

# Route 66

## 2 Samuel: The Battle Within

Part 10 – June 21, 2009

1st and 2nd Samuel were originally written as *one* book; but 100 years before Jesus, scholars translating it into Greek split the book in half so it would fit on two regular-sized scrolls. Samuel was Israel's last Judge and first major prophet. He anointed Saul as the first king; and when Saul proved to be unfaithful, Samuel anointed a boy named David to succeed him.



Mount Gilboa & Beth Shan

Saul spent his final years pursuing David in order to kill him.

When our story left off, Saul and his three sons (including David's best friend, Jonathan) had been killed in battle on Mount Gilboa. And a mortally wounded Saul had committed suicide.



Tel Sera (a.k.a. Ziklag)

And this is where the story picks up, in a place called Ziklag. Looks like Skagit Valley! It's in the south end of the Promised Land; and David lived here to avoid King Saul's persecution. At the end of 1st Samuel, David and his 600 men return to Ziklag to find that the Amalekites have destroyed it and captured their wives and children!

But, David and his men quickly rescue them.

After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head ... - 2 Samuel 1:1-2 NIV

The man informs David of Saul and Jonathan's deaths and gives him Saul's crown and armband. And he makes two *big* mistakes:

1. He's an Amalekite, unaware of what his countrymen just did.
2. Wanting to impress David, he claims that *he* killed Saul. (On the bright side: that was the *last* lie he ever told!)



Jewish Center of Hebron

After a time of mourning, David and his men settled their families in Hebron. This is the city that Caleb (*the faithful spy*) requested and conquered at age 85! It's the 2nd holiest city in Judaism (after Jerusalem), and the largest city in the West Bank. It houses about 166,000 Palestinians and 500 very tenacious Jews.

Then the men of Judah came to Hebron and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. - 2 Samuel 2:4a NIV

That's only the tribe of "Judah". Saul's commander Abner didn't want David as King. So, Abner declares Saul's 40-year-old son Ish-Bosheth as king over Israel.



El-Jib (a.k.a. Gibeon)

Then Abner and David's commander Joab, and their men get into it right here, at Gibeon. Joab's brother chases Abner, and all the while Abner pleads with Joab's brother to stop chasing him so he won't have to kill him. But, Joab's brother keeps chasing Abner, and Abner kills him.

Later, Ish-Bosheth accuses Abner of sleeping with one of Saul's former concubines. Abner is *very* offended (though it's probably true, because Ish-Bosheth was pretty much Abner's "puppet" King).



Hebron's Old City District

So, Abner speaks to the tribes of Israel on David's behalf, and makes a compact with David at Hebron (this is part of the old city). After Abner leaves, Joab calls him back, walks him down an alley, and kills him to revenge the death of his brother. This was a horrible blow to David and the people of Hebron.

When news reached Ish-Bosheth, he and all Israel panicked ('cause Abner kind of ran the place). Two of Ish-Bosheth's military men snuck into his house and killed him while he was taking a nap.

They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said ... "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to take your life ..." -  
2 Samuel 4:8a NIV

Then David told them a story about an Amalekite who came to him at Ziklag with a similar boast of killing the Lord's anointed. And they pretty much ended up with the same fate. One of the reasons God declared David as a man after His own heart (*Acts 13:22*) was because: He was willing to wait on the Lord

This is what it means to: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding". (*Prov 3:5*) It doesn't mean you don't use your head or take advantage of opportunities. It simply means: I refuse to override God's revealed will. The instructions and directions He's revealed through His Word.

David desired the throne, and yet he killed those who came to offer it to him! Why?! Because he was *more offended* that they had violated God's law ... and in *David's name* no less! So, he waited ... and waited ... another 5.5 years until the elders of Israel came to Hebron and invited him to take the throne. He was 37 years old when he finally became King of *all* Israel.



Jerusalem's Old City Wall

His first conquest was the heavily fortified, seemingly impregnable, Jebusite city of Jerusalem

David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. - 2 Samuel 5:9a NIV



Warren's Shaft

Do you know how they captured it?

Joab (the guy who killed Abner) snuck into Jerusalem through the city's well-guarded water shaft (a.k.a. *Warren's Shaft*). And at *that* time, I don't think it had the lights, the stairs, or even the hand rails!

