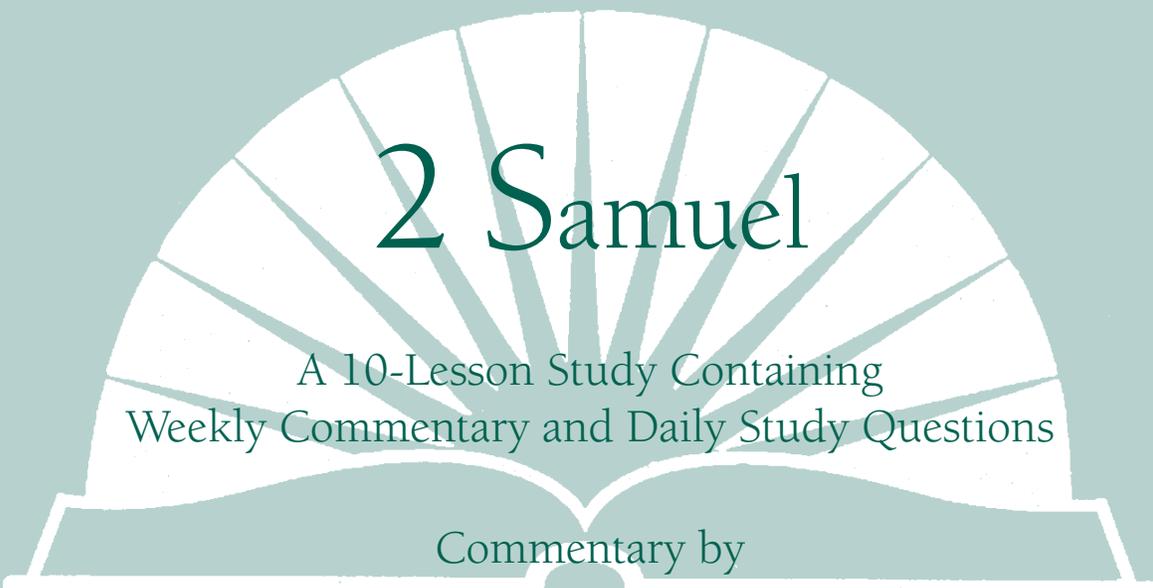


Joy of Living Bible Studies Of Living

Enriching lives through the study of God's Word



2 Samuel

A 10-Lesson Study Containing
Weekly Commentary and Daily Study Questions

Commentary by

Nancy J. Collins

Daily Study Questions by

Kathy Rowland

2 Samuel

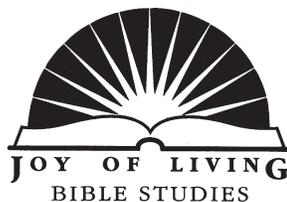
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Published by Joy of Living Bible Studies

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ISBN 1-932017-58-5

978-1-932017-58-8

About Joy of Living

For over 50 years Joy of Living has been effectively establishing individuals around the world in the sound, basic study of God's Word.

Evangelical and interdenominational, Joy of Living reaches across denominational and cultural barriers, enriching lives through the simple, pure truths of God's inspired Word, the Bible.

Studies are flexible, suited for both formal and informal meetings, as well as for personal study. Each lesson contains historical background, commentary, and a week's worth of personal application questions, leading readers to discover fresh insights into God's Word. Courses covering many books in both the Old and New Testaments are available. Selected courses are also available in several foreign languages. Contact the Joy of Living office for details.

Joy of Living Bible Studies was founded by Doris W. Greig in 1971 and has grown to include classes in nearly every state in the Union and many foreign countries.

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How to Use Joy of Living Materials

This unique Bible study series may be used by people who know nothing about the Bible, as well as by more knowledgeable Christians. Each person is nurtured and disciplined in God's Word, and many develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as they study.

Joy of Living is based on the idea that each person needs to open the Bible and let God speak to them by His Holy Spirit, applying the Scripture's message to their needs and opportunities, their family, church, job, community, and the world at large.

Only a Bible is needed for this study series. While commentaries may be helpful, it is not recommended that people consult them as they work through the daily study questions. It is most important to allow the Holy Spirit to lead them through the Bible passage and apply it to their hearts and lives. If desired, additional commentaries may be consulted after answering the questions on a particular passage.

The first lesson of a series includes an introduction to the study, plus the first week's daily study questions. Some questions are simple, and some are deeper for those who are more advanced.¹ The individual works through the Bible passages each day, praying and asking God's guidance in applying the truth to their own life. (The next lesson will contain the commentary on the Bible passage being covered in the study questions.)

To Use in a Group Setting:

After the daily personal study of the passage has been completed, the class gathers in a small group, where they pray together and discuss what they have written in response to the questions about the passage, clarifying problem areas and getting more insight into the passage. The small group/discussion leader helps the group focus on biblical truth, and not just on personal problems. The student is the only person who sees their own answers and shares only what they feel comfortable sharing.

After small groups meet for discussion and prayer, they often gather in a large group meeting where a teacher gives a brief lecture covering the essential teaching of the Bible passage that was studied during the prior week and discussed in the small groups. The teacher may clarify the passage and challenge class members to live a more committed daily life.

At home, the student begins the next lesson, which contains commentary notes on the prior week's passage and questions on a new Scripture passage.

1. Challenge questions are optional for those who want to dig deeper or write their personal opinion. The Personal questions are between the individual doing the study and God. Those answers may be shared in class only if the individual would like to.

Do You KNOW You Have Eternal Life?

Your condition...

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

But your iniquities (sins) have separated you from your God. (Isaiah 59:2)

For the wages of sin is death. (Romans 6:23)

There is help...

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. (1 Peter 3:18)

The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

What do I do?...

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out. (Acts 3:19)

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31)

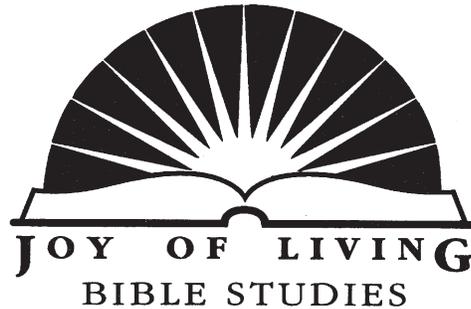
You CAN know...

He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:12-13)

If you would like to make the decision today to repent and trust Christ as your Savior, either for the first time or as a re-commitment of your life, you may want to pray a prayer similar to this one:

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner. Please forgive my sins. Thank You for dying on the cross for me, and for coming alive again. I accept Your gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. I place my life in Your hands. I want to be Yours forever. Thank you for loving me so much. In Your Name I pray. Amen.

2 Samuel Lesson 1



God's Call, God's Promise (Genesis 11-35)

Although the events in the book of 2 Samuel took place between 1010 and 970 BC,¹ the story began with one man nearly a thousand years earlier in the city of Ur of the Chaldees (in modern day Iraq). The descendants of Noah had spread out, multiplied and populated the earth, and they had again abandoned the God who created them.

Yet God had not abandoned man. He called one man, Abram, and told him that if he would leave his country and go to a land God would show him, He would give Abram that land, make a great nation from his descendants, and bless all the world through him. (It would be through his descendants that the Savior of the world would come.) In faith Abram (later called Abraham) obeyed God. Abraham had a son, Isaac, to whom the promise was given, and he in turn had a son, Jacob, to whom the promise was given.

From a Family to a Nation (Genesis 46—Exodus 18)

Jacob, whose name God changed to Israel, had 12 sons. When Jacob was an old man, he, his sons and their families (70 people in all) went into Egypt to escape starvation during a great famine. One of the sons, Joseph, was already there and in great power. He was second only to the Pharaoh, and because of this the family was well cared for.

However, generations passed, and the children of Israel grew in numbers. A new Pharaoh arose and was fearful of this great number of foreigners living within the borders of his land. To protect himself and his country, he placed the Israelites in bondage, where they remained for nearly 400 years. As always, God was faithful, and in His time He raised up a man named Moses. With great and mighty miracles God delivered the Israelites from the Egyptians and led them to the land He had promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

A Covenant Made — A Covenant Broken (Exodus 19 — Judges)

Prior to bringing the Israelites into the Promised Land, the general area of Israel today, God made a covenant with them. At Mount Sinai

they agreed to serve the Lord and obey His commands. He gave them His law, and promised to bless them as long as they served Him. But even as God gave them His glorious law, they were rebelling against Him and worshipping other gods. And so began the cycle of God's blessing, Israel's rebellion, God's disciplining, their repentance, God's deliverance and blessing again.

Because of their continued disobedience and rebellion, the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years after leaving Egypt and prior to entering the Promised Land. God, however, miraculously provided for them during that time. Finally, with Israel poised on the verge of entering the Promised Land, God designated Joshua, son of Nun, to lead them in the conquest of their new homeland. The final chapter of the book of Joshua states, "Israel served the Lord throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the Lord had done for Israel" (Joshua 24:31).

The time of the judges began soon after the death of Joshua. Israel would again rebel against God and worship false gods. God would allow a nation to oppress them until they cried out to God in their misery. In mercy He would raise up a person to judge them and lead them in victory against their oppressor. As long as the judge lived, there was peace, but when the judge died, the Israelites soon slipped into their old ways. This was a time when "everyone did as he saw fit" (Judges 17:6)—and much of the time, anarchy reigned.

The Kingdom Established 1 Samuel 8 — 2 Samuel 24

Israel had been given the perfect government, with the Lord Himself as King, and the law of the Lord as the law of the land, yet the people weren't satisfied. They wanted to be like the nations round about them. They wanted a man as their king. God granted their desire.

Saul, their first king, didn't fully obey the Lord, so God gave the kingdom to David, a shepherd who loved the Lord. Although David made many mistakes, as we will see in our study of 2 Samuel, God said, "I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart" (Acts 13:22).

God's Plan

The Bible unfolds for us God's beautiful plan to redeem mankind and restore to us everything that was lost in the Garden of Eden. The

1. Kenneth Barker, editor. *The NIV Study Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985). See "Introduction: 1 Samuel."

conquest of Canaan and the consequent removal of the ungodly and wicked people living there were part of God's plan. His plan for Israel (see Romans 9:4-5) was...

- ☛ to establish a "holy nation" (Exodus 19:6).
- ☛ to give them His law and the temple worship.
- ☛ to reveal to them His glory.
- ☛ to bring forth through them the Messiah, the Savior, to redeem the world.

It was not that the Israelites were innately better than other nations. As the Bible plainly reveals, all mankind is lost in sin (see Romans 3:23), and Israel repeatedly sinned. It is simply that God chooses to use whomever He will, and He chose to create and use the nation of Israel as part of His plan. Through them He would demonstrate to the world...

- ☛ that He alone is God.
- ☛ that He is completely holy.
- ☛ that all mankind is depraved.
- ☛ that sin is terrible.
- ☛ that we are helpless in our sin.
- ☛ that it is impossible to remove sin and its consequences by any natural means.
- ☛ that a Savior is necessary (see Galatians 3).
- ☛ that through them, finally, He would send His Son to be our Savior.

1 and 2 Samuel

First and Second Samuel were originally one book. The translators of the Septuagint, a pre-Christian Greek translation of the Old Testament, divided the book of Samuel into two books. The book of 1 Samuel begins during the time of the judges and ushers in the five hundred year period of the kings of Israel (approximately 1050-586 BC).¹ The events recorded in 1 Samuel cover a period of about 115 years, beginning with the childhood of Samuel the prophet, through the difficult times of Saul, Israel's first king, and ending during the early part of the reign of David, God's chosen king. These events are covered in the *Joy of Living* study of *1 Samuel*. Second Samuel is focused on the story of David as king and ends prior to his death. It records David's triumphs and his failures and, through it all, God's faithfulness. As we study, we will see what God can do in and through an imperfect man who was committed to serving Him.

Who Wrote 1 and 2 Samuel?

There are varying opinions regarding what person or persons physically wrote 1 and 2 Samuel. Was it Samuel? Did Samuel write part of it, and then someone else finished it? Was it a scribe who

1. Henrietta C. Mears. *What the Bible Is All About* (Ventura: Regal, 1997) 111.

gathered information from various sources and compiled it? There are entire books written about who and when various portions of the Bible were written, and it is all very interesting and serves a purpose; however, our purpose in this study is to know God better, to understand His working on behalf of mankind and through mankind.

And to that end, God solves for us the problem of "Who wrote 1 and 2 Samuel?" He tells us simply that the Bible (including 1 and 2 Samuel) is His Word, recorded by man but written by the Holy Spirit. Second Peter 1:21 says, "For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." And 2 Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed..." Regardless of whom God used to record it, He has spoken to us. The test of time has proven the infallibility of His Word.

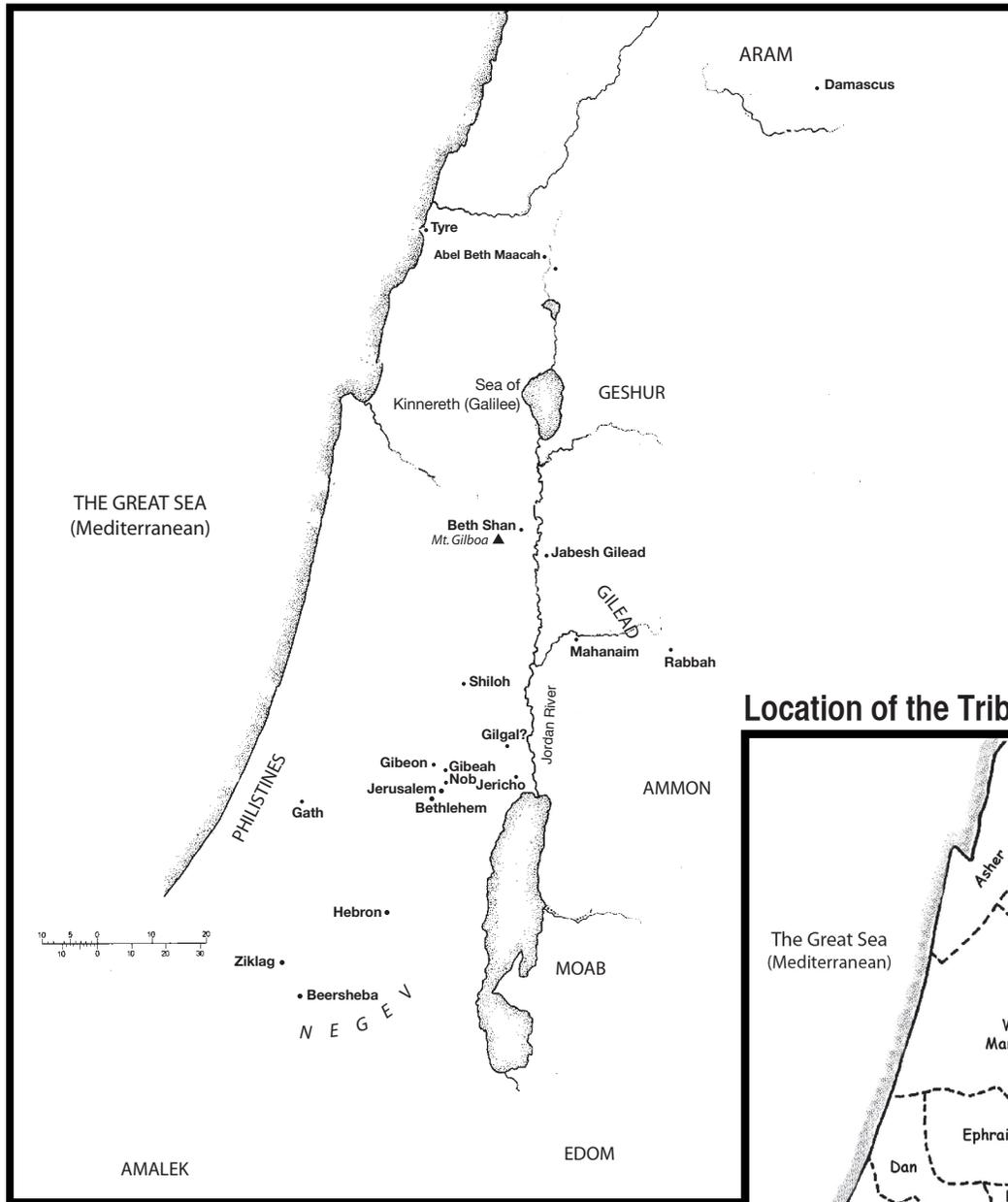
Second Peter 1:19 says, "And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place..." As you work through the study of 2 Samuel, ask God to open the eyes of your understanding to His truth. Ask Him to help apply His truth to your own life.

A Daily Appointment with God

Make a daily appointment with God. Find a quiet spot. Take your Bible, pencil or pen and your study material with you. If you have a busy phone, you may have to turn it off! Remember how very important your appointment with God is, and make time to be with Him daily. Ask yourself the following things:

1. How much time will I spend with the Lord each day?
2. What do I need to put aside in order to spend this time with the Lord? (Examples: sleep, TV, emailing, web-browsing or online chatting, casual telephone conversations, etc. Each person will have to decide what his or her priorities are, and what can be removed from the daily schedule to make time to spend with God.)
3. What is the best time for my appointment with God?
4. Where is the quietest place for me to pray and study?
5. Do I really want to spend time with God? (If your last answer is "yes," God will bless you as you work out the time. If your last answer is "no," pray that God will give you a desire, a hunger to spend this time with Him. He will do this for you!)

Location of Events in 2 Samuel

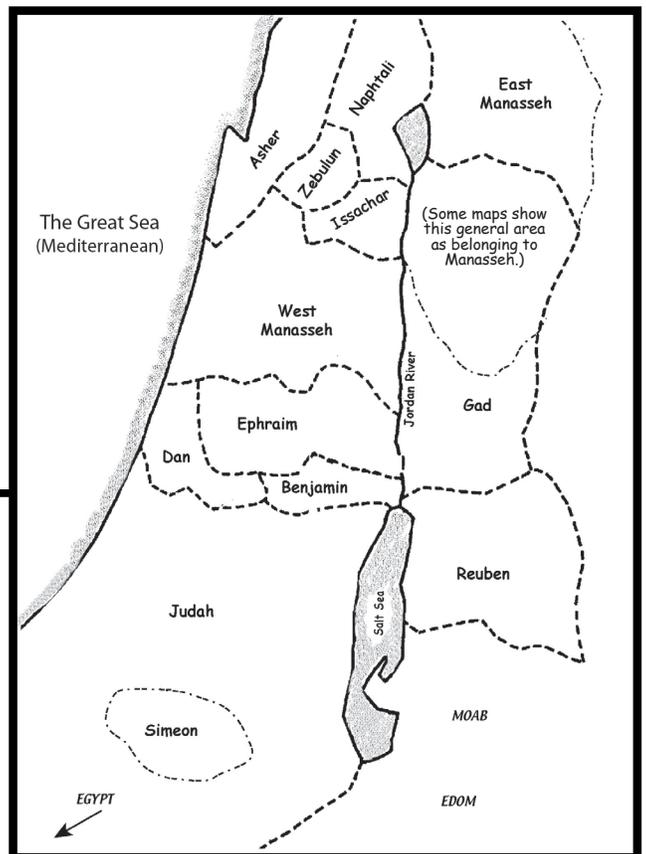


Collectively all the tribes are referred to as Israel, however, the tribe of Judah (Simeon had been absorbed by Judah) was the first to crown David king. He ruled in Hebron of Judah for seven years, before the remaining tribes anointed him as king.

As you will discover as you study, a rivalry existed between Judah and the northern/eastern tribes.

David was able to successfully unite these groups into one united kingdom.

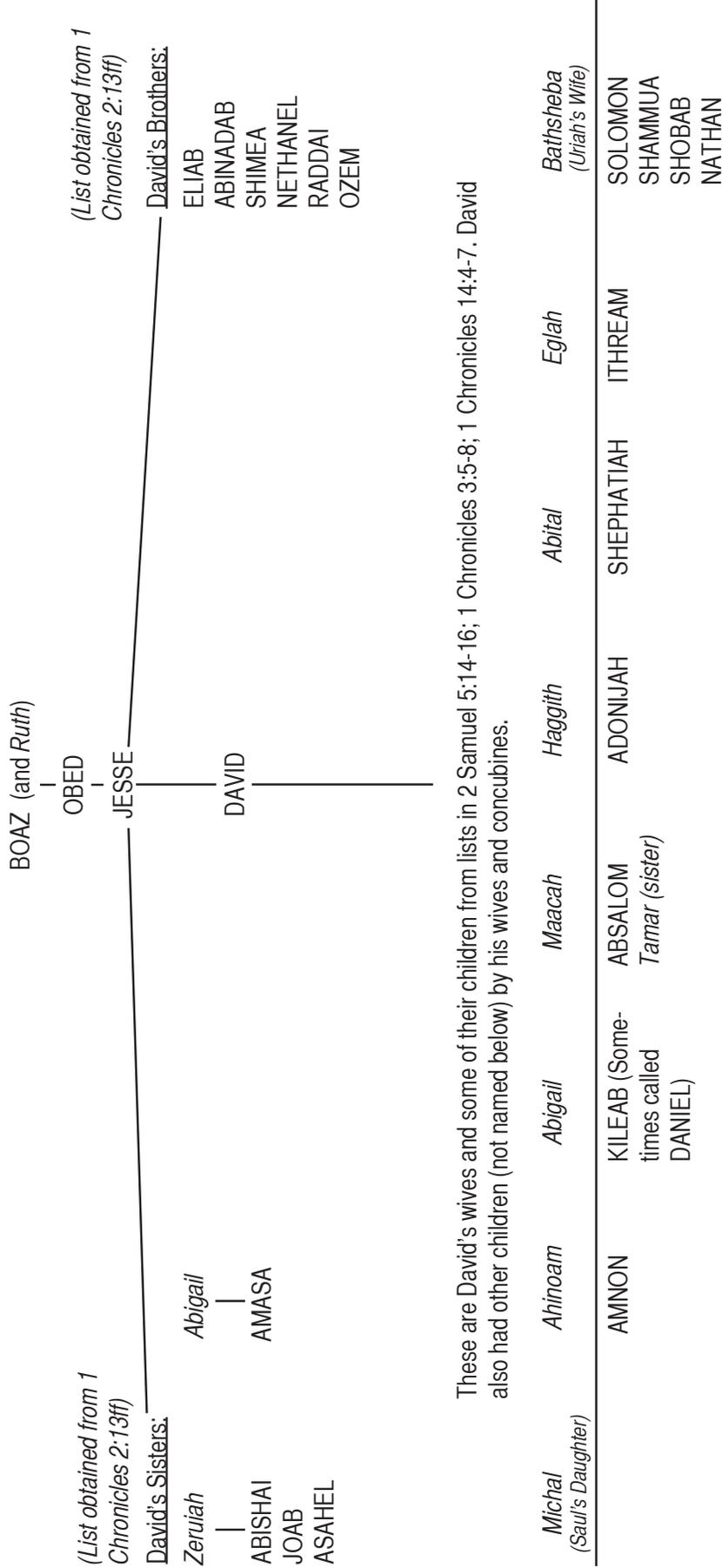
Location of the Tribes



For hundreds of years the Philistines periodically attacked and oppressed the Israelites. In the course of time, under David's leadership, the Philistines were subdued. The Ammonites, Moabites, Arameans, Edomites, and Amalekites were also brought into submission. David methodically worked to make the borders of Israel secure.

Map is not to scale and locations are approximate. Some locations are unknown. Map is based on several maps from *Reproducible Maps, Charts, Timelines & Illustrations* (Ventura: Regal, 1989). Used by permission.

David's Family



These are David's wives and some of their children from lists in 2 Samuel 5:14-16; 1 Chronicles 3:5-8; 1 Chronicles 14:4-7. David also had other children (not named below) by his wives and concubines.

From 1 Chronicles 3:1-9:
 Sons born to David in Hebron: Amnon, Kileab (Daniel), Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream.
 Sons born to David in Jerusalem: Solomon, Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Ibhah, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, Eliphelet.
 "All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister." (1 Chronicles 3:9)

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the Introduction to 2 Samuel.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the Introduction to 2 Samuel or from your teacher’s lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 1:1-16.

1. a. We last saw David in 1 Samuel 30, when he and his men pursued and defeated the Amalekites who had burned Ziklag, recovering all their women and children and the Amalekites’ plunder. First Samuel 31, which took place at approximately the same time, recounted the Philistines’ victory over Israel and King Saul. Where do we find David in 2 Samuel 1:1?

b. Who arrived in Ziklag, what was his appearance, and what was his attitude toward David? (2 Samuel 1:2)

2. a. What story did the man tell? (2 Samuel 1:3-10)

b. Challenge: Compare the Amalekite’s story with the account given in 1 Samuel 31:1-7. He may have changed the facts in his report in order to gain favor with David, who would benefit from Saul’s death.

3. How did David and his men react to the Amalekite’s news? (2 Samuel 1:11-12)

4. a. This young man thought he was bringing good news to David. What questions did David ask him? (2 Samuel 1:13-14)

b. Review 1 Samuel 24:4-6 to see David’s attitude toward Saul, the Lord’s anointed.

5. What did the Amalekite bring upon himself by his reported action? (2 Samuel 1:15-16)

6. Personal: The death penalty is a controversial subject. Read Genesis 9:6 (spoken to Noah after the flood) and Exodus 21:12-14 (given in the law). What do you think of David's actions? Do you think there is a difference between a person taking revenge into his own hands and the government (whether a king or elected officials) executing a person?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 1:17-27.

1. What did David compose and where was it eventually written down? (2 Samuel 1:17-18)

2. How are the deaths of Jonathan and Saul introduced in 2 Samuel 1:19, and then summed up in the last line of the lament, 2 Samuel 1:27?

3. a. From 2 Samuel 1:20 and 24, compare the reactions of the Philistines and the Israelites to Saul's death.

b. How did David feel about the area where this event took place? (2 Samuel 1:21)

4. From 2 Samuel 1:22-23, summarize the characteristics and accomplishments of Saul and Jonathan.

5. How did David express his grief over the death of Jonathan? (2 Samuel 1:25-26)

6. Personal: Saul had treated David terribly, making him a fugitive and driving him out of the country, yet David displayed no bitterness toward him in this lament. Saul had treated David as his mortal enemy, yet throughout their relationship David would not treat Saul that way in return. How do you respond when someone mistreats you? If you face this situation today, how can you follow David's example?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:1-7.

1. a. Since Saul was dead, David was now free to leave Philistine territory. What did he do before moving? (2 Samuel 2:1a)

b. Where did the Lord direct David to move? (2 Samuel 2:1b) Find this area on the map on page 7.

2. Who moved to this place with David? (2 Samuel 2:2-3)

3. a. Review 1 Samuel 16:1-13. Who anointed David in a private ceremony, and over whom was he anointed king? Who was present?
 - b. From 2 Samuel 2:4a, who publicly anointed David, and over whom was he anointed king?
4. What did David eventually learn about Saul's burial? (2 Samuel 2:4b)
5. a. Jabesh Gilead was not a part of the territory of Judah. How did David reach out in peace and friendship to this Israelite town? (2 Samuel 2:5-7)
 - b. Challenge: David invoked the Lord's kindness and faithfulness upon the men of Jabesh Gilead. What do you learn about these attributes of God in Exodus 34:5-7a?
6. Personal: Do you personally know these attributes of God, as David did? How has God showed you His kindness and faithfulness?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:8-11.

1. a. From 2 Samuel 2:8a, who was Abner?
 - b. Review 1 Samuel 14:50b-51. What additional relationship did Abner have to Saul?
2. a. Who did Abner take to Mahanaim? (2 Samuel 2:8b)
 - b. Challenge: From 1 Samuel 14:49a and 1 Chronicles 8:33, list Saul's sons. Which of his sons were killed in battle, according to 1 Samuel 31:2? Scholars believe that "Ishvi" (1 Samuel 14:49) and "Esh-Baal" (1 Chronicles 8:33) both are probably the same son as Ish-Bosheth.¹
3. a. What did Abner do for Ish-Bosheth? (2 Samuel 2:9)
 - b. How old was Ish-Bosheth, and how long did he reign? (2 Samuel 2:10a)
4. Although Abner set up Saul's last living son as king over "all Israel" (2 Samuel 2:9), did all of the Israelite tribes acknowledge him as their king? (2 Samuel 2:10b)

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary.*

5. How long did David rule as king over the tribe of Judah? (2 Samuel 2:11)

6. Personal: Yesterday we reviewed 1 Samuel 16:1-13, in which God told Samuel to anoint David as “king over Israel” (verse 1). Much time had passed between 1 Samuel chapter 16 and 2 Samuel chapter 2. Although David was now king over Judah, one of the tribes of Israel, God’s plan had not yet been fulfilled. Yet, as we have seen, David trusted God to lead him day by day. Read Psalm 25:1-7, in which David expressed this trust. Can you pray these verses to God regarding your own life and circumstances? How does this change your outlook?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 1-2, concentrating on 2:12-32.

1. a. Where did Abner, Ish-Bosheth and their men go, and who met them there? (2 Samuel 2:12-13)

b. Challenge: Read 1 Chronicles 2:13-16. How was Joab related to David?

2. a. How did Abner and Joab decide to try and settle the question of the succession to the throne of Israel? (2 Samuel 2:14-15)

b. What was the result of this fight? (2 Samuel 2:16)

3. Although this fight ended in a draw, 2 Samuel 2:17 looks forward to the result of further fighting described in the rest of this chapter. What would be the result by the end of the day?

