

LIVING GODS WILL

Vessel of God

DAVID



King David playing the harp by Gerard van Honthorst

Born: 1040 BC, Bethlehem
Died: 970 BC, Jerusalem (at age 70)

David defeated **Goliath**.

David succeeded **Saul** and **Ishbosheth** as **3rd King of the Jews**.

David's son was **King Solomon**.

David authored many of the **Psalms**.

We can learn a lot from the life of **David**. He was a man after **God's** own heart (**1 Samuel 13:13–14; Acts 13:22**)! We are first introduced to **David** after Saul, at the insistence of the people, was made king (**1 Samuel 8:5, 10:1**).

Saul did not measure up as **God's** king. While King Saul was making one mistake on top of another, **God** sent Samuel to find His chosen shepherd, **David**, the son of Jesse (**1 Samuel 16:10, 13**).

David is believed to have been twelve to sixteen years of age when he was anointed as the king of Israel. He was the youngest of Jesse's sons and an unlikely choice for king, humanly speaking.

Samuel thought Eliab, **David's** oldest brother, was surely the anointed one. But **God** told Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The **LORD** does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the **LORD** looks at the heart" (**1 Samuel 16:7**).

Seven of Jesse's sons passed before Samuel, but **God** had chosen none of them. Samuel asked if Jesse had any more sons. The youngest, **David**, was out tending sheep. So they called the boy in and Samuel anointed **David** with oil "**and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David**" (**1 Samuel 16:13**).

The Bible also says that the Spirit of the Lord departed from King Saul and an evil spirit tormented him (**1 Samuel 16:14**). Saul's servants suggested a harpist, and one recommended **David**, saying, "**I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And the LORD is with him**" (**1 Samuel 16:18**). Thus, **David** came into the king's service (**1 Samuel 16:21**). Saul was pleased with young **David**, and he became one of Saul's armor-bearers.

Saul's pleasure in **David** vanished quickly as **David** rose in strength and fame. In perhaps one of the best-known biblical accounts, **David** slew the giant **Goliath**. The Philistines were at war with the Israelites and taunted Israel's military forces with their champion, **Goliath** from Gath.

They proposed a dual between **Goliath** and whoever would fight him. But no one in Israel volunteered to battle the giant. **David's** older brothers were part of Saul's army; after **Goliath** had been taunting the Israelites for forty days, **David** visited his brothers at the battlefield and heard the Philistine's boasts.

The young shepherd asked, "**What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?**" (**1 Samuel 17:26**). **David's** oldest brother became angry and accused **David** of pride and coming only to watch the battle. But **David** continued to talk about the issue.

Saul heard what **David** was saying and sent for him. **David** told Saul, "**Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him**" (**1 Samuel 17:32**). Saul was incredulous; **David** was not a trained soldier. **David** provided his credentials as a shepherd, being careful to give the glory to **God**.

David had killed lions and bears that went after his sheep, and he claimed the Philistine would die like them because he had "**defied the armies of the living God. The LORD who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine**" (**1 Samuel 17:36–37**).

Saul acquiesced, provided that **David** wear Saul's armor into the fight. But **David** was not used to the armor and left it behind. **David** took with him only his staff, five smooth stones, his shepherd's bag, and a sling. **Goliath** was not intimidated by **David**, but neither was **David** intimidated by the giant.

David said to the Philistine, "**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. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands**" (**1 Samuel 17:45–46**). **David's** trust in **God** and his zeal for **God's** glory are remarkable. **David** did kill **Goliath**. He also entered into Saul's service full-time, no longer tending his father's sheep.

It was at this time that Saul's son, Jonathan, "became one in spirit with **David**" (**1 Samuel 18:1**). **David** and Jonathan's friendship is instructive to friendships today. Though his father was king and Jonathan would have been a natural heir to the throne, Jonathan chose to support **David**. He understood and accepted **God's** plan and protected his friend from his murderous father (**1 Samuel 18:1–4, 19–20**).