David and 30,000 men brought the Ark to Jerusalem ... almost. On the way, Uzzah (the priest) reached out to steady it, and God struck him dead. And that really threw a damper on things. Ever wonder why God did this? We'll find out in "1st Chronicles"!

The parade was postponed for three months. But then it came into Jerusalem with *huge* fanfare. David's wife, Michal scolded him for dancing in his skivvies in public before the Ark.

[David said] And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. - 2 Samuel 6:22a NKJ

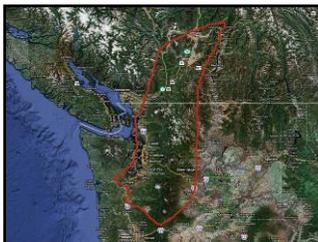
He was after God's own heart! He was determined not to be ashamed or embarrassed to praise and worship publicly. He wrote psalms. Idol worship was banished. And God promised to make his name great, to give him rest from his enemies, and to establish his throne forever - which He did *through* Jesus.



This is the golden-age of King David! Israel was invincible.

The Lord gave David victory wherever he went. - 2 Samuel 8:6b

He secured the borders on all sides! The Promised Land *was* 40 miles wide by 180 miles long. That's from Blain to Olympia and Anacortes to Birdsvew.



Here's how much David increased the Promised Land: it became about 100 miles wide by 350 miles long.

On our Washington map that's like Kamloops, B.C. to the Oregon border, and from Seattle to Wenatchee!

If only the book could stop here. But it doesn't. It lurches from David at his very best, to David at his very worst. All Israel's eventual downfall can be traced back to this moment:

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful  
... - 2 Samuel 11:2 NIV

Don't do it, David! Stay faithful. Don't do it! You're stressed; you're not sleeping; you're vulnerable. Don't abandon everything you hold sacred. Don't do it! But ... they did it. And his family and kingdom never recover from the consequences. The most difficult battle is the battle within.

He slept with Bathsheba and got her pregnant. Her husband, Uriah, was fighting in David's army about sixty miles from home. So, David called him home so that he would sleep with his wife. But, Uriah chose to sleep on David's doorstep with the servants (while his fellow soldiers were fighting). David tried getting him drunk; but even wasted Uriah displays more honor than David.

So, David sent him back to Joab with a secret note. It instructed Joab to put Uriah on the front line in battle, and pull back. And he did. And Uriah died. And David married Bathsheba. And month after month David's unrepentant heart was destroying him.

Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered ... When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. - Psalm 32:1-3 NIV

Finally, God sent Nathan with a story of a rich man who seizes a poor man's lamb. And since we always react more harshly when we see our own sin in someone else, David says the man should die.

Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" - 2 Samuel 12:7a NIV

And David confesses to adultery and murder, knowing full well the consequences prescribed in the Mosaic Law. But God exercises His sovereign right of grace and forgives David of his sin. However, the child of the adulterous affair was to die.

Psalm 51 is titled: "A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba."

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. - Psalm 51:1-2 NIV

David not only confessed his sin, he *announced* it - along with his renunciation and repentance - to the world! This is another reason David was a man after God's own heart. God isn't looking for perfection, just true repentance.

God forgave David, and a level of joy was regained, but there are *always* consequences when we sin. Nathan had prophesied:

The sword will never depart from your house ... - 2 Samuel 12:10 NIV

And the example of David's moral failure to his sons would prove to have a far-reaching and devastating effect:

- A. His son, Amnon, raped his half-sister, Tamar.
- B. Tamar's full brother, Absalom, murdered Amnon for revenge.
- C. Absalom ultimately led a rebellion against his father.

David flees for his life from the very son he loves. He even instructs his soldiers to spare Absalom's life in battle. But in a decisive battle, Absalom gets his hair caught in the branches of an oak tree as he rides underneath. And as he's dangling there, Joab plunges three javelins into his heart.

A distraught and shaken David returns to Jerusalem only to face another rebellion. And this time all (but his tribe of Judah) desert him, until Joab steps in and kills the renegade leaders.

But as the book ends, we see a man who has learned his lesson:

The Rock of Israel said to me: "When one rules over men in righteousness, when he rules in the fear of God, he is like the light of morning at sunrise ..." - 2 Samuel 23:3b-4a NIV

We see a man who was deeply flawed, but whose faith and trust were deeply rooted in the grace of God. This is a man after God's own heart.