

# Chronology of King David's Life

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*This is a suggested chronology of David's life. It is by no means definitive. Few commentators agree on dating, but there is substantial agreement on the sequence.*

**1040 BC:** Saul reigns from roughly 1040—1000 BC

**1035 BC:** David is likely born in Bethlehem between 1040 and 1030 BC.

**1030 BC:** Jonathan is a mighty warrior of whom his own father is jealous (1 Sam. 13-14). He is fiercely and loyally defended by his men against Saul's intent to kill him.

**1025 BC:** David is anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. 16) at age 10-13—which Saul undoubtedly hears about, later choosing to keep David nearby for observation and ready dispatch.

**1023 BC:** David, bar-mizvah'd, serves Saul in an *ad hoc* musical capacity (1 Sam. 16:17, "provide me a man"). He returns to his father's house to tend sheep, but comes to Saul when needed – (1 Sam. 17:15).

**1020 BC:** David defeats Goliath probably at 15-17 years of age (1 Sam. 17)

**1020 BC:** Jonathan, who is much older than David, becomes one in spirit with him (1 Sam. 18:1).

**1015 BC:** Because of his reputation he was appointed armor-bearer to Saul (1 Sam. 16:21— it may be mentioned in chap. 16, but the actual event is probably later—*i.e.* "he [later] be came...").

**1010 BC:** Saul banishes David from his court, yet he makes him commander of a thousand (1 Sam. 18:13). Maybe he hopes David will die in battle. David is perhaps 25 years old.

**1008 BC:** His success as a warrior has made Saul offer him the hand of his daughter Michal "as a snare" (1 Sam. 18:21). Michal marries him, and she loves him (1 Sam. 18:27-28).

**1007 BC:** At Jonathan's warning (and Michal's), David flees from Saul to Samuel at Ramah (1 Sam. 19). Michal remains behind with Saul. An evil spirit caused Saul to pursue David, but he is stopped by the Spirit of God at Ramah. Ps. 59

**1006 BC:** David and Jonathan covenant together at Ramah (1 Sam. 20).

**1006 BC:** David flees to Nob and is helped by Ahimelech the priest (1 Sam. 21). He gives David the consecrated bread, and the sword of Goliath. Doeg the Edomite is present. Ps. 56.

**1006 BC:** David flees to Achish, king of the Philistine city of Gath, the first time (1 Sam. 21:10). He feigns madness to protect himself and his men, and he is expelled. Ps. 34.

- 1005 BC:** David hides at the Cave at Adullam (1 Sam. 22:1-5) where he is joined by 30 chiefs. Three enter the camp of the Philistines to get David an offhanded request for a drink of water (1 Chron. 11:15). His father's household joins him there. Ps. 142.
- 1005 BC:** David takes his parents to Mizpah of Moab leaving them with the king (1 Sam. 22:3-4)
- 1005 BC:** Doeg the Edomite, at Saul's command, kills Ahimelech the priest who helped David and his men. He also kills 85 priests and everyone at Nob for helping David. Abiathar, the son of the priest flees to David with the ephod (1 Sam. 22:6-23). Ps. 52.
- 1005 BC:** David liberates Keilah from the Philistines (1 Sam. 23:6). Saul hears of it and gathers his forces against David at Keilah. Using the ephod, David learns that the people of Keilah will betray him to Saul, and so he flees again. Jonathan visits him at Ziph and covenants with him again (23:16). Ziphites betray David, but God hides him from Saul in the Desert of Ziph. Ps 63.
- 1005 BC:** Saul pursues David at en-Gedi. Ps. 54. David cuts of a corner of his robe in the cave near the Crag of the Wild goats. When Saul leaves the cave, David pleads his cause and his intent not to harm Saul (1 Sam. 24). He returns to his stronghold (Masada?). Ps. 57. This is just before Samuel dies (1 Sam. 25:1).
- 1005 BC:** David is living "off the land" as he encounters Nabal and Abigail at Carmel (1 Sam. 25). His men kindly provide protection for Nabal's flocks expecting to be paid, but Nabal rebuffs them. David threatens to kill Nabal for his affront until Abigail diplomatically intercedes with food and praise. David has married Ahinoam of Jezreel (1 Sam. 25:43). When Nabal dies shortly after this incident, David marries Abigail as well. In David's absence, Saul gives Michal to Paltiel in Gallim, which is probably on the border near Jerusalem.
- 1004 BC:** David encounters Saul and his 3000 men in his camp at Hakilah, having been betrayed by the Ziphites a second time. He spares Saul's life again (1 Sam. 26). Saul "repents" of his pursuit of David, but David doesn't trust him.
- 1004 BC:** David flees to Gath a second time with 600 men and their families. Saul stops his pursuit of David (1 Sam. 27:4).
- 1003 BC:** After living with Achish at Gath probably for a month or two, David asks to move to Ziklag with his men (1 Sam. 27:6). David "serves" the Philistines for over a year (see 1 Sam. 29:3). Achish defends David against his officers (1 Sam. 29:1-11).