Jonathan demonstrates humility and selfless love (**1 Samuel 18:3; 20:17**). During **David's** reign, after Saul's and Jonathan's deaths, **David** sought out anyone who remained of the house of Saul to whom he could show kindness for Jonathan's sake (**2 Samuel 9:1**). Clearly, both men greatly cared for one another and honored one another.

After the incident with **Goliath**, **David** continued to grow in fame. The chant in the camp of Saul was taunting as the people sang out the praises of **David** and demeaned King Saul, causing a raging jealousy in Saul that never subsided (**1 Samuel 18:7–8**).

Saul's jealousy of **David** turned murderous. He first tried to have **David** killed by the hand of the Philistines by asking **David** to become his son-in-law. The king offered his daughter in return for **David's** military service. **David**, in humility, refused, and Saul's daughter was given to another (**1 Samuel 18:17-19**). Saul's other daughter, Michal, was in love with **David**, so Saul asked again. **David** again refused due to his lack of wealth and inability to afford the bride price for the daughter of a king.

Saul asked for a hundred Philistine foreskins, hoping **David** would be slaughtered by the enemy. When **David** killed two hundred Philistines, doubling the required payment, Saul realized he was outmatched, and his fear of **David** increased (**1 Samuel 18:17-29**). Jonathan and Michal warned **David** of their father's murderous intent, and **David** spent the next years of his life fleeing from the king. **David** wrote several songs during this time, including **Psalms 57, 59, and 142**.

Although Saul never stopped pursuing him with the intent to kill him, **David** never raised a hand against his king and **God's** anointed (**1 Samuel 19:1-2; 24:5-7**). When Saul eventually died, **David** mourned (**2 Samuel 1**). Even knowing that he was **God's** anointed, **David** did not force his way to the throne. He respected **God's** sovereignty and honored the authorities **God** had currently in place, trusting that **God** would fulfill His will in His timing.

While on the run, **David** raised up a mighty army and with power from **God** defeated everyone in his path, always asking **God** first for permission and instructions before going into battle, a practice he would continue as king (**1 Samuel 23:2-6; 9-13; 2 Samuel 5:22-23**). Once king, **David** remained a powerful military commander and soldier. **Second Samuel 23** recounts some of the exploits of **David's** so-called "**mighty men**." **God** honored and rewarded **David's** obedience and gave him success in everything he did (**2 Samuel 8:6**).

David began to take other wives. He married Abigail, a widow of Carmel, during the time he was fleeing from Saul (**1 Samuel 25**). **David** had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel. Saul had given **David's** first wife, Michal, to another man (**1 Samuel 25:43-44**).

After Saul's death **David** was publicly anointed king over the house of Judah (**2 Samuel 2:4**), and he then had to fight against the house of Saul before being anointed king over all of Israel at the age of thirty (**2 Samuel 5:3-4**). Now king, **David** took Michal back to be his wife again (**2 Samuel 3:14**). **David** also conquered Jerusalem, taking it from the Jebusites, and became more and more powerful because the **Lord** Almighty was with him (**2 Samuel 5:7**).

The Ark of the Covenant had been previously captured by the Philistines (**1 Samuel 4**). Upon its return to Israel, the ark was housed at Kiriath Jearim (**1 Samuel 7:1**). **David** wanted to bring the ark back to Jerusalem. But **David** omitted some of **God's** instructions on how to transport the ark and who was to carry it. This resulted in the death of Uzzah who, amid all the celebrations, reached out to steady the ark with his hand. **God** struck Uzzah down, and he died there beside the ark (**2 Samuel 6:1-7**). In fear of the **Lord**, **David** abandoned the moving of the ark and let it rest in the house of Obed-Edom (**2 Samuel 6:11**).

Three months later, **David** resumed the plan to bring the ark to Jerusalem. This time, he followed instructions. He also "dance[ed] before the **LORD** with all his might" (**2 Samuel 6:14**). When Michal saw **David** worshipping in that way, "**she despised him in her heart**" (**2 Samuel 6:16**). She asked **David** how he, as king, could have acted so undistinguished in front of his people.

