

SYNOPSIS OF THE STORY OF DAVID

Taken from "The Jewish Study Bible".

From First Samuel

9.1 - 10.16 The Anointing of Saul

Seeking his father's asses, Saul comes across Samuel and asks for help. When Samuel sees Saul, the Lord tells him this is the man who would govern his people. Samuel anoints Saul. Saul falls in with prophets, foreshadowing the later episode when Saul follows David and Samuel. People say "Is Saul too among the prophets?" Prophets are considered low class.

10.17 - 27 The Election of Saul

Saul is presented as king after being chosen by lots. He hides in the baggage.

11.1 - 13 Deliverance

Saul's first action as king is to butcher a team of oxen and to send the pieces throughout Israel saying this is what would happen to the cattle of those who don't assist in the fight with the Ammonites. The Ammonites were defeated: "No two were left together".

11.14 - 12:25 The Prophet's Address

Saul is 'crowned' at Gilgal. The people are shown in a display of thunder and rain how wicked it was to want to have a king.

3.1 - 14.52 The King's Failure and the Prince's Success

Saul makes sacrifice alone, incurring the wrath of Samuel. Samuel says "your dynasty will not endure". He says the Lord will seek a man after his own heart. Saul's son Jonathan and his arms bearer wreak havoc among the Philistines.

15.1 - 35 Rejection

Speaking through Samuel the Lord commands Saul to destroy all the Amalakites. But he spares the Kenites among them, and takes some booty. Thus Saul is rejected as King. "Samuel grieves over Saul".

16.1 - 13 Anointing Renewed

First story of David. Samuel anoints David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, to be king.

16.14 - 23 The King's Musician

David is chosen to play for the soul stricken Saul.

17.1 - 18.5 The Shepard Boy and the Giant

David comes to the Philistine battlefield with provisions for his brothers. He inquires about Goliath, and is reprimanded by his oldest brother Eliab for his "impertinence". David's desire to face Goliath is approved by Saul, who offers him his armor and weapons. David refuses them after trying them on. After the slaying of Goliath, Jonathan gives his clothes to David, and Saul puts him in command of his troops.

18.6 - 30 Jealousy

Saul is bitter over the acclaim given to David. Saul offers David his daughter Michal if he will risk himself in battle, thinking he will be killed. However, David succeeds brilliantly and his reputation soars. He takes Michal as his first wife.

19.1 - 24 Escape

Saul attempts to murder David, who is saved by Michal. David runs to Samuel who is with prophets who are 'speaking in ecstasy'. Saul sends groups of men to seize David, but they all end up speaking in ecstasy. Finally Saul comes, but he too speaks in ecstasy. People say "Is Saul too among the prophets?"

20.1 - 21.1 Friendship

David escapes again, running to Jonathan. They make a plan to test Saul's feelings about David. It becomes clear that Saul really wants to kill David. David flees again, forming a guerrilla band.

21.2 - 10 The Helpful Priest

David gets bread and a sword from the priest Ahimelech.

21.11 - 16 In Philistia

David flees to Gath believing he will be out of danger there. Fearing King Achish, who has learned his reputation, David feigns madness, causing Achish to expel him.

22.1 - 5 Head of a Guerrilla Band

David starts collecting malcontents to form a guerrilla band. He moves his parents to Moab to keep them safe.

22.6 - 23 The Massacre

Continuing the narrative of 21.2 - 10, Saul has all the priests and inhabitants of Nob killed suspecting collusion between them and David. Saul wants to send a message about the consequences of any complicity with David.

23.1 - 13 Consulting the Lord

The Lord, when consulted, warns David against staying in Keilah since the inhabitants would deliver him to Saul.

23.14 - 18 Encouragement

Jonathan comes to David's hiding place to assure him that eventually he will become king.

23.19 - 28 Narrow Escape

David's whereabouts are exposed to Saul by the Ziphites. Saul nearly captures him, but David slips away because he and Saul are on either side of the 'Rock of Separation'.

24.1 - 23 Magnanimity

Saul enters a cave to relieve himself. David and his men have been waiting in the cave. David stealthily cuts off a corner of Saul's cloak. David reproaches himself for it, and confronts Saul. David swears in a monologue that he had never meant to wrong the King, and calls upon the Lord to vindicate him against Saul. When he finishes, Saul breaks down and weeps, and declares that the Lord would reward David generously, and says that he knows now that David will become king. At Saul's request David swears never to destroy his descendants or wipe his name from his father's house.

