

Key Events, Map, Charts, and Time Line

# Life of David



## A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

King David's humanity is a clear and compelling to any reader. Modern readers, centuries after his time, can still relate to his story. The Bible presents a realistic picture of a man who loved God, became a great instrument in God's plans, and was deeply flawed. David is a person we can easily relate to.

Although David's victories are exciting and stir our imaginations, David's failures and humility are what make him a powerful character and his life so meaningful. David's life shows that human weakness is the perfect opportunity for God's grace, power, strength, forgiveness, justice and holiness to shine incomparably.

## SAMUEL— LAST OF THE JUDGES

In order to understand David's role in the story of Israel, we must see him in contrast to Israel's previous leaders.

- Forty years before David, Samuel was the last of the judges who brought order and unity as God's priest and prophet.
- Samuel symbolized God's own willingness to hear his people—*Samuel* means "God has heard."
- The people asked him to give them a king, an act that seemed to show disrespect for the Lord.
- He was hesitant, but God directed him to grant their request.
- He anointed Israel's first king, Saul—the name *Saul* means, "The one who was requested."
- Later he brought God's judgment against Saul when Saul rebelled against the Lord.
- He anointed David to be king instead of Saul.

*"We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles." When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king." —1 Sam. 8:19–22*

### The Judges

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, Israel was not a nation yet. It was, rather, a group of tribes. When they arrived in the Promised Land, the land was distributed among the Israelites. At that point, each tribe governed itself separately. When a crisis arose, God would choose special leaders to fight in favor of God's people. They received a special calling; often God's Spirit empowered them in special ways to carry on a special task.



*The Prophet Samuel fresco painting.*



## SAUL, FIRST (AND FAILED) KING OF ISRAEL

- Saul was “without equal among the Israelites...” (1 Samuel 9:2).
- Under his leadership, the Philistine threat was weakened but not eliminated.
- Saul was reluctant to become king. After Samuel anointed him, Saul returned to his regular activities (1 Sam. 11:5).
- Saul led Israel’s armies to battle to save the city of Jabesh (1 Sam. 11).
- After an impressive victory, the people of Israel accepted Saul as their king.
- Saul made bad decisions that threatened his own kingship.



Saul Attacking David by Guercino

### Why was Asking for a King a Bad Idea?

- The Tribes of Israel were without a king because God himself was their King. He governed them through the Law (Torah, the first five books of the Bible) and through the leadership of chosen people: judges, priests, prophets at crucial times.
- Israel was a chosen nation. God chose Israel to be his own treasured possession (Ex. 19:5). Israel should not have been like the nations around them (this is the theme of the whole book of Deuteronomy; see, for example, chapters 7 and 8).
- One of the purposes of the Law (Torah) was to help Israel be different from the peoples who lived around them (Deut. 7).

### Israel’s Singer of Songs

David was called “Israel’s singer of songs.” David was gifted artistically as well as with weaponry. Among the many Psalms that are attributed to him are some that form key prophetic texts in the New Testament. Psalm 16:10 is quoted by both Peter and Paul as prophetically fulfilled in Christ’s resurrection (Acts 2:27, 13:35). Psalm 110:1 is the most quoted Old Testament verse in the New Testament, and 110:4 figures heavily in the book of Hebrews as pointing to the superior priesthood Christ exercised on our behalf. Jesus himself uses Psalm 110:2 to baffle his critics concerning the question of the Messiah’s identity (Matt. 22:41–46).

## CALL OF DAVID— THE SINGING SHEPHERD

- God rejected Saul because of his rebelliousness.
- God sent Samuel to anoint the new chosen king of Israel.
- When Samuel visited David’s father Jesse, Samuel expected the new king to be like Saul: impressive and imposing. Yet, God led the prophet to the last son: a small, young shepherd boy.
- After Samuel anointed him, David went back to his sheep.
- Although God had rejected Saul and anointed David as the new king, Saul continued to be king for sometime—perhaps for another 15 years or so.
- During that time, David came to be part of the royal court as a musician.
- David’s music helped Saul find relief from his anguish.

*It is good to know that God looks deep in our innermost being, that he knows our secrets, both the great goodness and great evil we are capable of doing. Still, Jesus came to die for each of us so we can become like David: people after God’s own heart!*

## THE BATTLE IS THE LORD'S

- Just as Saul was tested, David needed to be tested as well.
- Saul's life was filled with fear and depression.
- When the Philistines challenged Israel, the king of Israel had to lead God's armies to victory.
- However, when the mighty Philistine hero, Goliath, challenged the Israelites to fight him, all cowered in terror (1 Sam. 17:11).
- Saul failed again to lead Israel's armies.
- During this battle, Jesse, David's father, sent David to check on his older brothers at the field of battle (1 Sam. 17:17–19).
- As he arrived and heard the commotion in the camp, David was surprised with the Philistine's defiance of God's army.
- With great courage and faith, David accepted the challenge and stepped forward to fight the Philistine.

### Contrasting Warriors

The Bible's description of Goliath is important. It stands in contrast to David.

Opponent	Goliath	David
Description	Terrifying, giant warrior	Shepherd boy
Height	Nearly nine feet tall	Unknown and unimpressive
Weapons	Sword, spear, and javelin of bronze and iron; armor weighing about 125 pounds	Shepherd's staff and sling, five pebbles; a heart of faith and complete trust in the Lord

Ancient armies often allowed a fight between champions to decide the fate of the battle. However, behind the military practice was the understanding that it was not only champions fighting. Rather, the gods themselves fought on behalf of each army. At stake was more than just a battle: the name (or fame) of the Lord himself was on the line.

**“Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”(17:26).**

David's answer showed his utter confidence in his God: “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied” (17:45). The battle ended before it had even started. Like many other parts of the Bible show, no one and nothing can stand against the Lord of creation (see Ex. 15:1–18).