. Nevertheless, they often take things into their own hands. The baffle at the pool of Gibeon is a joust, or a contest, where the winner would be given the victory without involvement of a whole army; but it turns into an all-out baffle. In fleeing, Abner is followed by Asahel whom he is forced to kill

when he does not heed Abner's warnings. Joab allow a truce, but blood revenge for the death of his brother demands action in the future. Abner gets back safely to Mahanaim. Joab goes back to David in Hebron.

**Abner is the power behind the throne.** Abner takes one of Saul's concubines, a clear sign of his usurpation of Saul's power, and Ishbosheth resents it bitterly. The ensuing argument has Abner give up on Ishbosheth. He makes plans to turn the north, Israel, over to David. He finally concludes this with a covenant and feast with David in Hebron which seals the agreement uniting the north and the south. When coming back from a foray Joab finds this out; he calls Abner to him and treacherously kills him. By this act Joab rids David of a possible rival and future troublemaker, but probably equally in Joab's mind is the control he will have as commander of the united armies. Clearly David's alliance with Abner would have meant Abner would command the armies. Joab has also settled with Abner for killing his brother Asahel, blood revenge is satisfied. However, it is a problem for David. After all, Abner was still in Hebron under David's jurisdiction when he was killed, and David was responsible for his safety. By law he should have executed Joab; he wasn't hesitant to do this when others had been betrayed or their honor besmirched. However, David never feels he has the strength, as he often complains, to adequately discipline these nephews of his; and he curses Joab, but does not kill him. Actually Joab is very useful to David. Later he leaves instructions to his son, Solomon, to take care of Joab, postponing for years the just reward for his treachery.

**David is politically astute.** He never misses a trick when it comes to making good political decisions. His display of grief for Abner is convincing, and the unification that Abner has arranged goes through despite his death. Before the elders of Israel (the north) anoint him their king, Ishbosheth is killed by two who do not understand David's commitment and promise to the house of Saul. They bring him the head of Ishbosheth, again probably expecting a reward. They get their reward. They are immediately killed for their audacity. But the way is

now clear for David; he may have been secretly relieved, but he never displays such ambitious or ambiguous feelings.

David consolidates a kingdom. Abner and Ishbosheth are buried in Hebron with honor. David is anointed by the elders of Israel. He begins his wise moves of consolidation. First, he defeats the city of Jerusalem which has remained outside Hebrew control. The city is neutral, having no association with either north or south. It also lies midway between both. David makes it his central command city which it is for the Jews from that time forward. He builds himself a fine house of Lebanon cedar.

Now the Philistines are concerned. They didn't bother David when he seemed to be a mere chieftain of Hebron who paid them tribute. They didn't bother him when he was fighting Ishbosheth; "let them kill each other off," they thought; but now that David has conquered Jerusalem, and has consolidated the Hebrews, north and south, it is a different matter. They come up to take care of David, and are defeated in the Rephaim valley just outside of Jerusalem. And soundly defeated twice.

**David's second wise move is to bring up the ark.** He is a religious man, but this is also a good piece of policy. He brings together all the great meaningful things of Hebrew tradition into one central spot - the King and the ark. The death of Uzzah shocks David and he delays the plan, but the book of Chronicles tells us that the reason Uzzah died was because the Law had not been taken into account in their handling of the ark. They had been sloppy about the Law's requirements. That could not be tolerated - a dangerous precedent. Knowledge of the Law must come to the forefront for a successful God-centered kingdom. The ark must be handled like the holy object it is. The Interpreter's Bible has other insights: "we do not know what Uzzah did, since the word for *his hand* does not occur in the text, and where it does occur. . . it has been inserted in a vain attempt to make sense of the Hebrew of the present passage. We do not know what the oxen did, for the verb means "to drop" and it is always used transitively; it cannot mean either stumbled or kicked. . . the starting point for . . . conjecture is that Uzzah was believed to have been punished in vs. 7 for what he did in vs. 6. Now he is said to be punished for 'his slip.' He slipped because the oxen had been dropping - a euphemism which we use in English too for dunging.

The cause of his death was the blow on his head from the bare rock of the threshing floor.” However it occurred, David rightly saw the hand of God in the accident.

**From the story of the ark comes a foretelling of the Blessed Virgin Mary.** The three months the ark resides in the house of Obededom blesses that house. From this part of the story comes the parallel to Mary and the Visitation - “how can it be that the mother of my Lord comes to me” says Elizabeth akin to David’s wonder, “Now can the ark of the Lord come to me?” Also Elizabeth rejoices before Mary and her unborn child leaps, as David rejoices and dances with all his strength before the ark - both Mary and the ark hold within them *the Word of God*. The ark stays with Obededom three months blessing the home, Mary stays with Elizabeth three months blessing her home.

**Michal is reclaimed by David.** A third move of David to consolidate the north and south does not seem humane. Michal, who was first given to David by Saul, and then given by Saul to another man, is to be returned to David. She has not been with him for over ten years and is happily married, but he demands her as his legal right and his legal tie to the house of Saul, which makes him the successor of that royal house. At the time the ark is taken into Jerusalem midst great rejoicing, David dances only in an ephod . the priestly apron. The fact that he wears an ephod and makes sacrifices show that lines between king and priest are blurred at the time. Michal, who has been so hurt by him, observes his unselfconscious, joyful display and despises him more. David turns against her; she never bears a child for David.

**The prophecy of Nathan to David, given in II Samuel 7, provides a great stepping stone in Salvation History.** From God’s call to Abraham to the reign of David is about 1000 years. In Abraham’s close relationship with God three tremendous promises: tremendous for the implications they held for the future of the whole world, were given. These promises are so potent that they are never forgotten but clung to tenaciously through all the ups and downs of His People’s generations (Gen 12:2-3, Gen 13: 15-17). We recall that God promised Abraham first

that his descendants, to come from two old people “as good as dead,” would be as numerous as the sand of the sea and would become a great nation. Then that God would give this nation a land, Gen 12:7, later to be described as “flowing with milk and honey.” With the conquests of David the second promise of God to Abraham is fulfilled, the nation God formed in Egypt has a peaceful home that stretches from the Great River on the east to the Mediterranean on the west. The third promise remains to be fulfilled - that this nation will be a blessing to the whole earth. The two fulfilled promises given to Abraham are then linked into the great Third when the prophet Nathan relays a prophecy to David. They are an amplification of that third promise - that the whole world would be blessed by this nation. The next thousand years prepare for the fulfillment of these amplifications of Abraham’s third prophecy, propelling God’s People into the future. Look at them again in II Samuel 7; they are outlined in the lesson outline; and will be fulfilled in David’s greater son, Jesus of Nazareth. King David, of course, no doubt thought that they would be fulfilled through his successor, who will be King Solomon, but the expectation that they will be fulfilled by the natural progression of children in time will not be met; the Lord God alone will fulfill them by the birth of the son of Mary whose work is amazingly forecast by these prophetic words.

Jesus genealogy will include Bathsheba as a Mother of Israel (Mat 1:6). In the inscrutable design of God, the sin of David, both murder and adultery, righteously condemned by God by Nathan’s parable, and the resultant misery brought down on his head and that of his descendants, nevertheless is used to bring about the fulfillment of this prophecy. How often does the sacred text display the truth that “God writes straight with crooked lines”? Even grievous sin is incorporated into the plan of God who works all things together for good with those who love him (Rom 8:28).



**Lesson 20 II Samuel 1 - 12:24**  
**Synopsis**

1. a messenger brings to Ziklag the report of Saul's death the Amalekite says he killed him  
David has the man killed  
David laments in a poem over Saul and Jonathan  
How the mighty are fallen!
2. David inquired of the Lord and went up to live at Hebron he is anointed King of Judah ruled from Hebron 7 yrs, 6 mths he sends thanks to Jabesh-gilead for the respect shown to Saul  
Ishbosheth, Saul's son reigns in Saul's place from Mahanaim he is supported by Abner  
Abner and Joab's champions fight at Gibeon's pool the fight spreads  
Abner and his men are defeated  
Joab pursues Abner, turns back  
Asahel continues to follow him  
Abner warns him, then kills him
3. David's sons are born in Hebron the eldest, Amnon by Ahinoam  
Chileab by Abigail  
Absalom by Maacah  
Adonijah by Haggith  
Shephatiah by Abital  
Ithrearn by Eglah  
there is war between Saul's house and the house of David  
Abner reprimanded by Ishbosheth for taking Saul's concubine  
Abner threatens Ishbosheth he will turn Israel over to David  
Abner proposes a covenant

and brings Michal back to David  
Joab kills Abner in Hebron in revenge of Asahel's murder

4. Ishbosheth hears Joab is dead he fears and all Israel is dismayed  
two captains of Saul's forces kill him and take his head to David  
David, "I require his blood at your hand, and destroy you" commanded his men to kill them  
Ishbosheth and Abner buried by David in Hebron
5. Israel makes covenant with David he is only 30 yrs. old  
he reigns over north and south  
Jerusalem is defeated by David  
he moves his family to Jerusalem  
he has more sons and daughters and more wives and concubines  
Philistines find him a threat now  
David defeats the Philistines in the Valley of Rephaim two times
6. David brings the ark to Jerusalem carried on new cart pulled by oxen  
Uzzah is killed handling the ark  
David is appalled at God he leaves the ark at bededom after three months, with more care he brings the ark to Jerusalem  
David's dances before the ark clad only in an ephod he sacrifices and shares with all but Michal is shut out of his life because of her scorn of David  
shall David build God a house?
7. "no" is the prophecy of Nathan  
"I will make you a great name