4. a. Whom did Asahel, another of David’s nephews, single-mindedly pursue, and what was the result? (2 Samuel 2:18-23)

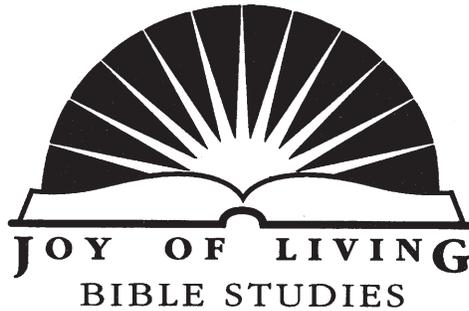
b. Who continued pursuing Abner, and how were the pursuit and the fight finally ended? (2 Samuel 2:24-28)

5. a. How many men were killed on each side of the battle? (2 Samuel 2:30b-31)

b. Where did each of the two armies go after the battle ended? (2 Samuel 2:29-30a,32)

6. Personal: In 2 Samuel 2:26 Abner said to Joab, his fellow Israelite, “Don’t you realize that this will end in bitterness?” Any fight between “brothers”—whether countrymen, family members or friends—is a bitter ordeal. Have you been in this situation in the past, or are you in it right now? From John 13:34-35, how did Jesus instruct us to relate to our brothers and sisters?

2 Samuel Lesson 2



2 Samuel 1-2

First and Second Samuel were originally one book. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek, the text was too long to fit on one scroll, so when one scroll was filled, they continued on another. For this reason, as we open the book of 2 Samuel we discover that it continues a narrative begun in 1 Samuel. Although David had been anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, Saul was still on the throne and was seeking David's life. After nearly being apprehended by Saul several times, David had sought refuge with Achish, king of Gath, in the land of the Philistines. Achish assigned the southern outlying city of Ziklag to David, his 600 men, and their families. From there David and his men raided other tribes of people and presented the goods that were plundered to Achish, thereby gaining his trust and favor.

As the Philistines were preparing to engage in a large battle with Israel, Achish expected David to join in the battle. The other Philistine leaders, however, didn't trust David and demanded that he and his men be sent home.

When David and his men returned to Ziklag they discovered that the Amalekites had burned their village and taken their families captive. David and his men pursued the Amalekites, defeated them, and recovered all the people and goods that had been taken. And so we open 2 Samuel...

The Death of Saul and Jonathan

Victory was David's. He had defeated the Amalekites, and recovered everyone and everything the Amalekites had taken—and more. He, his exhausted men, and their rescued families returned to Ziklag. The Amalekites had burned the village, so David and his followers had to take the needed steps to resume their lives.

David's heart was bound to Israel, and he must have wondered what was transpiring with the battle between Israel and the Philistines. Who would be victorious, and how would the outcome of the battle affect his life and the lives of his men? If Israel won, Ziklag might no longer be a safe haven from Saul. If the Philistines won—well, that was too much to consider.

Three days later, David had his answer. A man arrived in their camp, with torn clothes and dust on his head, as though in mourning. When he was brought before David, he fell to the ground to give David honor. He then told David that he had escaped from the Israelite

camp, that the Israelites had fled from the Philistines and many of them had died, and that Saul and his son Jonathan were dead.

David wanted to know—were the deaths of Saul and Jonathan just a rumor this man was repeating, or did he know for certain that they were dead? If so, how did he know?

As we look at what this man told David, let us consider several things. This man was an Amalekite—an enemy of Saul, David and all Israel. Why would he bring this news and Saul's crown to David, instead of taking them to his own people to celebrate the death of Saul—unless, of course, he thought David would give him some special reward for killing King Saul and presenting David with the crown? Although this man's story is quite similar to what we read in 1 Samuel 31, there are some added and some contradictory details. Because of this, you may wonder if the Bible is contradicting itself. The answer is no, it is not contradicting itself. In 1 Samuel 31, we read what actually happened. In 2 Samuel 1 the Bible accurately records what *the Amalekite said* happened. The most believable lies stay as close to the truth as possible, and it is plain that the Amalekite was lying in hope of being richly rewarded. The Bible is merely telling us what the Amalekite said—the lie he told.

First Samuel 31:4 says that Saul fell on his sword and died. In contrast, the Amalekite said in 2 Samuel 1:6-9 that he came upon Saul wounded but still alive. The Amalekite implied that Saul was afraid that the Philistines would find him alive and torture him before killing him. For that reason, the Amalekite said, Saul asked him to kill him—which he did. More likely, the Amalekite was scavenging the battlefield before the Philistines arrived the next day to strip the dead. When he discovered Saul's body, he stripped it of everything valuable, then decided to take the crown and armband (his supposed proof that he had killed Saul) to David, in hopes of gaining an even greater reward.

Little did this Amalekite know David, nor could he have anticipated David's reaction. Upon hearing the news of Israel's defeat, and the death of Saul and his sons, David and his men tore their clothes in grief. They wept and fasted until the evening.

David had no way of knowing what had actually transpired on Mount Gilboa. The Amalekite had succeeded in convincing David that he had killed Saul. Just think—David, who felt guilty at cutting off a piece of Saul's robe, who wouldn't raise a hand against Saul, even while Saul was attempting to kill him, was faced with a man who was bragging that he had killed Saul. Amazed at the Amalekite's audacity,

David asked him why he wasn't afraid to destroy the Lord's anointed. Without waiting for his reply, David sentenced him to death, saying, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed'" (2 Samuel 1:16).

Our mouths bear witness to who we are. James 3:8 tells us, "No man can tame the tongue." And Luke 6:45 says, "The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks." What does your mouth say about you? We may attempt to control our tongues, to watch what we say, but we find it does not work! We cannot tame our tongues—what is in our heart is what comes out of our mouth. We have to go to the Lord, ask Him to forgive us, cleanse us, and change us.

David's Lament

A lament is a song or poem expressing grief. In David's lament for Saul and Jonathan, he not only grieves their death, but also honors their memory. Notice that none of the evil that Saul did to David is mentioned—only what is good is to be remembered.

Saul and Jonathan are referred to as the "glory" of Israel (2 Samuel 1:19). As God's anointed king, with his son Jonathan by his side, Saul had, at one point, delivered Israel from the hands of many who had plundered them (see 1 Samuel 14:48).

Next, in 2 Samuel 1:20, David expresses his distaste at the thought of Israel's enemies rejoicing over her defeat and the death of Israel's "glory." As he continues, David curses the very ground upon which Saul and Jonathan perished, as they fought side by side against Israel's enemy. Although Jonathan didn't approve of Saul's behavior toward David, he was a loyal son, fighting by his father's side until death. Where David did not want the "daughters of the Philistines" (verse 20) to know and rejoice, he does want the "daughters of Israel" (verse 24) to remember all that Saul had done for them and weep.

Prior to addressing his feeling about Jonathan's death, David reiterates that "the mighty have fallen in battle" (verse 25). David refers to Jonathan as his brother, a man who was very dear to him. The love David and Jonathan had for one another is the love and the bond that only God can bring about.¹

Jonathan recognized that God had chosen David to become king after Saul rather than himself, and yet there was no bitterness or envy, just loyalty and love to the Lord and to David. As much as Jonathan loved and supported his father Saul, he consistently defended and

helped David. There was no one who was as close to David's heart as Jonathan had been.

Have you lost someone close to you? Are you still grieving? If you haven't done it already, why not sit down and write out your lament. Remember the good things, the noble actions and characteristics of that person. If you have unresolved issues with that person—perhaps a lack of forgiveness on your part—take them to the Lord. Ask Him to help you to forgive that person and to let go of your pain, and ask Him to heal you.

David, King of Judah

With Saul dead, it seemed the way was now clear for David to take his rightful place as king. But, rather than exalting himself, David sought God's guidance. What should be his next move? Should he stay in Ziklag or should he go to Judah? And if he was to go, where in Judah should he go? The Lord directed him to go to Hebron in Judah. So David and his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, along with all his men and their families, left Ziklag and moved to Hebron and its surrounding area. After David's arrival the men of Judah came to him and anointed him king over the tribe of Judah.

It was after this that David learned that the men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who had risked their lives to rescue Saul's body from the Philistines and give it an honorable burial. David sent a group of messengers to them to thank them for their kindness to Saul, and to let them know that the house of Judah had anointed him king. This gave them the opportunity to make David their king, too—but there was no response on their part.

Ish-Bosheth, King of Israel

Three of Saul's sons had been slain in the battle against the Philistines, but there was one more son who was still alive, Ish-Bosheth.² Abner, Saul's cousin and the commander of Saul's army, made Ish-Bosheth king over Israel and took him across the Jordan to Mahanaim, where the Israelite army had regrouped and set up camp after their defeat by the Philistines.

Ishbosheth was forty years old when he became king, and he reigned for only two years. David ruled over just the tribe of Judah for six and a half years. As you read this next portion you may wonder what happened to the four and a half years. Many believe Ish-Bosheth was not immediately crowned king.

War Between Israelites

If you look at the map on page 7, you can see where David was located in Hebron and the general area of Judah. Then note where Mahanaim is located and the distance it is from Gibeah, which had been Saul's home base. As you look at the map, consider how much Israelite territory the Philistines had taken in the last battle. The terri-

1. The relationship between David and Jonathan was not a homosexual relationship. Jonathan was a godly man; David was a man after God's own heart (see Acts 13:22); and the friendship between them was God's gift to them both. Mankind, with our fallen nature, often twists that which is good and attempts to turn it into something evil. We slander and lie. Even Jesus was slandered, so we shouldn't be surprised that David and Jonathan are slandered. We shouldn't be surprised that some might say the friendship God blessed them with was an ungodly relationship. Homosexuality is detestable to the Lord (see Leviticus 20:13). That being said, there can be deep friendships, deep love, between people without sex or sexual attraction being involved.

2. Ish-Bosheth was also known as Esh-Baal (see 1 Chronicles 8:33).

tory that Ish-Bosheth actually ruled was limited. Looking at 2 Samuel 2:15, notice that only the tribe of Benjamin truly supported him as king.

In an effort to keep David's rule from spreading northward, Abner moved Ish-Bosheth's troops from Mahanaim to Gibeon, which was located in the area belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe that Saul and his family belonged to. (You can find this on the map on page 7).

Was this an act of aggression? Were Ish-Bosheth and his army attempting to reclaim Judah? David didn't know their intentions, so Joab, the head of David's army, took David's men out to meet them at the pool of Gibeon. Abner and his men sat on one side of the pool. Joab and his men sat on the other.

It is interesting to consider the relationship of these two men, Abner and Joab. They were not strangers. In fact, they were on a first-name basis (see 2 Samuel 2:22). Abner was Saul's cousin. Joab was David's nephew, the son of David's sister Zeruiah. Among Joab's men were two of his brothers, Abishai and Asahel. It is probable that at one time many of these men had fought together in Saul's army.

In an effort to reduce the number of Israelites killed, Abner suggested that instead of having all the men from both sides fight one another, they have two smaller groups fight. Twelve young men representing David and twelve young men representing Ish-Bosheth stood up to fight. They were equally matched, and they killed each other. Twenty-four young Israelites lay dead.

A battle ensued between all the troops from both sides, Israelite brother fighting Israelite brother. Asahel, Joab's brother, spotted Abner and began pursuing him. Although Abner tried to outrun him, Asahel stayed with him. Believing he knew who this person was who so relentlessly pursued him, Abner called back, "Is it you, Asahel?" (2 Samuel 2:20), to which Asahel replied in the affirmative.

Not wanting to fight with and probably kill the younger brother of Joab, Abner tried to persuade him to stop chasing him and fight one of the younger men. However, Asahel was determined to take the prize—Abner, the head of Saul's army. Abner tried a second time to persuade Asahel to stop chasing him. But again Asahel didn't heed the warning, so to save his own life, Abner finally thrust the butt of his spear out behind him. It stabbed Asahel in the stomach. He fell dead.

When the rest of David's men came to the spot where Asahel had died, they stopped—all except Asahel's two brothers, Abishai and Joab. They continued to pursue Abner, their determination fueled by their desire to avenge their brother.

They chased Abner for a long time. As he reached the hill of Ammah, the men of Benjamin joined Abner, and they took a stand on the top of the hill—ready to fight. Abner—who had crowned Ish-Bosheth king even though he knew God had promised the kingdom to David (see 2 Samuel 3:9-10), and who had taken Israel's army to Gibeon—now attempted to stop the bloodshed. He called out to Joab that the battle would end in bitterness since it was brothers fighting, and not strangers.

Joab took to heart what Abner said, blew the trumpet to signal an end to the pursuit, and he and his men returned home. Abner took his

men, and in defeat marched all night back to Mahanaim. Three hundred and sixty of Abner's men were dead; only sixteen (plus Asahel) of David's men were dead. They buried Asahel in Bethlehem in his father's tomb and then returned to David in Hebron.

A temporary cease-fire had been called, but the war was not over. Abner was not willing to give up his position of power in what had been Saul's kingdom, and hatred and bitterness toward Abner had begun to grow in the heart of Joab.

Though Abner knew that God had promised the kingdom to David, his refusal to submit to God's plan had already caused the unnecessary death of many Israelites. How often we bring grief to ourselves and others by our refusal to listen to God, to walk in His paths, and to submit willingly to his plan for our lives. Are you resisting God's will? If you are, give it up. Trust that He knows what is best for you. Ask God to help you trust Him, and be willing to go in the direction He is leading you. He created you for His purpose, and only as you submit to and fulfill that purpose will you find His peace and joy.

5. Even though David was the anointed king, why was he not able to rebuke Joab and Abishai (the sons of Zeruah; see 2 Samuel 2:18) with authority at this time? (2 Samuel 3:38-39)

6. Personal: David left it to the Lord to “repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds” (2 Samuel 3:39). Read Psalm 28. When someone has wronged you can you echo this prayer of David's? Write down your favorite verse from this psalm.

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 3-5, concentrating on 4:1-12.

1. When Ish-Bosheth heard of the death of Abner—the man who had held the power behind his throne—what was his reaction and his people's reaction? (2 Samuel 4:1)

2. What two men are introduced in 2 Samuel 4:2-3 that might wish to take advantage of the weak king of Israel?

3. The only other living descendant of Saul is introduced in 2 Samuel 4:4. What happened to him?

4. What did Recab and Baanah do to Ish-Bosheth? (2 Samuel 4:5-7)

5. a. Why did these men think David would welcome them? (2 Samuel 4:8)

b. How did David actually react to them? (2 Samuel 4:9-12)

6. Personal: Ish-Bosheth had been crowned king of Israel by Abner, but God did not anoint him for that position. He knew that his protection was from Abner, so when Abner died, Ish-Bosheth lost courage and eventually lost his life. In whom do you trust for your protection—in some person or group of people, or in the Lord?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 3-5, concentrating on 5:1-12.

