

## Dr. Robert Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 17, 2 Sam. 1-3 – Tell It Not in Gath Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

### 1. Abstract of Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 17, 2 Sam. 1-3 – Tell It Not in Gath, [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org), BeL

**Dr. Chisholm's lecture** on 2 Samuel 1-3 analyzes David's reaction to Saul's death and his subsequent ascent to the throne. **The lecture explores** David's grief and loyalty, even towards Saul, and how he mourns the loss of Israel's army. **It further examines** the complexities of David's political maneuvering, his consolidation of power, and the challenges he faces from Saul's loyalists, especially in light of Abner's murder. **The lecture presents** Dr. Chisholm's interpretation of David's actions, emphasizing the ambiguities surrounding his character and leadership during this transitional period and the cracks that are forming in his foundation. **The account emphasizes** David's calculated moves toward solidifying his kingship alongside the violent events of the time.

**2. 12 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Chisholm, Session 17 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the [Biblicalelearning.org](https://www.biblicalelearning.org) [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament → Historical Books → 1 Samuel).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 17, 2 Sam. 1-3 – Tell It Not in Gath

Okay, here's a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from Dr. Chisholm's lecture on 2 Samuel 1-3:

#### **Briefing Document: 2 Samuel 1-3 (Chisholm Lecture)**

**Overall Theme:** The transition from Saul's demise to David's ascent to the throne of Israel is a complex and often violent process ("The Road to the Throne is Paved with Blood"). David's character and actions during this period are presented with both positive and negative aspects, raising questions about his leadership and motives.

#### **I. 2 Samuel 1: The Aftermath of Saul's Death and David's Lament**

- **Key Events:** News arrives of Saul and Jonathan's death at the Battle of Gilboa. An Amalekite claims to have killed the mortally wounded Saul and presents Saul's crown and armband to David. David mourns and executes the Amalekite for striking "the Lord's anointed." David then leads a public lament for Saul and Jonathan.
- **David's Response to Saul's Death:** David's profound grief and his execution of the Amalekite are crucial to understanding the defense of David's innocence in Saul's death: "Not only was David not even near the battlefield when Saul died, but when an individual brought Saul's crown, an insignia to him, that individual paid with his life because he claimed to have struck Saul down. So, we see David's loyalty to Saul continuing here."
- **The Amalekite's Account:** Chisholm questions the veracity of the Amalekite's story, suggesting it could be a fabrication designed to ingratiate himself with David. He outlines two views: the Amalekite is telling the truth or he concocting the story to get in good with David. "I tend to lean toward the fabrication view, but not everyone does. Some good commentators would argue more for a fusion of the stories. I don't think there's a contradiction."
- **David's Lament:** The lament emphasizes the magnitude of the loss for Israel and the speaker emphasizes that, "David is not celebrating the death of Saul. He's not saying, ah, finally, the door is wide open, and I am ready to occupy the throne of Israel. I'm ready to take over my destiny and fulfill my destiny and God's promise." The lecture clarifies that the lament serves as a means of defense for David's innocence.

- **David and Jonathan's Relationship:** Chisholm addresses the modern interpretation of David and Jonathan's relationship as homosexual, dismissing it as anachronistic and contrary to Old Testament law. He explains David's statement about Jonathan's love being "more wonderful than that of women" as referring to the unique covenantal bond of loyalty and allegiance that surpassed mere romantic love.

## II. 2 Samuel 2-3: David's Rise to Power and Political Maneuvering

- **David Becomes King of Judah:** David inquires of the Lord and is directed to Hebron, where the men of Judah anoint him as their king. This marks the beginning of his reign in the south, separate from the northern tribes who remain loyal to Saul's lineage.
- **Ish-bosheth's Reign:** Abner, Saul's army commander, establishes Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, as king over the northern tribes, leading to a period of conflict between the houses of Saul and David.
- **Conflict and Violence:** The lecture highlights the ongoing conflict between the pro-Saul and pro-David factions, exemplified by the battle at the pool of Gibeon, leading to numerous deaths.
- **David's Growing Harem:** The passage about the sons born to David in Hebron reveals David's increasing number of wives, which Chisholm interprets as a troubling development. He relates, "David's royal court is starting to look like the typical ancient Near Eastern royal court with a harem and lots of children. And I don't think this is a good thing."
- **Abner's Betrayal and Death:** Abner, after a dispute with Ish-bosheth, switches allegiance to David and promises to deliver the northern tribes to him. However, Joab, David's nephew and commander, murders Abner to avenge the death of his brother Asahel.
- **David's Response to Abner's Murder:** David vehemently denies involvement in Abner's murder and publicly mourns his death, cursing Joab and his family. While this action serves to distance David from the crime, Chisholm criticizes David's failure to bring Joab to justice, which he sees as a significant flaw in David's leadership. "David is not promoting justice as he should...Joab is a murderer, and David does nothing about it. And that's problematic, I think."