**1000 BC:** Samuel dies (1 Sam. 28:3). Saul solicits the witch of Endor to call up Samuel (1 Sam. 28:4-7). He prophesies Saul will die the next day. In a battle with the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa, three of Saul's sons die; Saul is wounded and falls on his sword (1 Sam. 31). David's Lament (2 Sam. 1:17-27). David's service is "dismissed" by the Philistines. The Amalekites raze Ziklag and take the wives of David's men (1 Sam. 28—2 Sam 1). David and 400 men recapture the women, but 200 men cannot go. David shares the plunder equally with them, and with the elders of Judah.

**1000 BC:** David with the help of his allies assumes control of Judah, and is anointed its king with Hebron as his capital (2 Sam. 2:7). He reigns for 7 years and 6 months (2 Sam. 2:11). While there, he marries Maacah, daughter of the king of Geshur. He also marries Haggith, Abital, and Eglah (2 Sam. 3:1-5) and has sons and daughter by all but Michal (2 Sam. 6:23).

#### **David's Sons:**

*Amnon by Ahinoam of Jezreel; Kileab by Abigail (Nabal's widow); Absalom by Maacah the Caananite; Adonijah by Haggith; Shephatiah by Abital; Ithream by Eglah*

**998 BC:** Ishbosheth, with Abner as his general, has liberated the remainder of the Western territory from the Philistines over a two-year period. He is declared king over Israel, the northern kingdom (2 Sam. 2:9-10). Abner slays Asahel at Gibeon (where the sun stopped for Joshua) which begins five and a half years of war with David (2 Sam. 2:12-32; 3:1). After Ishbosheth accuses Abner of infidelity with Saul's concubine, Abner threatens his life and covenants with David, who wants Michal back (3:9-13). Michal is returned to David by Ishbosheth (3:14). Joab, David's general, murders Abner at Hebron (3:22, 27).

**997 BC:** David conquers Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6). He rebuilds it, and moves there from Hebron.

**993 BC:** Ishbosheth is murdered by two cutthroats. David is publicly anointed king over all of Israel, north and south (2 Sam. 5:17). Battle of Baal Perazim (2 Sam. 5:17-25; 1 Chron. 14:8-17; Ps 18). David's 33-year reign at Jerusalem begins (1 Chron. 3:4). His total kingship lasts 40 years (1 Kgs. 2:11).

**992 BC:** Ark returned to Jerusalem to a tent (2 Sam. 6). The tabernacle remains in Gibeon (1 Chron. 16). David desires to build a temple to house the ark (2 Sam. 7; 1 Chron. 17). God sends Nathan to David with the Davidic Covenant instead, promising a perpetual throne to his offspring (2 Sam 7:12-29). Ps 105, 96.

- 982 BC:** After 7-10 years of war, David has solidified his empire (2 Sam. 8). David's sons become royal advisers 2 Sam. 8:18 (though too young – probably 14-18 years old; it distorts their sense of self-importance). Mephibosheth is found and David honors his pledge to Jonathan (2 Sam. 9).
- 981 BC:** Ammon and Syria conquered by Joab and Abishai after David's ambassadors are humiliated by the young king of Ammon (2 Sam. 10). Ps. 60.
- 980 BC:** While indulging his children, and allowing his generals to run their own war, David falls prey to the temptations of the flesh, of peace, and of plenty: he sleeps with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). Uriah is slain in April. In December, Nathan confronts David and he repents. The child dies (2 Sam. 11-12; Ps 51).
- 979 BC:** Solomon is born, youngest of David's sons, and future heir to the throne. Compare 1 Chron. 3:5 with 2 Sam. 12:24 – if Solomon is Bathsheba's fourth born, then this may be 975 BC. She may have been "comforted" with previous children by David, and then Solomon was born. Perhaps the others were unnamed in 12:24, thus giving honor to Solomon over them.
- 979 BC:** David returns to his duties, conquering Rabbah-Ammon (2 Sam. 12:26-31; 1 Chron. 20:1-3).
- 978 BC:** Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar, Absalom's sister (2 Sam. 13:1-22).
- 976 BC:** Absalom murders Amnon (2 Sam. 13:23-38). He is banished from the king's presence to Geshur for 3 years.
- 974 BC:** Absalom pleads for and is returned to Jerusalem via Joab's intercession and conniving use of the woman of Tekoa (2 Sam. 14); but he is banished from the king's presence for two more years.
- 972 BC:** Absalom begs and coerces Joab into interceding yet again that Absalom might see the king's face. He begins his four-year plot against David. (2 Sam. 14:28-33; 15:1-7).
- 969 BC:** Absalom's revolt steals the hearts of the people from David (2 Sam. 15-19). David weeps on the Mount of Olives (15:30). Shimei, a relative of Saul, curses David on his way out of the city, but Hushai offers to be David's ally in the palace. Ps. 3. Absalom lies with his father's concubines as Abner had done with Saul's (16:22). Hushai, against Ahithophel, advises Absalom not to pursue David immediately. As a result, David is able to conquer Absalom's army. Ahithophel hangs himself. While riding a mule, Absalom's hair (symbol of his pride) is caught in a tree where he hangs helplessly (18:14) until slain by Joab, against David's wishes. David mourns his son's death, "Absalom, Absalom!" (19:1).