1. a. For what three reasons did the elders of all Israel anoint David to be their king? (2 Samuel 5:1-2)

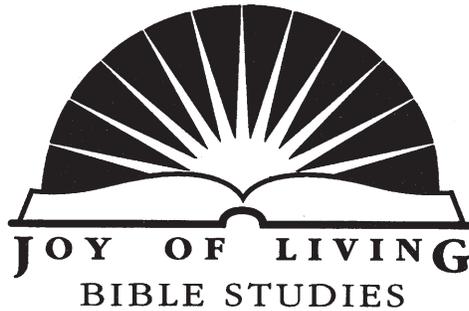
b. How does 2 Samuel 5:3 indicate that this was not just a contract among men, such as the anointing of Ish-Bosheth had been?
2. How long did David rule as king, first of Judah and then of all Israel? (2 Samuel 5:4-5)
3. a. What city, formerly occupied by pagan inhabitants, did David now conquer? (2 Samuel 5:6-8)

b. What did David do with the fortress of Zion in this captured city? (2 Samuel 5:9)
4. With whom did David establish friendly relations, and what did David receive from him in trade goods and services? (2 Samuel 5:11)
5. Why did David continue to become more and more powerful, and for whose sake was this accomplished? (2 Samuel 5:10,12)
6. Personal: David knew that all of the power and wealth that he received came from the hand of the Lord, and that it was not given for David's own sake, but for the sake of God's people, Israel (and for the glory of God Himself). How do you regard any earthly achievements or riches that you have received? Will this affect how you use these things?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 3-5, concentrating on 5:13-25.

1. a. How did David extend his family after he moved to Jerusalem? (2 Samuel 5:13-16)

2 Samuel Lesson 3



2 Samuel Chapters 3-5

While David was still a youth, Samuel, at God's direction, had anointed David as Israel's king. David had waited for God's timing for this kingship to become a reality. He had sought God's direction and walked in obedience to that direction. He had refused to take matters into his own hands and kill Saul, even when the opportunity arose. Now, although Saul was dead, David was king only in Judah. The rest of the tribes were under the control of Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth.

Abner, Saul's cousin, had been the commander of Saul's army. Now he was commander of Ish-Bosheth's army. It was at his instigation that hostile action began between the house of David in Judah and the house of Saul (represented by Ish-Bosheth). This war continued for many years. Because the Lord was with David, he grew stronger and stronger, whereas the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

As David's power and influence were increasing, so was his household. During the time he ruled in Hebron there were six sons born to him. He also added several wives. Some of these marriages were political alliances. Having multiple wives and concubines was a common practice in ancient times. Although it was not explicitly forbidden, it was not God's ideal. God's plan was that one man and one woman be joined and made one flesh (see Genesis 2:23-24). According to Scripture, those in leadership are not to have multiple wives (see Deuteronomy 17:17; 1 Timothy 3:2,12). As you read through the Scriptures, you see that sorrow, envy and strife are the result of multiple wives and concubines (see Genesis 16, 29-30).

After the death of Saul, if Abner had not sought out Ish-Bosheth and made him king over the northern tribes, it is possible that they, like the men of Judah, would have approached David and requested that he become their king. But as we will see, Abner was an ambitious man and had been strengthening his position within the house of Saul. Although Ish-Bosheth was king, it seems that the power lay in Abner's hands.

In the culture of that time, sleeping with¹ the concubine of a former king denoted the transfer of royal power (see 2 Samuel 12:8, 1 Kings 2:22). For some reason Ish-Bosheth believed that Abner had slept with Saul's concubine, Rizpah. This would have signaled an attempt on Abner's part to take the kingship from Ish-Bosheth. When Ish-Bosheth confronted him, Abner was furious. He believed that his

actions, up to that time, had proven his loyalty, but now, because of this offensive accusation, he told Ish-Bosheth plainly that he would transfer his allegiance and all of Israel to David.

Abner evidently had a poor understanding of God and His power. Although he acknowledged that the Lord had promised David that the kingdom would be David's, Abner actually believed that he was the one who could deliver Israel into David's hands. Although, humanly speaking, Abner—not Ish-Bosheth—held the power in Israel, God is sovereign over all the nations of the earth. Daniel 4:17 says, "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men." It was nearing the time that God would fulfill His promise to David, and Abner was merely a pawn in His hand.

Ish-Bosheth recognized that Abner was more powerful than he, and didn't pursue the matter. However, Abner sent messengers to David, seeking some type of agreement between them that would allow Abner to have some position of power within David's kingdom in exchange for using his influence to bring the northern tribes (Israel) to David.

David was open to an alliance, but wouldn't discuss it unless his first wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, was returned to him. Then in a wise political move, David sent a request for his wife directly to Ish-Bosheth. Rather than a coup with the death of more Israelites, David was seeking a peaceful unification of the tribes under his rule. If Ish-Bosheth sent Michal to him, it would show Israel that the houses of Saul and of David were reunited, and that David, as Saul's son-in-law, had a reasonable claim to the throne.

Michal had been David's wife, but when David had fled for his life from Saul, Saul gave her to Paltiel. For over ten years they had lived as husband and wife, so when Ish-Bosheth sent her to David, Paltiel followed her, weeping, until Abner forced him to return home.

Abner continued with his plan. He talked to the elders of Israel and encouraged them to make David their king, reminding them that God had promised to use David to deliver Israel from the Philistines. This stirred their hope that the land the Philistines had taken would be returned to them. Since Benjamin was the tribe that Saul came from, Abner made a special trip to speak with them in person, to convince them that David should be king.

1. "Sleep with" is a phrase meaning to have sexual intercourse (see Numbers 5:20, Deuteronomy 22:22).

With everything in place to finalize a deal, Abner and twenty men went to meet with David in Hebron. This was not a secret meeting. David held a feast for Abner and his men. Abner then departed to make arrangements to gather Israel together with David, so they could crown David king.

The Murder of Abner

While all this was taking place, Joab and many of David's men had been out on a raid. When they returned, Joab was informed that Abner had been there, and that David had sent him away peaceably. Joab hated Abner because he had killed Joab's brother Asahel. Adding to his anger was the thought that Abner might take a position of power in David's kingdom, possibly one greater than Joab's. In anger, Joab confronted David, accusing Abner of being a spy.

Joab then took matters into his own hands. Unknown to David, Joab sent word to Abner to come back to Hebron. Before Abner could speak to David, Joab called him aside, as though to speak to him privately. Joab stabbed and killed Abner because he had killed Asahel. If you recall from our previous lesson, Asahel had been killed by Abner, but it was an act of combat, not an act of murder. In fact, Abner had tried to avoid conflict with Asahel.

When David heard what had transpired, he was not pleased. He wanted it known that he had had no part in the slaying of Abner. He pronounced a curse upon Joab and his father's house (which would have included Joab's brother Abishai¹) for their action.

The peaceful unification of Judah and Israel was in jeopardy. If Israel believed that David had betrayed Abner, hostilities could begin again. Evidently it was not widely known that Joab was the one who had killed Abner. In an effort to honor Abner and maintain peace, David instructed Joab and all those with him to tear their clothes, put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner's bier.² David himself walked behind the bier. At Abner's tomb, David publicly wept for Abner, and sang a lament for him. David fasted all that day.

Everyone in both Judah and Israel was pleased with David's actions and knew that he hadn't had any part in Abner's death. David spoke with his men privately. As he had earlier done after the death of Saul and his sons, David acknowledged that Abner had been a great man in Israel. He also acknowledged that although he was king, he couldn't control Joab and Abishai—God would have to deal with them.

The Murder of Ish-Bosheth

Abner had been the power behind Ish-Bosheth's throne. When Ish-Bosheth heard of Abner's death, he and all Israel became fearful. Now that Abner was dead, would David attack? Who would then lead Israel into battle? Saul's only other living, legitimate male offspring

was Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son; he was still quite young and both of his feet were crippled.

Two of Ish-Bosheth's men who had led raiding parties decided to take matters in their own hands. While Ish-Bosheth was taking an afternoon rest they entered his bedroom, killed him and cut off his head. Thinking to profit from their evil deed, they took the head to David. Like the Amalekite at Ziklag, who thought to benefit from Saul's death, these two men didn't understand what type of person David really was.

Instead of rewarding them, David pronounced judgment on them for killing an innocent man. He had them killed, their hands and feet cut off and their bodies hung by the pool in Hebron. Then to show respect for Ish-Bosheth, David had Ish-Bosheth's head buried in the tomb with Abner's body.

David King of All Israel

With no viable leader, the elders of Israel made their decision and approached David. They put forth their reasoning and their proposition to him—he was related to them, he had led them in battle while Saul was king, and God had called him to shepherd and rule His people; therefore would he be willing to enter into an agreement with them and become their king?

So at last, David became ruler of the united kingdom of Judah and Israel. David was thirty years old when he became king and ruled for forty years. He reigned as king over just Judah for seven and a half years, and over all Israel for thirty-three years.

Philistine Opposition

When the Philistines learned that David had been anointed king over all Israel they came after him in full force.³ If you recall, Saul's final battle had ended in defeat (see 1 Samuel 31), and the Philistines were now occupying much of the land belonging to the northern Israelite tribes. The Philistines knew David and his abilities. When reigning as king over Judah alone he posed little threat, but now, reigning as king over all the tribes in Israel, he might attempt to regain the territory that Saul had lost. As they say, "The best defense is a good offense." Hearing about the Philistine advance, David needed time to regroup and inquire of the Lord. He left Hebron and went to the stronghold, the barren, mountainous areas that he had roamed when hiding from Saul. When he asked the Lord for guidance, the Lord told him to go fight the Philistines and He would give him success. So David obeyed—and the Philistines were defeated and fled.

But the Philistines didn't give up easily. They regrouped and came up again to fight against David. They spread out in the valley of Rephaim. Again, David sought the Lord for guidance. This time the Lord gave David specific instructions for the battle. Again David fol-

1. Although Joab was the one who stabbed Abner, Abishai also had some part in the murder (see 2 Samuel 3:30)

2. A bier is a stand on which a corpse, coffin or casket containing a corpse, is placed to lie in state or to be carried to the grave. *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* (American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1973)

3. Although the incident with the Philistines beginning in 2 Samuel 5:17 is listed in the Bible after David conquered Jerusalem (see 2 Samuel 5:7), many Bible scholars believe that it actually took place soon after David was crowned king over all Israel.

lowed God's instructions and was victorious over the Philistines. He chased them all the way back to their own towns.

God has given us His Word, the Bible, to show us how to live a victorious life. Like David, we need to be obedient to His instructions.

The City of Jerusalem

After defeating the Philistines, one of David's first actions as king was to conquer Jerusalem and make it his royal city. Jerusalem was located near the border between Judah and Benjamin and would not particularly favor the southern tribe over the remaining tribes of Israel who had so recently accepted David as their king.

Although Jerusalem was located in Israel, the Jebusites currently held control of the city (called Jebus at the time; see 1 Chronicles 11:4). It was a well-fortified and easily-defended city. Second Samuel 5:8 says that somehow David knew of a water shaft that would allow attackers to enter the city. In 1 Chronicles 11:4-6, which also describes this event, we read that David challenged his men, saying that whoever led the attack would become the commander-in-chief of his army. David's nephew Joab, who had been the commander of David's men when he was king over Judah, successfully led the attack and became the commander of the united army of all Israel.

David then made his residence in the city of Jerusalem and began to build it up. Hiram, king of Tyre, was the first foreign king to honor David as ruler of Israel. As a gift he sent David cedar logs along with skilled carpenters and stonemasons to assist in the building projects.

God's Work in David

David recognized that God had exalted him to this position, not for David's sake, but for the sake of His people, Israel. David had waited for over twenty years for God to fulfill His promise. During that time God had been doing so much more than merely making him king. David had changed in many ways. He had grown from the boy he had been when he was first anointed to a man who inspired the loyalty of his men and the people. And, he had learned to wait on and rely on God's direction.

David didn't know that he would become the most famous king of Israel, the king that would be known as a "man after [God's] own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). He didn't know that God would use the songs—the psalms—that he wrote in the dark and difficult hours of his life to comfort millions through the years. Nor did he know, at that time, that God would promise him a kingdom that wouldn't end, and that one of his descendants would be "Immanuel," God with us, the Savior of the world (see Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:26-33; 1 John 4:14).

God is working in our hearts, too, through all of our life situations. He is changing us and making us more like Himself. Often we begin our walk with the Lord with great zeal, planning to do great things for Him. But then difficulties come, and there seem to be so many roadblocks to the fulfillment of our dreams. Nonetheless, God knows what He is doing in us, and what He wants to do through us. Romans

8:28-29 tells us that He is working in all things to make us like Jesus. He wants us to learn to abide—to remain—in Him so that we can bear the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23), and thereby glorify Him.

John 15:2 tells us that when we bear fruit, He prunes us so that we can bear even more fruit. The difficulties and situations that come our way are not the devil thwarting God's plan in our lives; no, they are the very things God uses to accomplish His purpose in us. Are we becoming more like Jesus? Do we touch others with His love? Like David, we have to learn to be faithful to Him in whatever situation comes our way. Then all that we do flows out of who we have become. In God's time He will fulfill all that He has promised, in ways greater than we could imagine.

5. What was the attitude of David and all Israel as they escorted the Ark of God? (2 Samuel 6:5)

6. Personal: Can you identify with David and his people as they “were celebrating with all their might before the LORD”? Have you ever done this? How did you celebrate, and why?

Third Day: Read 2 Samuel 6-7, concentrating on 6:6-10.

1. What occurred as the Ark of God was being transported? (2 Samuel 6:6)

2. What happened to Uzzah, and why? (2 Samuel 6:7)

3. Challenge: What do you learn about this from 1 Chronicles 15:13? With what you learned in question 4 yesterday (Numbers 4:1-4,15), what should David have done in order to transport the ark correctly?

4. What was David’s reaction to this occurrence? (2 Samuel 6:8-10)

5. Because we’ve been taught that God is love, that God is merciful, we forget that He is also a holy God—a God of righteousness and justice. At the establishment of the nation of Israel, God set forth His law so that people might understand just how holy He is. The complex design of the tabernacle and the detailed instructions that were given for sacrifice help us see how impossible it was—is—for sinful mankind to approach God, who is perfectly holy. From the following verses, how are Christians able to approach God?

Hebrews 9:13-14

1 John 2:1-2

6. Personal: Although David and the Israelites loved God and were excited to bring His ark to Jerusalem, those who planned and carried out its transport failed to consult God's Word for the correct way to treat this holy object with the serious respect it deserved. Do you sometimes excuse your sin by saying that your intentions were good? How does this change your understanding of what sin is and how God views it? Read 1 John 1:9 to see what to do when you have sinned.

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 6-7, concentrating on 6:11-23.

1. a. What happened at the house of Obed-Edom while the Ark of the Lord was there? (2 Samuel 6:11)

b. When David heard this, what did he do? (2 Samuel 6:12)

2. From 2 Samuel 6:13 and 1 Chronicles 15:26, was the Ark of the Lord transported correctly this time?

3. How did David celebrate the coming of the Ark of the Lord, and where did he put it? (2 Samuel 6:14-15,17-19)

4. a. What did Michal think of David's behavior, and how did she confront him when he returned home? (2 Samuel 6:16,20)

b. How did David respond? (2 Samuel 6:21-22)

5. Since Michal did not honor the Lord or her husband as the Lord's appointed king, what blessing did she not receive? (2 Samuel 6:23)

6. Personal: Have you ever experienced criticism or disdain for following Jesus Christ? Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. How does this help you learn to disregard the world's opinion, just as David rejected Michal's opinion?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 6-7, concentrating on 7:1-17.

1. What discrepancy did David want to rectify? (2 Samuel 7:1-3)

2. How did God tell David that the decision to build a temple and the choice of a person to do it must come from God Himself? (2 Samuel 7:4-7)

3. What had God already done and what would He continue to do for David and all Israel during David's lifetime? (2 Samuel 7:8-11a)

4. What promises did God make that would be fulfilled after David's death? (2 Samuel 7:11b-17)

5. Challenge: How was God's message to David through the prophet Nathan fulfilled in 1 King 5:2-5 and 6:38?

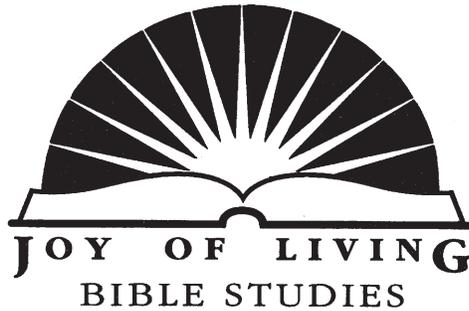
6. Personal: God took David, an unknown young shepherd, and made him king over all of Israel. He didn't select David for his military prowess or other human capabilities; rather, He was able to use David because David was faithful to Him. God wants to work in and through you, as a follower of Jesus Christ. Are you, by faith, allowing Him to do this?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 6-7, concentrating on 7:18-29.

1. a. In what way did King David come to speak to the Lord? (2 Samuel 7:18a)

b. Review 2 Samuel 6:17 to see where David may have entered.
2. What did David express his overwhelming gratitude for? (2 Samuel 7:18b-20)
3. Why had God done this for David? (2 Samuel 7:21)
4. What had God done for His chosen people, Israel? (2 Samuel 7:22-24)
5. What promise does David trust God to fulfill in the future? (2 Samuel 7:25-29)
6. Personal: Have you ever said to the Lord, as David did, "Who am I, O Sovereign Lord...that you have brought me this far" (2 Samuel 7:18)? Write down what the Lord has already done for you, and what you are trusting in Him for in the future.

2 Samuel Lesson 4



2 Samuel 6-7

David was now king over all the tribes of Israel—a united kingdom. The Philistines had been driven out of Israel and back to their own territory, and a royal city had been designated. Although he was now in this exalted, powerful position, David was still in submission to the Lord. His desire was to strengthen his kingdom and honor God. He planned to accomplish this by uniting all the tribes of Israel in their worship of the God of their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This would involve having a central place of worship to house the Ark of the Lord.

Since Israel's time of wandering in the wilderness after being freed from bondage in Egypt, the Ark of the Lord played a key role in the worship of the living and true God. In Exodus 25 (after the Israelites had left Egypt and were traveling to the Promised Land) detailed instructions were given for building the ark and the tabernacle.¹ In Exodus 25:22 the Lord declared, "There above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites." The ark was the symbol of the very presence of God among His people, the Israelites. Because the Israelites were moving from place to place at the time the ark was built, detailed instructions were given for moving the ark and for who was permitted to even touch it (see Exodus 25:12-15; Numbers 4:5-6, 15).

After the conquest of the Promised Land, the tabernacle containing the Ark of the Lord was set up in Shiloh (see Joshua 18:1). The tabernacle remained in Shiloh until the destruction of that city by the Philistines (see 1 Samuel 4:1-11; Psalm 78:60; Jeremiah 7:12), after which it may have been relocated to Nob, where a large number of priests lived (see 1 Samuel 22:11, 18-19). The Ark of the Lord, however, was captured by the Philistines at the time that Shiloh was destroyed.

The Philistines finally returned the ark to Israel after God dealt harshly with them for possessing it. It then resided at Kiriath Jearim in the home of Abinadab for about 60 years.²

1. The tabernacle was an elaborate, tent-like sanctuary that was built to house the ark and other items of worship that God instructed Moses to build.
2. In 1 Samuel 7:2 it states that the ark was in Kiriath Jearim for 20 years. That marked the time since its return from the Philistines until Samuel's call for repentance in 1 Samuel 7, after which Saul was anointed as king. Then Saul reigned for 40 years, during which time the ark was still housed in Kiriath Jearim.

God Is Holy

Let us pause and consider what it means that God is holy. In our society, here in America, we have lost a sense of reverence. We have even lost a sense of respect for one another and for ourselves, so it is sometimes hard for us to grasp the meaning of a true respect and reverence for God. His name is taken in vain in movies, TV shows and music. Adults and even little children think nothing of taking His name in vain. Because a lightning bolt doesn't come down from heaven the moment someone misuses His name, we seem to think that God didn't mean it when He said, "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name" (Exodus 20:7). God's patience, His long-suffering with us, does not mean there will not be a day of reckoning—a day of judgment. Matthew 12:36 says, "But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken."

Because we've been taught that God is love, that God is merciful, we forget that He is also a holy God—a God of righteousness and justice. He is *not* merely the "good ole boy upstairs" who overlooks our sin. We forget what a steep price He paid to provide forgiveness and mercy to us, and still retain His righteousness and justice—we don't think about the fact that it cost Him the life of His own Son.

At the establishment of the nation of Israel, God set forth His law so that people might understand just how holy He is. The complex design of the tabernacle and the detailed instructions that were given for sacrifice help us see how impossible it was—is—for sinful mankind to approach God, who is perfectly holy. (It is only by the blood of Jesus that we can enter His presence; see Hebrews 10:19.) When two of Aaron's sons dared to disobey one of these rules, fire shot out from the presence of the Lord and killed them (see Leviticus 10:2). Later, when seventy men of Beth Shemesh merely looked into the ark, all seventy were struck dead (see 1 Samuel 6:19).

God's holiness didn't and doesn't change. Here at the very beginning of David's kingdom, it was important that God's holiness be known and acknowledged.

A Right Thing the Wrong Way

Remember, the ark was now at Kiriath Jearim, which is about seven miles from Jerusalem. David would need to move the ark to Jerusalem. David, who had been so careful to seek God's guidance in

waging war, did not endeavor to find out the proper way to transport the Ark of the Lord. Perhaps, since the Ark of the Lord had resided in obscurity throughout his lifetime, David may not have even considered that there would be special instructions (written or otherwise) for moving the ark.

In his exuberance, David had a new cart built especially for transporting the ark, and selected 30,000 specially chosen men to join in the procession. The ark was placed on the cart (presumably by using the poles that were always attached to it) and Abinidab's sons, Uzzah and Ahio, guided the cart.

If David had sought the Lord, or if David, Uzzah or Ahio had known or read God's law, they would have known that the ark was not to be conveyed on a cart in the manner the heathens conveyed their religious items (see how the Philistines transported it in 1 Samuel 6:7), but rather was to be carried by its poles on the shoulders of the Kohathites (a branch of the Levites; see Numbers 4:15). Nevertheless, they didn't seek the Lord or the instructions in His law for this matter—and ignorance is no excuse.

And so the procession began moving toward Jerusalem with music and great fanfare. David and all Israel "were celebrating with all their might before the LORD" (2 Samuel 6:5). I know how wonderful it is to be with a large group of people singing, praising and worshipping the Lord. This happens in churches and among believers on a regular basis throughout our world. This event, however, was a first in David's lifetime. Such joy must have filled his heart—he was expressing his love and praise for the Lord. And he believed he was honoring the Lord.

Then the unspeakable happened—as they neared Jerusalem, the oxen stumbled. Responding as most anyone would, Uzzah reached out to keep the ark from falling—but Uzzah was forbidden to touch the ark. "The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:7).

Everything came to a halt. David was angry, and he was afraid of the Lord. David needed time to calm down, think, pray and seek the Lord. So instead of continuing with their journey, they took the ark to the nearby home of Obed-Edom.¹ Since Obed-Edom was a Levite, it was proper for the ark to be in his care. Because of the ark, God's blessing was upon Obed-Edom and his household. In this one incident alone, we see God's severity and His goodness—severity toward those who didn't seek and reverently follow His instructions, and blessing on those who acted in reverence and obedience.

I've heard people say they don't want to read God's Word, because then they will know what it says and be accountable for not acting in obedience to it. It makes you wonder where their heart is—and if they are truly even born again.

Moving the Ark with Joy

For three months the ark remained at Obed-Edom's house, and David heard that God's blessing was upon Obed-Edom's home—God's blessing and not His wrath. During those three months, David had taken the time to seek the Lord's guidance (see 1 Chronicles 15:16, which tells us more about these events of 2 Samuel 6). David now knew why God's anger had broken out against them, and he was prepared to follow the instructions given in the Law of Moses for moving the ark.

First, David prepared a tent in Jerusalem for the ark.² He gathered Levites and instructed them to consecrate themselves so that they could properly transport the ark with poles on their shoulders. The Levites were also appointed to sing joyful songs, accompanied by lyres, harps and cymbals. Other Levites were to blow trumpets before the ark.

So once again, the procession began moving toward Jerusalem. David, the elders of Israel (representing all Israel and not just a few tribes), and certain of the commanders of the army accompanied the ark and the Levitical procession (see 1 Chronicles 15:25-28). When those who were carrying the ark had taken six steps, the procession stopped and sacrifices were offered.

David's joy had returned—all was right between himself and the Lord. Clothed in a linen robe and ephod like the priests who carried the Ark (see 2 Samuel 6:14; 1 Chronicles 15:27), David danced with all his might before the Lord.

David, king of all Israel, leader of the people, set the example—there is no shame in worshipping and serving the Lord. There is joy in putting Him before everything and everyone. For whom are you an example? Your children, friends, family, and people you encounter—your sphere of influence is probably larger than you think. What type of example are you setting for them? Is God first in your life? Do they see you walking in His ways, seeking Him in prayer, and reading His Word? Do they feel His joy and love flowing from your life? If not, what will you do about it?

Michal's Scorn

There was at least one person in Israel who did not join in the celebration—Michal, Saul's youngest daughter. When David was young and had been in the service of Saul (and hailed as the one who had killed ten thousand), Saul had discovered that Michal loved David. He used her as "bait" in an attempt to get David killed (see 1 Samuel 18:20-21). She eventually became David's first wife, and at one point, she even lied to her father to help David escape his wrath (see 1 Samuel 19:11-17).

In 2 Samuel 3, we learn that when David fled from Saul, Michal was given to another man to be his wife (see 1 Samuel 25:44). David in the meantime took several more wives. Why didn't he try to rescue Michal? Jonathan, Saul's son, visited David in the wilderness (see 1

1. Although Obed-Edom is referred to as a Gittite in 2 Samuel 6:10, he was also a Levite (see 1 Chronicles 15:18, 21, 24). Levites were the ones designated to care for all the religious furnishings of the tabernacle (see Numbers 3:6-8).

2. The tabernacle remained at Gibeon; see 1 Chronicles 16:39.

Samuel 23:15ff); couldn't something have been done to return Michal to David? Even after Saul's death, when Ishbosheth sat on Saul's throne, nothing was mentioned of Michal until David wanted her back for political purposes—then she was taken from her husband of at least seven years and returned to David.

Nothing is said about how Michal felt about all this. Had she been hurt? Was she jealous? Had she become bitter? Did she resent that David had become king and no special honor was given her for being his first wife and Saul's daughter? We aren't told, but now as she looked out the window as the ark and the procession came through the city gates, she saw David leaping and dancing before the Lord—and she despised him. Why? Had the events of the years turned her love to hate, so that whatever David did disgusted her? Was it only that she thought David's behavior undignified and not appropriate for a king, or did she not love and honor the Lord and therefore despised David for his humble and outward display of love toward God?

David was oblivious to Michal's gaze and continued on. The ark was installed in the tent David had erected for it, and many sacrifices and offerings were made. When the celebration was finished, David blessed the people and gave them gifts of food, and they went to their homes.

David, too, went home—his heart full—ready to bless his household. Who should come out to meet him but Michal, spewing venom, mocking him, saying, “How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, disrobing in the sight of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would” (2 Samuel 6:20).

This must have been like a bucket of cold water thrown on his joy, like a slap in the face. Have you ever had something like this happen to you: you are filled with the joy of the Lord, and someone criticizes you or mocks you for following and serving Him? How did you react to them? First Peter 2:23 tells us Jesus' response to those who insulted Him, “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.” Jesus Himself tells us we are blessed, “... when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me” (Matthew 5:11). And in Luke 6:28 He tells us to “bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you.” Others' disparaging remarks or actions should never keep us from praising and serving the Lord.

David handled the situation well. He responded, “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. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor” (2 Samuel 6:21-22). David knew and loved the Lord; he knew that God was the only reason he was king over Israel. The opinion of others would not keep him from honoring the Lord, acknowledging His supremacy, and humbling himself before Him.

The Scripture says that Michal, daughter of Saul, had no children to the day of her death. Perhaps this was punishment for her

arrogance. Perhaps not allowing Saul's grandchildren¹ to be part of David's royal family was part of God's judgment on Saul. Perhaps David chose to have nothing more to do with Michal and never again went to lie with her. Or perhaps it was a combination of some or all of these. Whatever the case, the Bible notes that Michal had no children of her own.

Each of us must throw off the “sin that so easily entangles” (Hebrews 12:1); arrogance and pride are among those sins. First Corinthians 1:26-31 says, “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: ‘Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.’” First Corinthians 4:7 reminds us, “For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?” If we, like David, would only realize that all that we have, all that we are, is because of God's grace, it would change our attitudes towards God and toward man. May we humbly thank Him for His many blessings and look at others with new and loving eyes.

God's Plan vs. Man's Plan

As time passed, life settled down somewhat for David. The ark was in Jerusalem. God had given him temporary rest from his enemies, and he was living in his magnificent cedar palace. David's thoughts again turned to the Lord, and he called for Nathan, the prophet.² David was bothered that he, a mere man, was living in a magnificent palace while the Ark of God—the symbolic throne of the divine King of Israel—was residing in a tent. Nathan gave David the “go-ahead” to rectify what David believed was wrong. But God had other plans, and neither of these men had consulted Him.