I will appoint a place for my people Israel they will not be disturbed the Lord will make you a house and establish your offspring and his throne forever  
I will be his Father, he my son he will be punished for iniquity but I will not take away my love  
David's prayer, "Who am I,  Lord that you have brought me so far  
Thou art great, none is like Thee confirm forever your word"

8. David's victories - Philistia, Moab, Zobah, Syria, Edam  
David reigned over all Israel he administered justice
9. David keeps his vow to Jonathan he shows kindness to his son Mephibosheth who is crippled he is cared for by David as a member of Saul's house  
Ziba's family recalled to serve M.
10. David sends sympathy to Ammon the Ammonites insult David's men this results in war with Ammon  
Ammon is subdued and Syria they made peace with David and were ruled by him
11. during siege of Rabbah in Ammon  
David sees Bathsheba bathing he sends for her the woman conceives by David he sends for her soldier husband to come home on leave he hopes he will sleep with his wife but he is loyal to his friends who are fighting and does not David sends him back to Joab

12. with instructions that Uriah be put in a place where he is killed  
Bathsheba mourns him  
The Lord is displeased  
Nathan tells a story of a pet lamb taken from the poor man's flock by a rich man to feed a guest  
David is angry, Nathan says "you are the man!"  
why have you despised the Lord's word?  
I will bring evil against your house your wives will be given to others  
I have sinned! David repents "the child born to you shall die"  
David fasts and prays then his child dies he rises and worships God he comforts Bathsheba who conceives, bearing Solomon

## Lesson 20 II Samuel 1 - 12:24 Outline

### I. David consolidates a Kingdom

- A. The deaths of Saul and Jonathan
  - 1. David's loyalty to Saul
    - a. the lying Amalekite killed for killing "the Lord's anointed." 1:14
    - b. David's song to Saul and Jonathan idealizes their union of spirit
  - 2. David shows not a trace of bitterness or a shadow of relief 1:23
- B. Rules seven years over Judah from Hebron II Sam 2:4 (I Sam 16)
- C. David woos Jabesh-gilead
  - 1, it lies only about twenty miles from Mahanaim
    - a. Mahanaim is the headquarters of Saul's son, Ishbosheth
    - b. Abner is the power behind Ishbosheth
    - c. Israel is ruled from Mahanaim in the Transjordan
    - d. the Philistines control major cities in Israel west of the Jordan 2.
  - David's thanks (for care of Saul's body) are political as well 2:5ff
  - 3. Jabesh however remains unmoved, loyal to Saul's house
- D. Ishbosheth, the House of Saul, and Abner's role
  - 1. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, is Abner's puppet king 2:8, 3:6, 3:11
    - a. Abner takes one of Saul's concubines
      - 1) this means that he is assuming the prerogatives of the king
      - 2) Ishbosheth resents this
    - b. Abner is angry at Ishbosheth's rebuke
      - 1) he threatens to turn Saul's house over to David
      - 2) he will help David consolidate the union of north and south
  - 2. Abner makes a covenant with David 3:13 a.
    - David asks for the return of Michal as his wife
      - 1) Saul's daughter will help consolidate his power
      - 2) Michal is happily married 3:16
        - a) she is forced to leave her husband
        - b) Ishbosheth returns her to David
  - 3. Abner speaks to the elders of all the tribes of the north (Israel)
    - a. they want David to free them from the Philistines 3:18
    - b. they agree that Abner can make covenant with David 3:19
- E. David's nephews are useful but unruly 1.
  - Joab, Asahel, Abishai
    - a. they are his sister, Zeruiah's, sons
    - b. David complains "they're too much for him." 3:39

- c. they are David's chief warriors, strong, able and impetuous
      - d. the three are totally loyal to David, but don't listen to him
- 2. Abner kills Asahel after the contest at Gibeah
- 3. Joab is David's commander
  - a. he kills Abner after his "safe" meeting with David
  - b. this treachery evens the blood revenge score
  - c. it also takes Abner out of Joab's way to total control the joint armies
  - d. David claims he can do nothing with him
    - 1) curses him 3:29
    - 2) instructs Solomon to bring retribution on him I Kings 2:5
- F. Final consolidation of David's kingdom
  - 1. David's mourning satisfies Israel he was not responsible for Abner's death
  - 2. Saul's raiding captains kill Ishbosheth
    - a. they go to David with his head for reward
    - b. angry David has them executed
  - 3. Abner and Ishbosheth's head are buried at Hebron
- G. Israel crowns David King