25.1 - 44 The Evil Husband and the Clever Wife

Samuel dies and is buried in Ramah. David hears that a wealthy man named Nabal is going to have a sheep shearing, and since he has 'protected' Nabal's shepherds, and indeed some of them were with David, he sends a message to Nabal hoping to be invited. But Nabal rejects him harshly, and David prepares to teach him a lesson. As he rides to the task, he is met by Abigail, the wife of Nabal, who has brought many gifts to placate David. She impresses David greatly with her ways, and he gratefully accepts the gifts, promising he will not harm anyone. Nabal dies upon being told by her about her encounter with David, and David takes Abigail as his wife, now his second after Ahinoam. (Saul had given Michal, David's first wife, to Palti, the son of Laish.)

26.1 - 25 Magnanimity Repeated.

(A story similar to that of the cave in Chapter 24) Saul pursues David in the wilderness of Ziph. David enters the camp of Saul, finding him asleep with his general Abner and his guards. Abishai offers to kill Saul, but David refuses to let him, instead taking away Saul's spear and water jar. Then from a distance David taunts Abner for not protecting his King well enough. Saul recognizes David's voice: "Is that your voice, my son David?" The story ends like the one in Chapter 24, with David and Saul swearing peace with each other.

27.1 - 28.2 In Philistia Again

David takes his guerrilla band to Gath, and joins with Achish. David raids communities slaying all so that news of his deeds doesn't get back to Achish, who thinks that David is arousing the wrath of the people of Israel by attacking them.

28.3 - 25 Prophecy of Doom

The Philistines marshal their forces to make war on Israel. Saul is unanswered when he asks help from the Lord, so he goes to a sorceress in Endor to consult the dead Samuel. Saul does this even though he has banned the use of magic and sorcery in Israel. The ghost of Samuel predicts the death of Saul and his sons.

29.1 - 11 The Problem Solved

Although Achish would like David with him during his battle with Israel, his generals convince him to dismiss David and his band from the battlefield.

30.1 - 30 Defeat Turned into Victory

David and his men return to Ziklag where he had been staying, while with Achish, to find the town in ruins. He consults the Lord and is told that he will be able to pursue the Amalekite raiders who had captured the wives and children of David and his troops and razed the town. David overtakes and beats them. They recover all that was taken from Ziklag plus much more. David insists that the spoils be shared alike with those of his men who were 'too faint' to proceed to the battle, but instead stayed behind.

31.1 - 13 Tragic End

During the Philistine attack on Israel, Saul and his three sons (including Jonathan) die in battle.

From Second Samuel

1.1 - 16 Message of Death.

David is told of the death of Saul and his sons by an Amalekite. Saul had fallen on his spear to avoid death or capture at the hands of the Philistines, and he asked the Amalekite to finish him off. The Amalekite did. David commands that the Amalekite be put to death.

1.17 - 27 David's Dirge

David writes a Dirge to demonstrate his deep sorrow over Saul and Jonathan's death. It contains the famous verse "I grieve for you, /My brother Jonathan, /You were most dear to me. /Your love was wonderful to me /More than the love of women."

2.1 - 11 King of Judah

David is anointed King of Judah, and rules from Hebron. Ish-bosheth, son of Saul, reigns in Israel, being placed there by Abner, Saul's army commander. David honors the men from Jabesh-gilead who had buried Saul.

2.12 - 32 Civil War

The fight at the pool of Gibeon between David's and Ish-bosheth's soldiers. Asahel, one of David's nephews, begins to chase Abner, who tries to convince him to stop. When he won't, Abner kills him. David and his soldiers defeat the Benjaminites.

3.1 - 5 Children Born to David

Amnon, Absalom and others are born to David's family.

3.6 - 39 The Strong Army Chief

Abner transfers loyalty to David after being accused by Ish-bosheth of lying with his father's concubine. David requires as a condition that Michal be returned to him. Abner is traitorously killed by Joab, brother of Asahel and David's army commander. David mourns the death of Abner.