Our plans may be good, but are they God's plan for us? Have we prayed and sought God's guidance? After Jesus' resurrection, His disciples went to Galilee, as the Lord had instructed (see Matthew 28:10). As they waited there, they decided to return to their previous work and go fishing. John 21:3 tells us they fished all night and caught nothing—an entire night's labor and not one fish! When Jesus came on the scene and gave them instructions, they finally caught fish, but this was not the career direction the Lord wanted them to take—they were to be fishermen no more. Their plan was to make a living as fishermen; God's plan for them was the Great Commission—they were to

1. Michal was Saul's daughter. Her children would have been Saul's grandchildren.

2. This is the first, but not the last, time we hear of Nathan. Not only a prophet, but also an historian (see 1 Chronicles 29:29), Nathan was used by God through the years to both rebuke and give guidance to David. He was also instrumental in securing the throne for David's son, Solomon, after David's death.

“...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I [Jesus] have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

No matter how good your plans may seem, no matter how righteous, even if it is something you may have done before, pray and seek God. Is this what He has for *you* to do—now? If it is and He’s given you some steps to take, take them and be willing to wait for more guidance. We should never rush ahead of God.

That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan with a message for David—David was not the one to build a house for the Lord. No reason was given at that time. The Lord simply stated that He had lived among His people in a tent since they had left Egypt, and during that time He had never asked that a house be built for Him. Although nothing more was said about it that night, that was not the end of God’s conversation with David about building a temple. In 2 Chronicles 6:8 we learn that God commended David for desiring to build a temple for His Name. And in 1 Chronicles 22:7-10 we learn that it was David’s son Solomon that God would have build the temple.

At this point let us stop and note that God is not finite or limited, so He cannot actually dwell in a building made with hands.¹ Acts 7:45-50 says, “Having received the tabernacle, our fathers under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, who enjoyed God’s favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. But it was Solomon who built the house for Him. However, the Most High does not live in houses made by men. As the prophet says: ‘Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me? says the Lord. Or where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things?’” The God of the universe chooses to dwell in and among His people (see John 14:7; 1 Corinthians 3:16-17). The tabernacle and the temple were examples of this.

God’s Blessings, Past and Future

So we see that David had been thinking of what he could do for God or give to God. But God’s message to David through Nathan was, basically, “No David, I don’t need you to provide for or give to Me. Instead, let Me remind you of what I have already done for you, and reveal to you what I am yet going to do for you!” God’s message to David through Nathan in 2 Samuel 7 was two-fold...

In the past:

- ☛ I took you from being a nobody (a shepherd) and made you a somebody (the king of God’s people, Israel).
- ☛ I have never forsaken you. (I’ve been with you everywhere you’ve gone.)
- ☛ I have defeated your enemies. (You are currently living at peace, with no one pursuing you or fighting you.)

In the future:

- ☛ I will make your name great (like the greatest of men).
- ☛ I will give Israel a home free from the oppression of wicked people.
- ☛ I will subdue all of your enemies.
- ☛ I will build a “house” for you (not a house of wood, stone, etc. as David suggested building for God, but a lineage, a dynasty that would continue).
- ☛ Your offspring will have a father/son relationship with Me.
- ☛ Your offspring will always be loved by Me.
- ☛ Your son will build a “house” for My Name.
- ☛ Your throne—your “house,” your kingdom—will last forever.

Although in 2 Samuel this prophecy referred to David’s son Solomon, in Luke 1:32-33 we see it ultimately refers to Jesus, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end. ‘How will this be,’ Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin?’ The angel answered, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.’”

After hearing this message, David went in and sat before the Lord.² How humbled he must have felt. All these great promises had been given to him from God—not because of anything he, David, had done, but because God is who He is.

Have you ever stopped and just sat or knelt before the Lord, just you and He alone together, and thought of all that He has done for you—then thanked Him? Consider: He sent His Son, Jesus, to pay the price for your sin. He has made you His child. He has given you eternal life. He has promised to make you like Himself that you might share in His glory. He has revealed Himself to you. He has promised never to leave you or forsake you. These are but a few of the current blessings. And what a future He has promised to us! Just read through the last few chapters of Revelation, and you will be amazed!

Won’t you stop and take a few minutes right now to consider all these blessings and add some more of your own? If you would like to, write some of them down. You may find yourself saying, as David did, “Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future...” (2 Samuel 7:18-19). Take time to thank Him.

1. Although God’s glory fills the earth (see Numbers 14:21), His presence and glory did fill the tabernacle and the temple in a special way (see Numbers 16:42; 2 Chronicles 7:2).

2. It appears that David went into the tent he had constructed for the Ark of the Lord and sat before the ark.

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☛ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☛ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☛ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☛ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☛ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the commentary on 2 Samuel 6-7.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 2 Samuel 6-7 or from your teacher’s lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 8-10, concentrating on chapter 8.

1. a. What peoples did David defeat over a period of time? (2 Samuel 8:1-6a, 12a, 13-14a)

b. Why was David able to do this? (2 Samuel 8:6b, 14b)

2. Challenge: The expanded boundaries of Israel under King David corresponded to those outlined by God in His promise to Abraham, and later to Moses and to Joshua. Read and summarize God’s promises in Genesis 15:18, Deuteronomy 11:22-24, and Joshua 1:3-4, which were fulfilled under David’s leadership.

3. When news of David’s victories reached the king of Hamath, what did he do to gain David’s goodwill? (2 Samuel 8:9-10)

4. What did David do with all the valuable items that he received as gifts, tribute or plunder? (2 Samuel 8:7-8, 10b-12)

5. a. What qualities characterized David’s reign over Israel? (2 Samuel 8:15)

b. Challenge: From the following verses, how did these qualities reflect God’s character, and how would they be seen in the future Messiah who would come from David’s line?

Psalm 103:6

Isaiah 9:7

6. Personal: When we become God's children, He works in us to help us become more like Him, just as He did with David. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24. Do you trust Him to do this in you?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 9-10, concentrating on 9:1-8.

1. a. What did David want to do in 2 Samuel 9:1?

b. Whom did he ask for information about any living descendants from the house of Saul? (2 Samuel 9:2-3a)
2. a. Whom did Ziba identify? (2 Samuel 9:3b)

b. Review 2 Samuel 4:4 to find out more about this person.
3. What did David do when he heard Ziba's news? (2 Samuel 9:4-5)
4. a. Mephibosheth probably knew what had happened to his uncle, Ish-Bosheth. How did David put him at his ease? (2 Samuel 9:6-7a)

b. In what two ways did David say his kindness to Mephibosheth would be carried out? (2 Samuel 9:7b)
5. How did Mephibosheth show submission in his reply to David? (2 Samuel 9:8)
6. Personal: David could have offered the minimum of help to Mephibosheth—say, just room and board at the palace—and kept all of Saul's land for himself, but instead he chose to be unselfish and generous. When you give help to someone, is it your first response to be generous? If not, why not ask God to help you develop this characteristic?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 9-10, concentrating on 9:9-13.

1. Mephibosheth was only five years old when his father died, and was probably only twelve when his uncle Ish-Bosheth was assassinated.¹ He would not have been old enough to fend for himself, even if he had not been crippled in both feet. How did King David arrange for Mephibosheth's property to be managed? (2 Samuel 9:9-11a)

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. See notes on 2 Samuel 4:4.

2. How was Mephibosheth integrated into David's household? (2 Samuel 9:11b)
3. In the course of time, what blessing came to Mephibosheth? (2 Samuel 9:12)
4. When Mephibosheth was a grown man with a family, where did he live? (2 Samuel 9:13)
5. Challenge: Read 1 Chronicles 9:39-44, which lists Mephibosheth by his original name, Merib-Baal.¹ What do you notice about the number of descendants of the house of Saul? How does this show the fulfillment of David's promise to Saul in 1 Samuel 24:20-22a?
6. Personal: When David showed "God's kindness" (2 Samuel 9:3) to the house of Saul, God brought that kindness to fruition in the form of many descendants. Whenever we help someone in God's name, we are allowing His goodness and kindness to flow through us to that person. How did Jesus express this in John 15:4-5? Do you recognize that He is the source of any godly fruit that you bear?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 9-10, concentrating on 10:1-5.

1. When the king of the Ammonites died, what did David do, and why? (2 Samuel 10:1-2a)
2. Challenge: The Bible does not specifically tell us how Nahash had shown kindness to David. Read 1 Samuel 11:1-11. What would Nahash have felt about King Saul after this incident? How do you think this might later have caused Nahash to treat David when David was a fugitive from Saul?
3. How did the Ammonite nobles evaluate David's delegation to their king? (2 Samuel 10:2b-3)
4. What did Hanun, acting upon this evaluation, do to David's men? (2 Samuel 10:4)
5. How did David help his men deal with their humiliation? (2 Samuel 10:5)

1. Mephibosheth meant "one who scatters shame" and Merib-Baal meant "warrior of the Master." *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, see note on 1 Chronicles 8:34.

6. Personal: Has someone ever misinterpreted your actions and reacted in a way that made you feel humiliated or angry? How did you react? Read Matthew 5:38-44. How did Jesus teach us to respond? Why not pray and ask Him to help you act this way in future situations?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 9-10, concentrating on 10:6-13.

1. a. What did the Ammonites realize, too late, was the effect upon King David of their treatment of his delegation? (2 Samuel 10:6a)

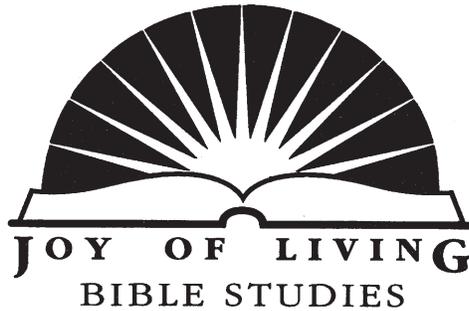
b. How did they prepare for the likelihood of war with Israel? (2 Samuel 10:6b)
2. What was David's response to the Ammonites' actions? (2 Samuel 10:7)
3. a. What was Joab's battle strategy? (2 Samuel 10:8-11)

b. Although Joab urged that they fight bravely, who does he affirm is ultimately responsible for the outcome? (2 Samuel 10:12)
4. a. What was the outcome of this confrontation? (2 Samuel 10:13-14)

b. What did the Arameans, the mercenaries hired by the Ammonites, do next? (2 Samuel 10:15-16)

c. Who led Israel's army this time, and what was the final outcome? (2 Samuel 10:17-19)
5. Challenge: In David's day, Israel's battles were fought with physical weapons against human enemies, but the outcome still depended on their right relationship with the Lord. Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. What kind of battles do believers fight today? What type of weapons do we fight with?
6. Personal: Do you want to live in victory over every kind of enemy that confronts you? The first step is to believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Then ask Him to make His truth preeminent in your life, and to defeat everything that tries to pull you away from Him.

2 Samuel Lesson 5



2 Samuel 8-10

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, “There is a time for everything...” Although God had given David many blessings, and had promised so many more, it was not yet time for David to rest. Israel’s borders were not yet secure and there were still many battles to be fought. So with God’s promises in his heart, David continued to do what God had called him to do—lead His people, the Israelites.

For hundreds of years there had been attacks from and periods of oppression by the Philistines. In the course of time, under David’s leadership, the Philistines were subdued. Even the great city of Gath and the areas surrounding it were conquered. The Philistines no longer oppressed the Israelites.

The Ammonites, Moabites, Arameans, Edomites, and Amalekites were also brought into submission. Some were required to pay tribute to Israel. The map on page 7 shows the location of these various nations, and you can see that David was methodically making the borders of Israel secure. The Lord gave David victory in all his battles. The king of Hamath was so overjoyed at David’s victory over a mutual enemy that he presented David with gifts of silver, gold and bronze. All the gold, silver and bronze articles obtained from these surrounding nations, whether by gift, plunder or tribute, David dedicated to the Lord.

David organized his army and his government, assigning responsibilities to various men. The Scripture says he “reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people” (2 Samuel 8:15). What about you? God has already done so much for you, and He has promised you such a glorious future, but are you doing what He has called you to do? Are you doing what is just and right for those you are responsible for, whether family members, employees, those in a class you teach, or those you come in contact with as you live in this world? You may say, “I don’t know what He has called me to do.” Let me give you a starting list:

- ☛ “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him.” (Proverbs 3:5-6a)
- ☛ “Do not be wise in your own eyes.” (Proverbs 3:7a)
- ☛ “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

- ☛ “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)
- ☛ “Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.” (Romans 12:17)
- ☛ “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (John 13:34)
- ☛ “In your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Peter 3:15)
- ☛ The Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful.” (2 Timothy 2:24)

Remember this is merely a starting point. If you seek to be obedient to these, God will show you the rest.

Blessing Saul’s Descendants

During one of the periods when David was residing in Jerusalem, rather than on the battlefield, he began to make inquiries to see if there were any remaining descendants of King Saul—not to harm them but to bless them.

If you consider all that had transpired between Saul and David you begin to realize what a miracle this was. Saul was anointed to be king over Israel about 10 years before David was even born. Then, about 25 years into Saul’s reign, because of his disobedience to the Lord, God rejected him as king. At that time, unknown to Saul, David, who was still a youth, was anointed (at God’s direction) to replace him. (The actual crowning of David as king did not take place until after Saul’s death.) When an evil spirit began plaguing Saul, David was brought to the royal court to play his harp and calm Saul. When the Philistines gathered to fight against the Israelites, their champion, a giant of a man named Goliath, gave a challenge to any man in the Israelite army—fight him, and whoever was victorious would win the battle. No one dared to take the challenge until David showed up on the scene with food for his brothers. With God’s help, the youthful David defeated Goliath with only a sling and a stone. The Philistines fled in fear that day, and the Israelites celebrated a great victory. From then on David remained with Saul, doing whatever was required of him. Saul, however, became jealous of David and began trying to kill him.

Immediately after that initial meeting with Saul (after the battle with Goliath) David and Saul's son Jonathan became the closest of friends. The word "friend" seems too light a word to describe the relationship between David and Jonathan. Their mutual love and faith in God caused their spirits to become as one. Even though Jonathan realized that David would one day be king, instead of himself, Jonathan always sought to help, encourage and protect David. When David finally had to flee from Saul for his life, Jonathan helped him escape. At that time, David made a covenant with Jonathan, promising that when he became king he would show kindness to Jonathan and his family. Now, all these years later, David was seeking to fulfill that promise.

Ziba, who had been one of Saul's servants, informed David that Jonathan's son Mephibosheth was residing across the Jordan River in Lo-Debar, in the home of Makir son of Ammiel. Mephibosheth had been five years old when the news came that his father and grandfather had been killed in battle. In fear, his nurse had picked him up and fled for safety, but somehow he fell and both of his feet had been crippled. Now he was a grown man with a son of his own.