### II. The Davidic Kingdom

- A. David takes steps to unify the kingdom
  - 1. Joab takes Jerusalem
    - a. the city has never been subdued since Joshua
    - b. it has no history for either north or south; its neutral
    - c. David makes it his city, rebuilding it
  - 2. he brings up the ark from Baal-judah (Kiriath-jearim) (there has been no mention of the ark since I Sam 7:1)
    - a. it was carried on a new cart with David dancing ahead 6
    - b. the cart tilts, Uzzah reaches up to balance it and dies
      - 1) David is horrified
      - 2) he leaves the ark with Obededom
    - c. I Chronicles 15:13 tells why
      - 1) the Law of handling the ark was disregarded
      - 2) priestly organization and respect needed to move the ark
  - d. David brings the ark to Jerusalem midst rejoicing 6:16
    - 1) he dances in only an ephod
    - 2) Michal despises his lack of dignity
    - 3) David ostracizes her the rest of her life 6:23
  - e. there are overtones of the Mary and Elizabeth story Lu 2 1)
    - Mary, the ark of God, bears the Word

- 2) Elizabeth rejoices, John leaps
- 3) Mary stays three months blessing Elizabeth's home
- 4) "Why should the mother of my God come to me?" see II Sam 6:9
- 3. David wars against the Philistines
  - a. the Philistines are concerned 5:17
    - 1) they were not worried about David as their vassal in Hebron
    - 2) this consolidation of the Hebrews must be squelched
  - b. the battles take place in the valley of Rephidim near Jerusalem
    - 1) David inquires of the Lord and is told to fight 5:19
    - 2) he defeats them decisively twice also 8:1 ff
- 4. David engages in other wars and alliances
  - a. his war against Zobah and Syria is successful
  - b. he makes a vassal of Hamath
  - c. he puts garrisons in Edam
  - d. then the Ammonites insult him 10
    - 1) David's envoys are shamed and insulted
    - 2) David declares war on them and their Syrian allies
    - 3) Joab and Abishai defeat them
    - 4) Ammonites need further subduing
      - a) Joab and the army siege Rabbah
      - b) Uriah is one of Joab's champions
- 5. a new priesthood is instituted by David
  - a. Abiathar of the old priesthood is still with David
    - 1) he will eventually be disloyal I Kings 1:19
    - 2) Solomon will exile him I Kings 2:261f
    - 3) Abiathar is the end of the Aaronic priesthood ? —
  - b. Zadok is mentioned in 8:17 family of Melchizedek of Salem Gen 14:18
    - 1) priest of God most High, not the name God gave Moses
    - 2) Zedek (ZOK) is the name of priests of Salem which is Jeru
      - a) Zedek without the vowels ZDK, is the same for Zadok •
      - b) vowels are arbitrarily given to Hebrew consonants
    - 3) Jerusalem was a Jebusite city before David
      - a) Zadok is a *Jebusite* priest
      - b) is he a convert to Yahweh? or merely appointed by David
    - 4) Hebrews says Jesus is of the priesthood of Melchizedek
      - a) he is of the house of Judah, David's lineage
      - b) he is not of the Levitical priesthood either
  - c. David has more control of the religion of the whole country 1) he has a new line of priests, the Zadok line ;

- 2) he acts as priest himself wearing the ephod, making swifts B. David has a kingly relationship to Yahweh
  - 1. he wants Yahweh to have a fine house - a temple
    - a. Nathan, the prophet, agrees
    - b. Yahweh reverses this; He does not want a house
  - 2. Nathan brings to David - **the most important promises since those of Abraham II Sam 7:8ff**
    - a. God will make David a great name
    - b. He will appoint a place for Israel and plant them
    - c. there will be no more disturbance and no more violence
    - d. they will have rest from enemies
    - e. He will raise up David's son and establish his kingdom
    - f. He will establish the throne of his kingdom *forever*
    - g. *God will be his Father, he will be God's son*
    - h. he will be chastened for iniquity with the rod and stripes
    - i. God will not take back steadfast love forever
  - 3. David is humble before Yahweh - a touching prayer 7:18
  - 4. David sins gravely
    - a. he *sees* Bathsheba, desires, and seduces her 11
    - b. She conceives
    - c. David plots to cover his adultery
      - 1) Uriah, her husband, is called *home* from Rabbah
      - 2) he will not sleep with his wife in loyalty to his fighting comrades
    - d. David writes to Joab to have Uriah killed - the deed is done e, Nathan confronts him
      - 1) draws David to confess with an analogic story
      - 2) condemned by God for his sin
        - a) the sword will never depart from David's house
        - b) David's wives will *be* lain with in the sight of all
        - c) the child born to David and Bathsheba will die
    - f. David is penitent
      - 1) he fasts and prays for the child
      - 2) the child dies, he stops mourning "He shall not come to me, I shall go to him
    - g. he comforts Bathsheba and Solomon is conceived