David said to Michal, "It was before the **LORD**, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the **LORD's** people Israel—I will celebrate before the **LORD**. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes" (**2 Samuel 6:21–22**). **David** understood that true worship is intended for **God** alone. We do not worship for the benefit of the perceptions of others but in humble response to **God** (**John 4:24**).

After **David** was settled in his palace and had peace with his enemies, he wanted to build a temple for the **Lord** (**2 Samuel 7:1–2**). The prophet Nathan first told **David** to do as he wanted. But then **God** told Nathan that **David** would not be the one to build His temple. Instead, **God** promised to build a house for **David**. This promise included a prediction that Solomon would build the temple.

But it also spoke of the coming Messiah, the Son of **David** who would reign forever (**2 Samuel 7:4–17**). **David** responded in humility and awe: "Who am I, Sovereign **Lord**, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?" (**2 Samuel 7:18**; see **2 Samuel 7:18–29** for **David's** entire prayer). Before he died, **David** made preparations for the temple. **God's** reason for not allowing **David** to build the temple was that he had shed so much blood, but **David's** son would be a man of peace and not a man of war. Solomon would build the temple (**1 Chronicles 22**).

Much of **David's** shedding of blood had been a result of war. But, in a sordid incident, **David** also had one of his mighty men killed. Though **David** was a man after **God's** own heart, he was also human and sinful. While his armies were at war one spring, **David** remained home. From his rooftop he saw a beautiful woman bathing. He found out that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, one of his mighty men who was at war, and **David** sent messengers for her.

David slept with Bathsheba, and she became pregnant. **David** called Uriah back from battle, hoping he would sleep with his wife and believe the child to be his, but Uriah refused to go home while his comrades were at war. So **David** arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle. **David** then married Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 11**). This incident in **David's** life shows us that everyone, even those we highly esteem, struggle with sin. It also serves as a cautionary tale about temptation and the way sin can so quickly multiply.

The prophet Nathan confronted **David** about his sin with Bathsheba. **David** responded in repentance. He wrote **Psalms 51** at this time. Here we see **David's** humility and his true heart for the **Lord**. Though Nathan told **David** that his son would die as a result of his sin, **David** pleaded with the **Lord** for his son's life.

David's relationship with **God** was such that he was willing to persist in faith and to hope that **God** might relent. When **God** enacted His judgment, **David** accepted it completely (**2 Samuel 12**). In this story we also see **God's** grace and sovereignty. Solomon, **David's** son who succeeded him and through whom **Jesus** descended, was born of **David** and Bathsheba.

God had also told **David**, through Nathan, that the sword would not depart from his house. Indeed, **David's** household had much trouble from that time on. We see this among **David's** children when Amnon raped Tamar, leading to Absalom's murder of Amnon, and Absalom's conspiracy against **David**.

Nathan had also told **David** that his wives would be given to one who was close to him; this would not occur in secret as had **David's** sin with Bathsheba, but in public. The prophecy was fulfilled when Absalom slept with his father's concubines on the roof for all to see (**2 Samuel 16**).

David is the author of many of the psalms. In them we see the way he sought after and glorified **God**. He is often thought of as a shepherd king and a warrior poet. Scripture calls him "**the sweet psalmist of Israel**" (**2 Samuel 23:1**).

David's life seemed filled with the range of human emotions—a common shepherd boy with great confidence in **God's** faithfulness who honored authorities, fled for his life, and became the king against whom all future kings of Israel would be measured. He saw many military victories.

He also fell into grave sin, and his family suffered as a result. But through it all **David** turned to **God** and trusted Him. Even in the Psalms when **David** is downcast or despondent, we see him lift his eyes up to his **Maker** and give Him praise. This reliance on **God** and continual pursuit of relationship with **God** is part of what makes **David** a man after **God's** own heart.

God promised David a descendant to rule on the throne forever. That everlasting king is Jesus, the Messiah and Son of David.

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

1st Samuel 17:37 Moreover David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"

1st Samuel 17:45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.

1st Chronicles 23:1 So when David was old and full of days, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.



Saul attacking David by Guercino