I can only imagine what must have been in Mephibosheth's mind when he was brought before David—would David kill him? After all, Mephibosheth's grandfather Saul had systematically sought to kill David; then his great-great-uncle Abner¹ had been murdered by David's cousin Joab; and later his uncle Ishbosheth had battled with David for years, and Ishbosheth too was eventually murdered. Mephibosheth may have wondered if David had influenced these murders. Also, Mephibosheth's son Mica, as a descendant of Saul, could have eventually been a contender for David's crown.

As Mephibosheth entered David's presence, he bowed in honor. David's first words to him were, "Don't be afraid." Can you imagine the surprise and joy that must have been his when David not only spared his life, but also returned all of his grandfather's property to him, and commissioned Ziba, his sons and servants to farm the property and give the abundance to him? As if this were not enough, David also invited him to dine at his table as if he were one of David's own sons. All of these blessings were poured out on Mephibosheth, not because of anything he had done, but because of David's promise to and love for Mephibosheth's father Jonathan.

God has poured out blessing after blessing on us, not because we deserve it but because of Jesus Christ. Have you stopped lately and thanked Him? Why don't you pause a moment right now and tell Him how grateful you are.

Israel's Enemies Subdued

Time passed and word came to David that Nahash, king of the Ammonites, had died. At some time prior to this, possibly when David was hiding from Saul, Nahash had shown kindness to David.² Because of this David sent a delegation to express sympathy to his son Hanun, the new king of the Ammonites. Instead of viewing the visit of

the delegation as an overture of friendship and concern, the Ammonite officials feared that David had sent them to spy out the city so David could conquer it.

Instead of tactfully sending the delegation back to Jerusalem without allowing them to see how the city and its fortifications were laid out, the Ammonite officials intentionally humiliated David's delegation by shaving off half of each man's beard and cutting their robes up to their buttocks. When David heard of this, he told the men to wait until their beards had grown back before returning home.

David took no steps to avenge the insult. The Ammonites, on the other hand, assuming that David would take action, hired a total of thirty-three thousand soldiers (twenty thousand were Arameans). This huge force amassing near the Ammonite capital city of Rabbah, only forty miles from Jerusalem,³ was a threat to the safety of Israel. David sent Joab and the entire army of Israel to deal with the impending danger.

As the Israelites approached the city, the Ammonites came out and lined up in battle formation, placing themselves between the Israelites and the city. The foreign mercenaries positioned themselves behind the Israelites in the open fields. Taking stock of the situation, Joab took some of the best troops to fight against the Arameans and other mercenaries, and sent the remaining troops, under the command of his brother Abishai, to fight against the Ammonites. Joab and Abishai were each to be aware of what was going on with the other, so that if either was having a problem, the other would come to help. Joab's parting words of encouragement were to fight bravely for their people and the cities of their God, and that God would do what was good in His sight.

We would do well to remember such advice. Do your best at whatever task is set for you to do, and leave the outcome to God, trusting Him to do what is best in His sight. Colossians 3:23 says, "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit," says the LORD Almighty." And finally, Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails."

As the battle progressed, the Arameans fled from the Israelites, and the Ammonites became afraid and retreated inside their city. With that threat dispelled, Joab and the army returned to Jerusalem. But the Arameans weren't done yet. They gathered more troops from across the Euphrates River and prepared for battle. Again David couldn't ignore this threat to his kingdom, so this time he himself led the army against the Arameans. Once again God gave them a great victory. Many of the enemy were killed, and the rest fled. The other kings, who had been vassals of the Aramean king Hadadezer, shifted their allegiance to David and became subject to him. Never again would an alliance of nations attack David's kingdom.

1. Saul's father, Kish, was Abner's brother (see 1 Samuel 14:51).

2. Saul had fought with and defeated the Ammonites (see 1 Samuel 11:11). Nahash may have aided David because Saul had been their mutual enemy.

3. Rabbah is today known as Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. It is located about forty miles east-northeast of Jerusalem. (*The Expositor's Bible Commentary*)

David battled tangible enemies with tangible weapons. Our battle is spiritual, and we fight with spiritual weapons. Second Corinthians 10:3-5 says, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” Ephesians 6:12 tells us whom our battle is against, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” And verse 13 of that same chapter goes on to tell us what we must do to remain standing in the battle, “Therefore put on the full armor¹ of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.” And Ephesians 6:18 tells us how to fight, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.”

Do you sometimes think that there is nothing you can do, that you have few talents and gifts? Do you realize that you can pray? As these verses have stated, it is critical that we do just that. God uses our prayers to accomplish His purposes (see Acts 12:5; Ephesians 6:19; Philippians 1:19; and James 4:3). James 5:16 says, “The prayer of a righteous² man is powerful and effective.”

Here is a starting list of things to pray for:

- ☛ For “all those in authority, so that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness” (1 Timothy 2:2).
- ☛ For your brothers and sisters in Christ, that God would fill them “with the knowledge of His will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding” (Colossians 1:9).
- ☛ For missionaries, that doors would be open so they can preach the Gospel (see Colossians 4:3).
- ☛ For spiritual leaders, that they would “have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably” (Hebrews 13:18).

Add to this list those that God places on your heart, and remember to “be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12).

1. Ephesians 6:14-17 outlines what the armor of God is.
 2. A person is counted righteous because of his or her faith in Jesus Christ (see Romans 3:22).

5. Challenge: Read Romans 7:18—8:2. How did God make it possible for us to not be ruled by our sinful desires?

6. Personal: Have you believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, the one who will set you free from the law of sin and death? When your old sinful nature tries to entice you to sin, do you turn to Him for help?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 11-12, concentrating on 11:5-17.

1. What happened as a natural result of David's sin? (2 Samuel 11:5)

2. a. What was David's first attempt to cover up his sin? (2 Samuel 11:6-8)

b. Did it work? What happened? (2 Samuel 11:9-11)

3. What was David's second attempt, and did it succeed? (2 Samuel 11:12-13)

4. a. How did David decide to make certain his sin would remain hidden? (2 Samuel 11:14-15)

b. Did this plan work? What happened? (2 Samuel 11:16-17)

5. Challenge: Read Exodus 20:1-17, and write down the commandments that David disobeyed in 2 Samuel 11:1-17.

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 11-12, concentrating on 12:1-14.

1. a. Who sent the prophet Nathan to David? (2 Samuel 12:1a)

b. What parable or story did Nathan tell David? (2 Samuel 12:1b-4)

2. a. How did David respond to the story? (2 Samuel 12:5-6)

b. Challenge: Read Exodus 22:1 to see where the penalty David mentions came from.

3. How did Nathan apply the parable to David? (2 Samuel 12:7-9)

4. What would be the consequences for David's sin? (2 Samuel 12:10-12)

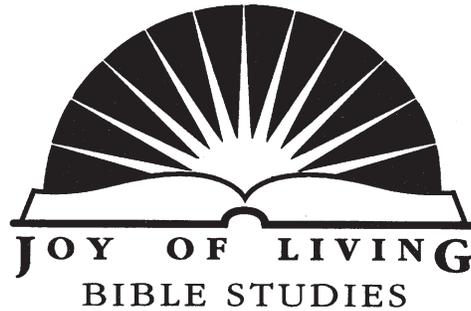
5. a. After hearing the word of the Lord, what did David admit? (2 Samuel 12:13a)

b. What words of God's grace did Nathan give to David? (2 Samuel 12:13b-14a)

c. Even though God forgave David when he repented of his sin, what consequences would still follow from his sin? (2 Samuel 12:14b)

6. Personal: Do you realize that when you disobey the Lord and His Word, you are showing contempt for Him? What sins do you need to confess and repent of? Read Psalm 51, which David wrote after Nathan confronted him. Choose verses that express your own feelings, or write a psalm of your own to the Lord.

2 Samuel Lesson 6



2 Samuel 11-12

In our last lesson, the Israelite army, under Joab's leadership, fought a coalition of Ammonites and Arameans. After being defeated in the initial battle, the Arameans had fled, mustered more troops, and regrouped for another battle. This time Israel, under David's leadership, completely defeated them. The Ammonites, on the other hand, had fled inside their city. The Israelites besieged the city, but it appears that as winter set in, the Israelite troops returned home.

As we begin this lesson, it was once again springtime. Throughout the Old Testament you will note that in the springtime after the rains, when roads are passable and the spring harvest can provide food to sustain an army, kings generally went to war (see 2 Samuel 11:1; 1 Chronicles 20:1; 1 Kings 20:22). David, determined to completely defeat the Ammonites, again assigned Joab to lead Israel's armed forces against the Ammonites.¹ This time, however, "the king's men" (2 Samuel 11:1) accompanied the Israelite army. This elite group of professional soldiers consisted primarily of the Pelethites and the Kerethites, hired by David as mercenaries. The Kerethites were from a tribe associated with the Philistines who lived in southern Israel,² and the Pelethites were also possibly Philistines. They served as fighting men and as the king's couriers.³ The Pelethites and Kerethites were under the leadership of Benaiah (see 2 Samuel 8:18), and were loyal to David. They laid waste to the land of the Ammonites and then besieged the capital city of Rabbah. But David was not with them—he was still in Jerusalem.

David and Bathsheba

The next incident we will study has been looked at and interpreted in many ways, with blame being laid on different people and fingers pointed. I hope to help clarify the facts, to not read into the Scripture something that isn't there, to give you food for thought, and to help you see that we should all take heed of 1 Corinthians 10:12, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

The incident involves King David, the man God had chosen to be king, and of whom God said, "I have found David son of Jesse a man

after my own heart..." (Acts 13:22b). So as you read, remember, this is a man who loved and served the Lord. We will see how easily a person can be tempted and fall into sin.

David was in Jerusalem rather than with the army. This is the second time he sent Joab, commander of the army, to fight against the Ammonites. Should David have been with the army? Quite possibly, but on the other hand, there may have been some other duty that kept David from joining the army at that time. All we know for certain is that the army was fighting, and David was in Jerusalem.

Why did David get up from his bed in the evening? Was he a lazy king refusing to go with the army and lying around in the bed until late in the evening? Was he ill or in pain and lying down for that reason? Or had he been busy through the early part of the day, had lain down during the heat of the afternoon, and was now going up to the roof for the cool evening air and the view? Perhaps it was late evening and he had retired for the night and it was too hot to sleep, so he went to walk on the roof to enjoy the cool air. We don't know, and it evidently isn't something God felt was necessary for us to know. He gave us the facts: David got up, went to the roof, and walked around.

The next situation has also been viewed from various angles, portraying the woman, Bathsheba, in a variety of ways. The Scripture says, "From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful" (2 Samuel 11:2). Was she a seductress trying to entice men by bathing where she could be seen? We immediately assume that bathing was "taking a bath" in the manner our society takes a bath—nude, sitting in a tub. *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* says, "Bathing in the ordinary nonreligious sense, whether for physical cleanliness or refreshment, is not often mentioned in the Scriptures. The average Hebrew had neither the water nor the inclination for bathing. In most cases 'bathe' means partial washing."⁴ She may have simply been on her roof, using a bowl of water to bathe her face or arms, possibly to cool herself.

Sin isn't always something someone sets out to do. Often we are tempted to sin while in completely innocent situations. It appears that David did not set out to sin when he took a walk on the roof, nor does it seem that Bathsheba set out to sin. But sin happened.

All of us are born with a sinful nature. And much as we don't like to admit it or to look at ourselves closely, we sin—if not in our actions, then in our words or our thoughts. Remember what we read

1. In 2 Samuel 10:7 David had also remained in Jerusalem and sent Joab and the army to fight the Ammonite/Aramean coalition.

2. See 1 Samuel 30:14 and Zephaniah 2:5-6.

3. Merrill C. Tenney, general editor. *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987).

4. *Ibid*, page 128.

earlier from 1 Corinthians 10:12, “So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” David saw Bathsheba’s beauty, and he wanted her. Instead of getting away from the situation and praying, confessing his sin and then occupying his mind with something else—or perhaps going to one of his wives to fulfill his desire—he pursued the sin that began in his heart (see Mark 7:21-23). David inquired who the woman was, and then sent to get her. He abused the royal power and position that God had given him by taking what he wanted.

Was Bathsheba a willing partner? Perhaps, perhaps not. David was the king, and one couldn’t easily resist the command of a king. But then, we really don’t know, because God does not address it in Scripture one way or the other. In telling us this incident, His focus is on David and his sin.

When David had finished with Bathsheba, he sent her home. He may have thought he’d have his night of pleasure and no one would know, but that was not the case. Bathsheba had become pregnant. Her husband was miles away, fighting with the army, and she had just finished her monthly menstrual cycle before coming to David. David was the only possible father.

Their relationship was not an ongoing affair; it had been a one-night-stand. So when Bathsheba discovered she was pregnant, she had to send a message to David to let him know. Not a problem—David thought he had an easy plan to cover up the sin. He sent a message to Joab on the battlefield, and told him to send Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah the Hittite, to him.

When Uriah arrived, David questioned him about the army and the battle, then said he could go on home and relax. I guess David thought that was that; the problem was taken care of. He thought Uriah would sleep with his wife, then think the child was his own. David even sent a gift, perhaps of food, to Uriah’s house.¹ Did he think this was recompense for what he had taken from Uriah? Did David even feel guilty?

But David’s plan failed. Instead of going down to his wife, Uriah slept where all of David’s servants slept. When David learned of this, he questioned Uriah about why he didn’t go to his house. Uriah answered saying, “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat, drink, and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!” (2 Samuel 11:11). Again, did David feel anything? He had done all that Uriah refused to do, and worse.

Since that plan failed, David decided to get Uriah drunk. Perhaps then, he would not think about being so noble, and would go home and sleep with his wife. But again the plan didn’t work. Once again Uriah slept on his mat among David’s servants.

Not knowing what else to do to try to cover his sin, David wrote a letter to Joab to be delivered by Uriah. In the letter David instructed Joab to arrange for Uriah to die in battle. So, although the Ammonites might be the ones who actually did the killing, it was David who had

Uriah killed. He murdered Uriah as surely as if he had plunged a knife into his heart.

When Joab read the missive, I can imagine his thoughts went something like, “Self-righteous David was mad at me for killing Abner, who killed my brother; now he wants me to have Uriah killed. I wonder what Uriah has done. Well, I’ll know sooner or later.”

Before long, David received a report from Joab regarding the siege of Rabbah and the most recent battle. Thinking that David might become upset because he had allowed the men to go so close to the wall, Joab instructed the messenger to tell David that in the course of the battle Uriah the Hittite was killed. David instructed the messenger to tell Joab, “Don’t let this upset you: the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it” (2 Samuel 11:25).

In reading David’s reply to Joab, I wonder if he was trying to justify himself in Joab’s eyes, trying to downplay the murder of Uriah and the deaths of the other men who might otherwise have survived the battle. Or maybe he was just trying to make the communication sound innocent to the messenger.

Just think, at this point David’s lust had cost Uriah and multiple Israelite soldiers their lives. Each of those men must have had loved ones whose lives were torn by grief and would never be the same. And the repercussions of this sin had only begun. When we sin, we may think that our sin hurts no one but ourselves, but this is not true. Besides being an offense to God, our sin touches and hurts others.