- 969 BC:** No sooner has one rebellion been quashed than another arises by Sheba (2 Sam. 20). Amasa, who was appointed over the army by Absalom in place of Joab, is considered by David to be a threat in this conflict. Amasa is sent on an errand by David, but David also gives orders to Abishai to have Amasa killed. Joab kills Amasa at Gibeon and Sheba flees to Abel Beth-Maacah. A wise woman of the city has his head delivered to Joab to preserve the city (2 Sam. 20:4:-22).
- 968 BC:** A three-year famine occurs as a result of Saul's attack on the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21:1). The attack violated a covenant made with them by Joshua (Josh. 9:16).
- 966 BC:** David makes amends with the Gibeonites by having seven sons of Saul executed except Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, whom he vowed to protect (2 Sam. 21:2-14).
- 965 BC:** Battles with the Philistines. David is almost killed by a giant, and he is asked to stay home for his own safety. Four giants are killed in these battles (2 Sam. 21:15-22). They no longer terrorize Israel or mock God as they had in David's youth under Saul. David's Eulogy (2 Sam. 23:1-7).
- 964 BC:** David takes nine months to number the people as if to quantify his security (2 Sam. 24:10). Joab, curiously, is the voice of reason here, asking David not to do it. David repents of it, but God demands a price: pestilence takes 70,000 (24:15). God then instructs David to buy the threshing floor of Araunah (Ornan) for an altar (24:18-25; 1 Chron. 21:1-17). David offers sacrifices on the threshing floor which God accepts with an angel's fiery sword. David fears approaching God in the tabernacle, because it now sits on the high place at Gibeon (1 Chron. 21:26-30). He begins the preparations to construct the temple around the altar, gathering all the materials according to the pattern God shows him (1 Chron. 22; 28). Ps 30.
- 963 BC:** David charges Solomon and the princes with the task of construction (1 Chron. 22:6-19).
- 962 BC:** David's health begins to fail him (1 Kgs. 1:1-4). A beautiful young woman is sought to serve him and keep him warm in his old age (Abishag). Adonijah, 4th born son of David, attempts a coup with Joab. At Nathan's insistence, Bathsheba convinces David to declare Solomon king-in-waiting (per the promise in 2 Sam. 11:24-25; 1 Chron. 22:9), and have him assume the throne (1 Kgs. 1:5-53; 1 Chron. 23:1; 26:31). David agrees (Solomon becomes pro-rex).

**961 BC:** David calls for a National Assembly, and passes to Solomon his pattern for the temple (1 Chron. 28). He exhorts the people to give willingly, in joyful worship (29:10-20). Solomon is anointed a second time, publicly, and is now co-rex (29:1-25). In private, David instructs Solomon to walk with God, and after his death to deal with Joab and Shimei son of Gera, the traitors (1 Kgs. 2:1-98).

**961 BC:** David dies a natural death at 70-75. Although David begins to rule at age 30 for 40 years, he may be older than 70 if we add Solomon's overlapping time of rule. (2 Sam. 5:4-5; 1 Kgs 2:10-11; 1 Chron. 29:26-30; see Ps. 90:10). David is buried in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:4-5; 1 Kgs 2:10-12; 1 Chron. 29:26-30), having served God's purposes in his own generation (Ac 13:22, 36).