4.1 - 12 The Weak King

Ish-bosheth 'loses heart'. Two company commanders under Ish-bosheth slay him, and take his head to David. David reproaches the commanders, and has them executed. As with Saul and Abner, David is cleared of all complicity.

5.1 - 5 King of Israel

The tribes of Israel come to David and offer him the kingdom of Israel.

5.6 - 12 Jerusalem

David captures Jerusalem from the Jebusites. He receives gifts from King Hiram of Tyre.

5.13 - 16 Children Born to David

Solomon and others are born in Jerusalem to David.

5.17 - 25 Liberation

David liberates Israel from Philistine domination.

6.1 - 23 Holiness

David brings the Ark of God to Jerusalem. Michal, his first wife, who was returned to him, despises David for dancing before the Ark.

7.1 - 29 The House

David tells the prophet Nathan that he wishes to build a house for the Lord. Nathan approves. But the Lord objects to this in a vision of Nathan's, and says that He will instead build a house (dynasty) for David. The Lord says that an offspring of David's will build "a house for my name". Nathan tells David. David gives thanks to the Lord and then requests that his house may endure forever.

8.1 - 14 Expansion

David expands Israel through a number of military campaigns. He makes the Moabites lie on the ground, and measures them out in three lengths, two to be put to death and one to be spared.

8.15 - 18 Administration

David executes "true justice" in Israel. The Members of his government are named in this section.

9.1 - 13 Faithfulness

For the sake of Jonathan, David gives all of Saul's lands to Jonathan's lame son, Mephibosheth, and promises that he shall always eat at David's table.

10.1 - 19 War

The king of Ammon dies, and David sends courtiers with a message of condolence to his son Hanun. Hanun is convinced that the courtiers are up to no good, so he humiliates them. During the subsequent war, David's armies prevail, and Israel gains more vassals.

11.1 - 27a Adultery and Murder

During part of the war with Ammon, David remains in Jerusalem. He sees Bathsheba, fetches her and lies with her. Bathsheba becomes pregnant. David recalls her husband Uriah the Hittite from the battles and tries to get him to lie with Bathsheba without success because Uriah is true to his soldier's vows. Then David writes a note to his general Joab which is carried by Uriah telling him to put Uriah at the front of battle, and then draw back so that he may be killed. Bathsheba laments her husband and is taken by David as wife.

11.27b - 12.25 Repentance

The Lord is displeased with David because of Uriah. He sends Nathan to David with the parable of a poor man and a rich man. The rich man has many sheep, but takes the poor man's only sheep to prepare a feast. David flies into a rage against the rich man, and Nathan tells David "That man is you!" Nathan foretells much calamity for David and his house. David proclaims his guilt. Bathsheba's child is born and dies shortly after. David consoles Bathsheba, and lies with her. She bears a son named Solomon.

12.26 - 31 Conquest

(Concluding the account of the Ammonite war.) Joab tells David to lead the troops to capture the royal city so that he will get the proper credit.

13.1 - 22 Rape

(First of the calamities in the house of David) David's daughter, Tamar, is raped by his oldest son, Amnon. David's son, Absalom, discovers the rape, and hates Amnon because of it.

13.23 - 39 Vengeance

Two years later Absalom holds a sheep shearing to which he invites all his brothers. He orders the slaying of Amnon. Absalom flees. In time David 'pines away' because he misses Absalom.

14.1 - 33 Reconciliation

Joab sees that David misses Absalom, so he sets up the woman of Tekoa to convince David to allow Absalom to return. But Absalom is made to go directly home and is not permitted to speak to David. After two years David and Absalom are happily reunited, but not until after Absalom sets Joab's barley field on fire to get his attention.

15.1 - 12 Rebellion

Absalom strives to make himself popular with the people of Israel in an effort to become the new king. After a period of forty years, Absalom goes in revolt to Hebron, capital of Judah, and proclaims himself King. He gains the support of Ahithophel, one of David's principal counselors.

15.13 - 16.14 Flight

When David hears what Absalom has done, he flees with most of his household to a place near the Jordan River. He is joined by some of the priests, a few of whom he commands to remain as spies in Jerusalem. David hears of Ahithophel's treason, and asks Hushai to return to Jerusalem to nullify Ahithophel's advice.

Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth comes as well. He tells David that Mephibosheth remains in Jerusalem hoping to get back the throne that Saul lost. David grants all of what Mephibosheth owned to Ziba. During the march, a member of Saul's clan, Shimei, taunts and throws stones at David. Abishai offers to kill him, but David dissuades him. Barzillai the Gileadite is among others who donate goods to David.

16.15 - 17.14 The Counselors' Contest

Absalom arrives in Jerusalem. He tells Hushai that he should go with his friend David, but Hushai tells him that he will be for the one the Lord chooses for Israel, so "As I was in your father's service, so I will be in yours". Ahithophel advises Absalom to lay with his father's concubines to assert his primacy. Ahithophel then advises Absalom to take a force of men to pursue David and vanquish him while he is weary. Hushai counsels convincingly instead that Absalom wait to bring down David only after he has successfully consolidated his power in Jerusalem. Absalom foolishly follows Hushai's advice.

17.15 - 29 Recovery

Hushai sends word to David through the spies David had planted about Absalom's plans. David and his troops cross the Jordan to reinforce Absalom's decision not to pursue David. Ahithophel goes home and hangs himself when he sees his advice is not going to be taken.

18.1 - 18 The Rebels' Downfall

David organizes his forces preparing for battle. He gives orders to the commanders to deal gently with Absalom. David defeats the Israelite troops in the forest of Ephraim. Absalom is caught by the neck when passing under a terebinth tree, and despite David's command, Joab and others kill Absalom.

18.19 - 19.9 The Sad Victory

David is informed of the victory and of Absalom's death. He weeps: "My son Absalom! O my son,...". David mourns loudly, and Joab admonishes him for shaming those who had fought for him.

19.10 - 41 Return.

On his return, David forgives Shimei, who first prostates himself. He meets Mephibosheth who claims that Ziba has misled David concerning his apparent defection. David decrees that Mephibosheth and Ziba are to divide the property. He meets Barzillai, who had provisioned him earlier, and offers him a place in his household.

19.42 - 20.22 Rebellion Again

Conflict between Israel and Judah causes Israel to break away. Sheba, son of Bichri, sounds the horn and proclaims "... Every man to his tent, O Israel!" David tells Amasa to call up the men of Judah, but he takes too long to do it, so David appoints Abishai, Joab's brother, as commander of his personal force. Amasa returns and is killed by Joab, who fears him as a rival. Then Abishai and Joab corner Sheba in Abel of Beth-maacah which they put under siege. Sheba is killed by the inhabitants. The rebellion is ended by David's swift action.

An Appendix: From Second Samuel Chapters 21 - 24

21.10 - 14 Charity

David takes the bones of Saul and Jonathan for burial.

21.15 - 22 Heroic Deeds

Four short accounts of feats performed by David's warriors against Philistine giants. During the first, David grows weary and is told to stay out of the battle. This may be the excuse for David being in Jerusalem when he sees Bathsheba.

22.1 - 51 A Song of Thanksgiving

A song attributed to David expressing thanks to the Lord who delivered the author from mortal danger and granted him victory over his enemies.

23.1 - 7 Last Words

A poem attributed to David contrasting the just ruler to the wicked.

23.8 - 39 The Heroes

A list of warriors of David along with brief accounts of heroic deeds. For example, a story of three warriors who bring David water in the cave of Adullam when he was thirsty. This was done under very trying circumstances, so David uses the water as a libation to the Lord to celebrate the feat.

24.1 - 25 Census, Plague, and Altar

David conducts a census, which is considered a sin. The Lord punishes Israel with a plague. To put an end to the plague, David erects an altar.

From First Kings

1.1 - 4 David weakens with age

David is old, and can never get warm. His courtiers bring him Abishag the Shunammite to him. She becomes his close attendant, but he is never intimate with her.

1.5 - 53 Adonijah and Solomon

Adonijah is David's oldest living son. He preens himself for being king on the model of Absalom, but David had promised that Solomon would be king. Bathsheba urges David to proclaim Solomon as king to avert Adonijah's succession. David arranges a procession in which Solomon is proclaimed king, having been anointed by the priest Zadok. Adonijah submits to Solomon.

2.1 - 11 The Death of David

David instructs Solomon as his life comes to a close. He tells Solomon to kill Joab and Shimei. "The length of David's reign over Israel was forty years: he reigned seven years in Hebron and he reigned thirty-three years in Jerusalem."

Bibliography

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