- **The Return of Michal:** David demands the return of his wife Michal, daughter of Saul, from her current husband, Paltiel. Chisholm sees this as a politically motivated move by David to solidify his claim to the throne but criticizes it as unfeeling and foreshadowing his later abuse of power with Bathsheba.
- **Political Maneuvering:** David is shown engaging in political strategies, such as solidifying his place with the daughter of a king of Geshur. This shows how complicated David's image is and the ambiguity in his actions.

### III. Key Points and Interpretations

- **Defense of David:** Chisholm emphasizes the pro-David stance of the books of Samuel, suggesting that the narratives are designed to legitimize David's kingship in the face of opposition.
- **Ambiguity in David's Character:** The lecture stresses the complexity of David's character, highlighting both his strengths (loyalty, piety, military prowess) and weaknesses (political maneuvering, failure to enforce justice).
- **Foreshadowing:** Chisholm points out instances of foreshadowing, such as David's acquisition of multiple wives and his treatment of Paltiel and Michael, as indicators of future problems and moral failings.
- **Importance of Context:** The lecture underscores the importance of understanding the historical and cultural context of the Old Testament to properly interpret events and characters.

This briefing document provides a concise overview of the key themes and ideas presented in Dr. Chisholm's lecture, along with supporting quotes from the transcript.

## 4. Study Guide: Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 17, 2 Sam. 1-3 – Tell It Not in Gath

### 2 Samuel 1-3: A Study Guide

#### Study Guide Sections

#### I. Key Themes and Concepts:

- **The Aftermath of Saul's Death:** David's response, mourning vs. celebration, and the Amalekite's report.
- **David's Ascent to the Throne:** Gradual process, kingship over Judah vs. Israel, political maneuvering, and the role of violence.
- **Loyalty and Justice:** David's loyalty to Saul, the complexities of justice in a time of transition, and the actions of Joab.
- **Political Intrigue and Ambiguity:** The motivations of various characters (Abner, Joab, David), the moral ambiguities of political decisions, and the challenges of leadership.
- **Divine Promise vs. Human Action:** How David's actions align (or don't align) with the Lord's promise to establish him as king.
- **Foreshadowing and Consequences:** Events in these chapters foreshadowing later events in David's reign.
- **Character Analysis:** Close examination of motivations and actions of central characters, including David, Joab, Abner, Ish-bosheth, the Amalekite.

#### II. Chapter-by-Chapter Breakdown:

- **2 Samuel 1: David's Response to Saul's Death** The Amalekite's account and its reliability.
- David's mourning and lamentation, "Tell it not in Gath."
- David's execution of the Amalekite.
- The "Lament of the Bow" and its significance.
- **2 Samuel 2: David Becomes King of Judah** David inquires of the Lord and goes to Hebron.
- David is anointed king over Judah.

- David's outreach to the men of Jabesh-Gilead.
- Abner sets up Ish-bosheth as king over Israel.
- The battle at the pool of Gibeon and the death of Asahel.
- **2 Samuel 3: War Between the Houses of Saul and David** The ongoing war and its impact on David's ascent to the throne.
- David's growing family and the "harem report."
- Abner's conflict with Ish-bosheth and his decision to support David.
- David's demand for Michael's return and its implications.
- Joab's murder of Abner and David's response.

### III. Key Figures:

- **David:** His complex character, political skill, loyalty, and flaws.
- **Saul:** Deceased king, representing the old order, whose death creates a power vacuum.
- **Jonathan:** His relationship with David and his death as a loss.
- **Joab:** David's ruthless nephew and commander, driven by personal vengeance and loyalty.
- **Abner:** Commander of Saul's army, his shifting allegiances and political maneuvering.
- **Ish-bosheth:** Saul's son, a weak king set up by Abner, representing the remnants of Saul's dynasty.
- **The Amalekite:** The bearer of bad news who meets his demise at the hand of David's men.
- **Azahel:** Joab's brother whose death fuels Joab's actions later in Chapter 3.

### Quiz:

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. Why does David execute the Amalekite in 2 Samuel 1?
2. What is the significance of David's lament for Saul and Jonathan?
3. Why does David inquire of the Lord before going to Hebron in 2 Samuel 2?

4. What prompts Abner to make Ish-bosheth the king of Israel, and where does he set up his kingdom?
5. Describe the events that lead to Asahel's death at the hands of Abner in 2 Samuel 2.
6. What is the significance of the list of David's sons in 2 Samuel 3:2-5?
7. Why does Ish-bosheth accuse Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine?
8. What motivates Abner to switch his allegiance from Ish-bosheth to David?
9. Why does David demand the return of Michael, Saul's daughter, in 2 Samuel 3?
10. What prompts Joab to murder Abner, and what is David's response to this act?

**Quiz Answer Key:**

1. David executes the Amalekite because the Amalekite claims to have killed Saul, "the Lord's anointed." David views this as a sacrilegious act, demonstrating disrespect for the divinely appointed king. This action also helps to solidify David's image as loyal to Saul and not complicit in his death.
2. David's lament for Saul and Jonathan demonstrates his genuine grief and respect for them, even though Saul was his rival. It emphasizes the tragedy of their deaths for Israel and conveys that David is not celebrating his newfound opportunity to ascend to the throne. The lament also prevents perceptions of David's participation in their death.
3. David inquires of the Lord before going to Hebron to seek divine guidance on where he should go and what he should do. This reflects his dependence on God's direction and his commitment to following God's will in his life. His decision to go to Hebron is in obedience to the word of the Lord.
4. Abner makes Ish-bosheth king of Israel in an attempt to maintain the Saulide dynasty and retain his own power. The Philistines have overrun much of central Israel, so he sets up his kingdom in Mahanaim, east of the Jordan River (Transjordan), a safer location. He establishes him over the tribes of Gilead, Ashuri, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and all of Israel minus Judah.
5. Asahel, known for his speed, pursues Abner on the battlefield, hoping to gain glory by defeating him. Abner warns Asahel to stop, but Asahel persists, forcing Abner to kill him in self-defense by thrusting the butt end of his spear into Asahel's stomach. Asahel dies on the spot.

6. The list of David's sons in 2 Samuel 3:2-5 reveals the increasing complexity of David's household and hints at future rivalries and conflicts within his family. It also highlights David's growing power and influence as he takes on more wives. The "harem report" is a sign of David becoming like the other kings of the ancient world.
7. Ish-bosheth accuses Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine, Rizpah, because in that culture, this act would have been seen as a claim to the throne. By taking the king's concubine, Abner would be signaling his intention to usurp the kingship. As such, the accusation demonstrates his attempt to overthrow Saul's throne.
8. Abner switches his allegiance from Ish-bosheth to David because he is angered by Ish-bosheth's accusation of sleeping with Saul's concubine. Feeling that his loyalty has been questioned, Abner resolves to transfer the kingdom to David, fulfilling what he knows to be God's plan. Abner also has the backing of the elders of Israel.
9. David demands the return of Michael, Saul's daughter, as both a political move and a matter of legal right. Politically, it strengthens his claim to the throne by associating him with the Saulide dynasty. Legally, he sees Michael as his wife, for whom he had paid a bride price, and whom Saul had wrongly given to another man.
10. Joab murders Abner to avenge the death of his brother Asahel, whom Abner had killed in battle. Joab had not let go of the offense of Asahel's death and continues to carry the grudge. David publicly denounces Joab's actions, calls a curse down upon him, and mourns Abner's death, attempting to distance himself from the crime.



## Essay Questions:

1. Analyze David's response to Saul's death as depicted in 2 Samuel 1. How does David balance genuine mourning with political considerations, and what does this reveal about his character and leadership?
2. "The Road to the Throne is Paved with Blood." Discuss the theme of violence in 2 Samuel 2-3, examining the motivations and consequences of violent acts committed by various characters (Joab, Abner, Asahel). How does this violence shape David's path to kingship?
3. Examine the complex relationship between David and Joab in 2 Samuel 2-3. To what extent does Joab's loyalty serve David's interests, and to what extent does it undermine them? How does David's handling of Joab reflect his strengths and weaknesses as a leader?
4. Discuss the significance of David's "harem report" in 2 Samuel 3. How does this passage contribute to the overall portrayal of David's character, and what does it foreshadow about his future reign?
5. Analyze the political maneuvering of Abner in 2 Samuel 2-3. What are his motivations, and how does he attempt to navigate the shifting allegiances and power dynamics of the time? Ultimately, what does his fate reveal about the challenges of political life in ancient Israel?

## Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Anointed One:** (Hebrew: *Mashiach*) A person set apart for a special task by God, often through the ritual of anointing with oil. In this context, it refers to Saul and David as kings chosen by God.
- **Hebron:** A city in Judah where David first becomes king, ruling over the tribe of Judah for seven and a half years.
- **Ish-bosheth:** Saul's son, set up as king over Israel by Abner after Saul's death, representing opposition to David's rule.
- **Joab:** David's nephew and commander of his army, known for his ruthlessness and strategic abilities.
- **Abner:** Commander of Saul's army, who initially supports Ish-bosheth but later switches allegiance to David.
- **Amalekites:** An ancient nomadic people, often enemies of Israel.
- **Lament:** A passionate expression of grief or sorrow, often in the form of a song or poem, such as David's lament for Saul and Jonathan.
- **Covenant:** A formal agreement or treaty, often involving promises and obligations, such as the covenant between David and Jonathan.
- **Transjordan:** The area east of the Jordan River.
- **Harem:** The women associated with a king or ruler, often wives and concubines.
- **Philistines:** A people who inhabited the coastal regions of Canaan and were frequent adversaries of the Israelites.
- **Gath:** A major Philistine city.
- **Mahanaim:** The city in Transjordan where Abner sets up Ish-bosheth as King.

## 5. FAQs on Chisholm, 1 & 2 Samuel, Session 17, 2 Sam. 1-3 – Tell It Not in Gath, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided text:

### FAQ: 2 Samuel 1-3

- **What is the significance of David's reaction to the news of Saul and Jonathan's death in 2 Samuel 1?**
- David's response, characterized by mourning, weeping, and fasting, demonstrates his deep respect for Saul, the Lord's anointed, and Jonathan. He is not celebrating his ascent to the throne, and he punishes the Amalekite who claims to have killed Saul, underscoring David's loyalty and innocence in Saul's demise. This serves as a key element in the defense of David against any accusations that he had a hand in Saul's death, showing instead his genuine grief and respect. David even creates a lament for Saul and Jonathan, known as the Lament of the Bow.
- **How does the account of Saul's death in 2 Samuel 1 differ from the account in 1 Samuel 31, and how does the source address this discrepancy?**
- 1 Samuel 31 narrates that Saul fell on his own sword after being wounded, while 2 Samuel 1 presents an Amalekite claiming he finished Saul off at Saul's request. The source offers two interpretations: one, that the Amalekite's account fills in details of Saul's death, explaining that Saul was not yet dead when he fell on his sword, and the Amalekite finished him off and, two, that the Amalekite is fabricating the story to gain favor with David. The source leans toward the fabrication view because the narrator would be correct in some way.
- **What are the key themes related to David's ascent to the throne in 2 Samuel 2-3?**
- The primary themes are that David's path to becoming king over all Israel is not straightforward and the "Road to the Throne is Paved in Blood." After being anointed king over Judah in Hebron, he faces opposition from the followers of Saul, who establish Ish-bosheth as king of Israel. This leads to conflict and war between the houses of Saul and David. David's actions during this time are politically motivated.

- **Why does David inquire of the Lord before going up to Judah?**
- David's inquiry highlights his reliance on divine guidance. After years of being tested, he has learned to wait on the Lord's timing rather than impulsively pursuing his destiny. He seeks God's direction to ensure that his actions align with God's will.
- **What is the significance of David taking multiple wives, as mentioned in 2 Samuel 3?**
- The source views David's increasing number of wives with concern. While some might see it as a sign of blessing and political strength, it contradicts the Deuteronomic ideal that a king should not multiply wives. It suggests David is starting to resemble a typical ancient Near Eastern king with a harem, establishing a precedent that could lead to problems, as it did with Solomon. It's a "crack in the foundation."
- **How does Abner's role shift in 2 Samuel 3, and what motivates this change?**
- Initially, Abner is the commander of Saul's army and supports Ish-bosheth as king. However, after being falsely accused by Ish-bosheth of sleeping with Saul's concubine, Abner becomes angry and decides to switch his allegiance to David. He offers to bring all of Israel under David's rule, motivated by a desire to fulfill what the Lord had promised David. Abner's honor was assaulted, so he decided to go over to David.
- **What is David's reaction to Abner's murder by Joab, and why does he react this way?**
- David vehemently denies any involvement in Abner's murder. He curses Joab and his family, orders a state funeral for Abner, and mourns publicly. David does this to distance himself from Joab's actions and to demonstrate to the people of Israel that he did not condone the murder of Abner, which threatened to derail his efforts to unite the kingdom. This portion of the story is very important to the defense of David.

- **What is problematic about David's reaction to the murder of Abner?**
- Although David curses Joab and distances himself from the crime, he fails to bring Joab to justice for murdering Abner. The source indicates that David is failing to promote justice as he should, and his failure will eventually be a catalyst for Absalom to revolt against his own father. David is quick to punish those who raise a hand against the Lord's anointed, but when family is involved, David is reluctant to act.