

Frequently Asked Questions About the Old Testament

SESSION 14 – 2 SAMUEL 7–24

Why wouldn't God permit David to build a temple (7:13)?

Though David was a “man after God’s own heart” he was not without faults. His adultery with Bathsheba was legendary. Beyond that, he was a man of war—and *that* aspect of his life specifically disqualified him from building a sacred place for God. In 1 Chronicles 22:8, God said, “You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight.” His constant warring was in part the result of God’s judgment on him from the Bathsheba episode (“the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own,” 2 Samuel 12:10). Ironically, David’s military exploits established a time of peace enjoyed by Solomon that facilitated the building of the temple. It is a great reminder to us that though our sin may cause some blessings to be forfeited forever, God has purposes for our lives beyond what we know, and he can even take our mistakes and out of the ashes bring about some good.

–Don Porter and Judson Poling

How has David’s house and kingdom endured forever (7:16)?

The succession of kings who ruled in Jerusalem after David were all direct descendants from this great king. However, the New Testament is clear that Jesus represents the fulfillment of this wonderful promise. In Luke 1:32–33 we read the words of the angel assuring Mary that Jesus would be “given the throne of his father David” and that “his kingdom will never end.” God can be trusted to fulfill all of his promises—though often in ways that surprise us!

–Don Porter

Were the predictions in these verses fulfilled (12:10–14)?

Yes. Because David murdered Uriah and stole his wife, (1) murder was a constant threat in his family (13:26–30; 18:14,15; 1 Kings 2:23–25); (2) his household rebelled against him (15:13); (3) his wives were given to another in public view (16:20–23); (4) his first child by Bathsheba died (12:18). If David had known the painful consequences of his sin, he might not have pursued the pleasures of the moment. –*NIV Application Bible*

If God forgave David, why did his son have to die (12:14)?

We can only speculate about God’s mysterious ways. It seems sin often has a price tag in this life, though its eternal consequences have been paid. Some suggest there are two results of sin: (1) It separates a person from God. (2) It produces negative effects in this world. In this view, forgiveness covers the first result of sin but not necessarily the second. And unfortunately for innocent bystanders like David’s infant son, the negative effects of sin are not limited to the sinner.

–*The Quest Study Bible*

If God said to name the baby “Jedidiah,” why did they call him “Solomon” (12:25)?

Apparently the baby was given two names, even though only one of them came to be commonly used (just as some today go by their middle name). Jedidiah means “loved by the Lord” and is a name similar to the name of David himself (1 Samuel 16:13). The name “Solomon” is a form of the word “*shalom*,” which means “peace.” Perhaps he was called Jedidiah as a child, but officially adopted the name Solomon upon assuming the throne because God had promised his kingdom would be one of peace (1 Chronicles 22:8–9).

–*The Quest Study Bible and The NIV Bible Commentary*

Second Samuel 14:27 says Absalom had three sons; 2 Samuel 18:18 says he had none. Which is right?

2 Samuel 14:27 says, “And to Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar.” But 2 Samuel 18:18 states, “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself a pillar which is in the King’s Valley, for he said, ‘I have no son to preserve my name.’ So he named the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom’s monument to this day”—that is, to the time of the final composition of 2 Samuel, which may have been in the middle of the eighth century B.C. This establishes the fact that by the time he set up his

monument (which may have been a year or two before his rebellion against his father, David), Absalom had no male heirs surviving to him. But it does not prove that none had been born to him previously (and died in infancy). Consequently, as Absalom had no sons, he afterwards erected a pillar to preserve his name. Apparently he endured the heartbreak of losing all three little boys in their infancy, and it had become apparent that his wife would not bear him any more.

–Dictionary of Bible Difficulties

Why did David go back on his earlier vows to Mephibosheth (16:4)?

Apparently David feels justified in rejecting his earlier vow because he believes Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son to whom David had promised protection and provision) is seeking to rebel against David and regain a portion of his grandfather's kingdom. Sadly, David acted without hearing Mephibosheth's side of the story. Ziba, acting in his own interests, had lied about Mephibosheth. It is the wise person who fully investigates a situation before acting (Proverbs 14:15).

–Don Porter

What are “the cords of the grave” (22:6)?

A metaphor for death. Combined with the parallel metaphors in this passage, this may use mythological images that depict a struggle with the Canaanite god of death and god of the sea. David's encounter with pagan forces threatened to ensnare him and pull him down to his death. But God broke the cords and released David from danger.

–The Quest Study Bible

How do sinners see God (22:27)?

Believers see God's capacity for love and forgiveness. Sinners, on the other hand, can expect to see God only as judge and avenger. To them God appears devious, untrustworthy and subject to manipulation. We see God through the grid of our own character. But God remains what he has always been: holy, just, loving, pure and compassionate.

–The Quest Study Bible

Who moved David to number his people, God or Satan (2 Samuel 24:1)?

In 2 Samuel 24:1 we read, “And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.” In the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21:1–2 it is stated: “And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.” The wording of 1 Chronicles 21:2 is similar to that of 2 Samuel 24:2. There are times when Satan believes God’s purpose will accomplish his own. In this case, the Lord was drawing David into a trial by allowing him to fulfill his desire to count up his manpower. Quite possibly this would also afford him a better base for assessment of taxes. And so God in effect said to him: “All right, go ahead and do it. Then you will find out how much good it will do you.” In 1 Chronicles 21, we are faced with the statement that it was Satan who moved David to conduct the census. Why would Satan get himself involved in this affair if God had already prompted David to commit the folly he had in mind? It was because Satan found it in his own interest to do so.

–The Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties