

David's dynasty faced much opposition. Below is a brief list of the challengers.

King Saul hunted David after God declared the end of his dynasty. David was unable to begin his reign until Saul had died. Saul's pursuit drove David to hide in caves and even among the Philistines. During this time, David still managed to save Israel from its enemies, while Saul was neglectful due to his obsession with killing David.

After David was anointed king of Judah, the commander of the army, Abner, made Saul's son, Ish-bosheth, king over Israel. Abner had a falling out with Ish-bosheth and switched his support to David. Joab, commander of David's army, killed Abner. Two of Ish-bosheth's captains, Rechab and Baanah, killed Ish-bosheth. After this, David was anointed king over all Israel.

Through a series of tragic events, Absalom, David's son, became separated from David for several years. After returning from exile, he won a following and stole the throne. David fled across the Jordan. David's counselor, Ahithophel, defected to Absalom. While on the run, Mephibosheth's servant, Ziba, told David Mephibosheth had expressed his hope the turmoil would lead to the restoration of Saul's dynasty. Mephibosheth later called Ziba's accusations slanderous lies. Shimei, a relative of Saul, cursed David and threw rocks at him and his men as they fled east. David had spies in Jerusalem who ultimately thwarted Absalom's conspiracy by giving Absalom bad counsel and warning David of his strategy. Against David's instructions, Joab killed Absalom. David and his supporters returned to Jerusalem.

Another Benjamite, Sheba, led a rebellion that influenced all Israel except Judah to reject David's rule. Joab and Abishai trapped Sheba in a city called Abel. As they were preparing to breach the walls, a wise woman delivered Sheba's head to Joab, and the rebellion died.

When David was old, he intended to make Solomon king. But another son of David, Adonijah, declared himself king. Joab and Abiathar supported Adonijah. Nathan and Bathsheba informed David, and he instructed Zadok, Nathan, and Benaiah to anoint Solomon king and set him on David's throne. After this was done, Adonijah begged Solomon to spare his life, and Solomon did. But Adonijah boldly asked for Abishag, David's servant, to be his wife. Solomon, viewing this as a step toward rebellion, had Adonijah executed. Solomon also had Joab executed for the murders he'd committed in spite of David's instructions to pardon. Solomon expelled Abiathar from the priesthood. He pardoned Shimei, who had cursed David, on the condition that Shimei not leave the area. But Shimei broke his oath to obey this command, and Solomon had him executed.

Solomon's reign was firmly established until he was punished by God for marrying foreign princesses and bringing their idolatry into Israel. God raised up against him Hadad the Edomite, Rezon the Syrian, and Jeroboam the Ephraimite.

After Solomon's death, his son, Rehoboam, followed foolish advice. He threatened to increase taxes and oppress the Israelites. Israel revolted and made Jeroboam their king, leaving only Judah under Rehoboam. David's descendants continued to rule Judah, while Israel was ruled by various dynasties. Both kingdoms fell into sin. Israel was conquered by Assyria in 721 BC, and Judah was conquered by Babylon in 586 BC. The people of Judah, who became known as the Jews, returned from exile in 536 BC. They enjoyed relative autonomy under the Persians. When the Greeks took over, Judah was ruled by Greek tyrants. The Jews revolted against the Greeks and enjoyed about a century of independence under the rule of the Hasmoneans, a Levitical family. Their claim to the throne was controversial, because they were not David's descendants. Judah was subjected by the Romans in 63 BC and governed by members of the Herod family (Edomites) and Romans. The Jews revolted in 66 AD, and Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. The Jews were expelled, and Judah was no more. Jesus, the prophesied descendant of David, reigns over spiritual Israel— the church— from heaven forever.