David’s Sin Is Revealed

When Bathsheba heard of her husband’s death, she mourned for him. When the time of mourning was over,² David quickly made her his wife. How soon after this she gave birth, we don’t know. Often a woman doesn’t realize she is pregnant for six to eight weeks. Taking that into consideration and adding the time that it took for David to make arrangements regarding her husband, she might have been about three months pregnant when David made her his wife. People may have wondered about the situation, but who would have dared question the king? When a son was born to them, David must have thought he was free and clear, but God knew, and God was not pleased.

We can fool others, we can sometimes even try to fool ourselves, but we can never fool God. Psalm 69:5 says, “You know my folly, O God; my guilt is not hidden from you.” At least nine months had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba. And David had already begun to experience the consequences of his sin. His joyful relationship with God was interrupted. Psalm 32:3-4 says, “When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.” But the discomfort of his conscience did not cause David to return to the Lord, confessing his sin. So God in His great mercy sent the prophet Nathan to him.

1. The Hebrew word for “gift” has the meaning of “food” in Genesis 43:34 (*The NIV Study Bible*).

2. From Genesis 50:10 and 1 Samuel 31:13 it seems to be a period of seven days.

Nathan immediately began telling David about a situation that arose between a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had taken unfair advantage of the poor man, and had taken the poor man's pet lamb to feed to his guest rather than slaughtering and serving one from his own flock of sheep.

David was incensed at the unfairness of the rich man's actions and his lack of pity. He immediately pronounced judgment: the rich man deserved to die, and he should repay four times the amount taken, that is four lambs, according to the Law of Moses (see Exodus 22:1).

No sooner was the judgment out of David's mouth than Nathan said, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). Nathan then proceeded to tell David what God had said.

First God outlined all that He had given David (see 2 Samuel 12:7-8):

- ☛ I anointed you king over Israel.
- ☛ I delivered you from the hand of Saul.
- ☛ I gave Saul's house to you.
- ☛ I gave Saul's wives into your arms.
- ☛ I gave you all of Israel and Judah.
- ☛ If that hadn't been enough, I would have given you more.

Then came the rebuke, "Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in His eyes?" To clarify what David had done, to let him know it wasn't hidden, Nathan continued, "You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites" (2 Samuel 12:9). Then God pronounced His judgment (see 2 Samuel 11:11-12):

- ☛ The sword would never depart from David's house.
- ☛ Out of his own household God would bring calamity on David.
- ☛ Right before David's eyes, God would take his wives and give them to someone close to David. That person would lie with David's wives in broad daylight in view of all Israel.

David had attempted to do his evil deeds in secret, but God would judge him openly.

David's response was immediate, "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Samuel 11:13). What a release for David; confession brought forgiveness and a renewed relationship with his Lord.

Have you ever experienced the discontent of unconfessed sin? Your fellowship with the Lord is interrupted, and all joy and peace are gone. Perhaps you have unconfessed sin in your heart right now. God already knows about it and is longing to forgive you and restore you to a right relationship with Him. First John 1:9 says to His children, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

The Consequences of Sin

David had acknowledged his sin, but Nathan was not finished with God's message. David's sin was taken away and he would not suffer the penalty of death,¹ but David's actions had given God's enemies a great opportunity to show utter contempt; for this reason the son born to David and Bathsheba would die.

The child immediately became sick. David, feeling remorse for his sin and begging God for the child's life, began to fast and pray. For seven days he lay on the ground and refused to eat. Psalm 51 was written by David during this time, right after Nathan confronted him with his sin. In this psalm we have a clear picture of David's heart. His repentance was true and genuine.

On the seventh day the child died. His servants were afraid to tell David. They thought if he grieved this much when the child was ill, what would he do because the child died? They were surprised when David, realizing by their whispering that the child was dead, got up, bathed, put on lotions and went into the house of the Lord to worship.

David had known that while the child was still alive, there was the possibility that God would allow the child to continue to live. But once the child died, there was no reason to continue to fast and pray. God had made His decision. The child was with the Lord. David knew that one day he would be with the child again.

Note David's actions and responses:

- ☛ He acted upon his own lust and sinned, but he was miserable because he had sinned (see Psalm 32).
- ☛ When confronted with his sin, he did not try to deny his sin, blame someone else, or make excuses. He confessed and repented.
- ☛ When God passed judgment, he accepted the consequences of his sin. He did not rail against God or ask God to ease up for his own sake; instead he prayed for others who were affected by his sin.
- ☛ He worshipped God.

If only our attitudes could be the same. We do something wrong, and we ask God's forgiveness, but we somehow think that means there will be no consequences, no negative result of our sin. An alcoholic or drug addict may repent, be forgiven and set free from their addiction, but often there are still physical consequences they must deal with. God is still there, willing to help them deal with the consequences, but there are still consequences.

So often we want to do what we want to do, even though God said, "Don't," and then we want God to "fix it." We forget that our sin affects others, and that sin is so devastating and deadly it cost the life of the Son of God to deal with it. Or, we seem to think that because we are God's children, we should never have sadness or difficulty in our lives (which is contrary to God's Word; see John 16:33 and Romans

1. The penalty for both murder and adultery was death (see Exodus 21:14; Leviticus 20:10).

5:3). We ask for something, but if God says no, how often do we become angry with God? We are not willing to accept what God allows (or doesn't allow) in our lives.

We seem to think we are wiser than God. We forget that He is working in us from eternity and for eternity, that some things are more important than our immediate happiness. Why God allows what He allows we don't always know (see Deuteronomy 29:29), but we are to trust that He is who and what He said He is—good, loving, caring, wise, powerful, etc. Either we believe Him and trust Him (even if we don't understand or like His decisions), or we don't. If, like David, we do trust Him, we too will truly worship God.

God's hand of blessing was still on David, in spite of his failure. David comforted Bathsheba, and she again conceived. Another son was born to them. They named him Solomon, but the Lord said (through Nathan the prophet) to call him "Jedidiah," which means "loved by the LORD."¹ Our God is so amazing. Only He can take our sin (when it is forgiven by Him) and turn it around and make it a blessing.² It was through the offspring of David and Bathsheba that the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ, would eventually be born.³

It is always safe to trust the Lord. If you have sinned, go to Him and confess your sin. He will forgive you. If there are difficult consequences because of your sin, He will go through them with you and work them for your good (see Romans 8:28-29). Only He can then turn it all into a blessing.⁴

Continue To Serve God

There may be major crises in our lives, but the world goes on, and life continues. And so it was for David. As king, it was still his responsibility to finish securing the borders of Israel. If you recall, he had sent Joab as head of the army to fight against Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites. Joab had finally captured their water supply, and the battle was almost finished. He sent word to David to muster the rest of the troops and lead them in the final battle, otherwise he, Joab, would get the credit. David took heed of his advice and led the army in the final attack against Rabbah. When he had captured it, he took the crown from the Ammonite king and placed it on his own head.⁵ He then took all the people from Rabbah and the other Ammonite towns and set them to forced labor for his various building projects.

At last Israel's borders were secure. David and all the army of Israel could return home. With God's help, David had united the kingdom and centralized the worship of the Lord, and all Israel was living in peace.

And so, like David, we must continue to serve the Lord. When we sin, we ask His forgiveness, and then we continue to live. God is with us in every situation. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us (see Hebrews 13:5), and He has promised us His peace (see John 16:33).

Have you sinned or failed to do what you believe God instructed you to do? Go to Him now. Confess your sin, and ask for His forgiveness. Know that He does forgive you because of Jesus' sacrifice for your sin (see 1 John 1:9). Now get on with your life, seeking Him in prayer and through reading your Bible. Don't forget to fellowship with other believers (see Hebrews 10:25). And remember, "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Colossians 3:17).

1. *The NIV Study Bible*, see text note on 2 Samuel 12:25.

2. For example, see the story of Joseph and his brothers in Genesis 37-50, particularly 50:20.

3. In both genealogies of Jesus, listed in Matthew 1 and Luke 3, it is through the offspring of David and Bathsheba that Jesus enters the world.

4. This is not saying we should sin, merely that as we give ourselves to the Lord seeking His forgiveness, He will work all things for good.

5. The crown consisted of about 75 pounds of gold and jewels. (*The NIV Study Bible*, see text note on 2 Samuel 12:30.)

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the commentary on 2 Samuel 11-12.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 2 Samuel 11-12 or from your teacher's lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 13-14, concentrating on 13:1-22.

1. a. What situation arose among David's offspring in 2 Samuel 13:1?

b. Challenge: Review 2 Samuel 3:2-3 to see the details of the relationships of these people.

2. What was Amnon's frustration, and what did his friend (who was also his cousin) suggest? (2 Samuel 13:2-5)

3. How did Amnon carry out this plan, and what was the result? (2 Samuel 13:6-14)

4. After Amnon's brutal act against Tamar, how did his emotions change toward her, and what did he do? (2 Samuel 13:15-18)

5. Did anyone take action to right the wrong done to Tamar? (2 Samuel 13:19-22)

6. Personal: The Bible says that David was furious when he heard what his firstborn son, Amnon had done, yet he took no action. One commentator said, "The results of David's sin with Bathsheba become evident in his relations with his sons, for how can a father discipline his children when he knows that he has done worse than they?"¹ Yet, David had confessed his sin and had been forgiven. Does your awareness of your past sin ever hinder your appropriate discipline of your children, or make you feel that you can't expect others to act rightly?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 13-14, concentrating on 13:23-37.

1. Review what 2 Samuel 13:22 said about Absalom's reaction to Amnon's rape of Tamar. How much time had passed since that terrible event? (2 Samuel 13:23a)

2. What plan did Absalom develop to avenge his sister's desolation? (2 Samuel 13:23b-28, summarize briefly)

3. a. After Amnon was killed, what false report came to David, and how did he react? (2 Samuel 13:29-31)

b. Who reassured the king, and how? (2 Samuel 13:32-36, summarize briefly)

4. a. What did Absalom do after the murder of his brother? (2 Samuel 13:37)

b. Review 2 Samuel 3:3 to see why Absalom went there.

5. a. How did King David react to the death of his first-born son, Amnon? (2 Samuel 13:37b)

b. Challenge: Read Galatians 6:7. How is this fact illustrated in what you have learned about David's life in 2 Samuel 11-13?

6. Personal: What consequences or effects of your past sin have you or your family suffered? Remember that these natural consequences or effects are not God punishing you. If you have accepted God's gift of His Son's death on the cross as payment for your sin, He has forgiven you; you have become His child, and have received eternal life with Him. Write down Psalm 103:8-14, and insert your name in the verses if you would like to.

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary.*

3. What question did King David now ask the woman? (2 Samuel 14:18-19a)

4. What did she admit? (2 Samuel 14:19b-20)

5. Personal: The woman told David that God “devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him” (2 Samuel 14:14). Colossians 1:21 says, “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.” God’s plan to reconcile us to Himself was through Jesus Christ: “But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (Colossians 1:22). Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, and been reconciled to God?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 13-14, concentrating on 14:21-33.

1. What did David decide to do about Absalom? (2 Samuel 14:21)

2. After Joab brought Absalom back to Jerusalem, what restriction did he face? (2 Samuel 14:23-24)

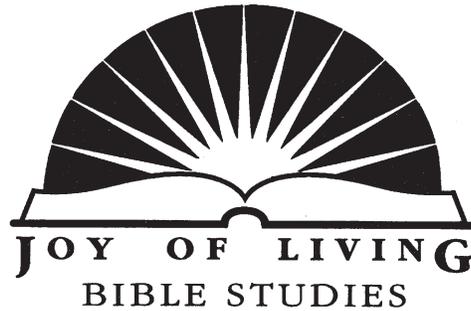
3. What was Absalom known for among the Israelites? (2 Samuel 14:25-26)

4. After waiting two years on restriction in Jerusalem, what did Absalom do to force a confrontation with his father, the king? (2 Samuel 14:28-32)

5. What was the result of Joab’s report to the king? (2 Samuel 14:33)

6. Personal: Joab succeeded in reconciling King David with his son Absalom, at least on the surface. Yet their relationship must have been strained by the knowledge of Absalom’s past sin, as well as David’s past inaction against Amnon’s sin. Do you have a relationship with a family member or a friend that is okay on the surface, but underneath there are unresolved problems? Again, this is an opportunity for you to ask for God’s wisdom as you interact with this person. Another action you can take is to pray for them. Write down a prayer for this person, and perhaps what you sense God is telling you to do in this relationship.

2 Samuel Lesson 7



2 Samuel 13-14

When you plant a garden, you place a seed in the ground, cover it with dirt, and water it according to schedule. If you plant a watermelon seed, you get watermelons; if daisy seeds, you get daisies—each according to its kind (see Genesis 1:11).

The seed does not pop up the moment you put it in the ground, or when you cover it with dirt, or when you begin to water it, or even the moment the sun shines on it. No, it takes time for the seed to germinate and begin to show itself. And the plant that grows from that seed doesn't look just like the seed, but within the mature fruit you will see more seeds.

It is the same with the seeds we sow spiritually. You harvest what you sow, both good things and bad things (see Galatians 6:7-9). Proverbs says, "He who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward," and "He who sows wickedness reaps trouble" (11:18b; 22:8a). And what you reap may not look exactly like what you sowed, but it is the fruit of that action. Sometimes people wonder, "Why is this happening to me?" It may be they are merely reaping what they sowed.

And so it was with the seeds David had sown with the entire incident with Bathsheba. God had forgiven him, but the natural consequences—the fruit of what he had done, the judgments—were still there. And, as with any seed that has been planted, in the course of time we begin to see the results.

Now first let me say, there is no such thing as a perfect family. Every family is made up of fallen human beings. Each of us has a sin nature—that is why we each need Jesus as our Savior. Because of this, and this alone, there will be difficulties. God gives us guidance in the form of commands, rules and principles to help us live the best lives we possibly can in the midst of a sin-filled world. If we don't obey them and follow them, we will cause problems for ourselves and for others—problems that God, in His love, was trying to help us avoid. Add to that the fact that God allows each of us to make choices, and all too often we choose the selfish way. You can see how and why there are no perfect families. Someone does wrong, and someone else reacts and does wrong, and it goes back and forth. No one is completely innocent—completely righteous; everyone is touched by sin. I trust that this doesn't discourage you, because it isn't intended to. As believers, God forgives us our sin, and then He takes all that is wrong and works it together for good for those who love Him (see Romans 8:28-29). Only our great and wonderful God can do this! But,

what our struggle with sin does mean is, don't expect your family or anyone else's to be perfect.

All this may cause you to wonder:

- ☛ Is the difficulty you are going through caused by someone else's sin?
- ☛ Are you reaping what you sowed?
- ☛ Is God disciplining you?
- ☛ Or, is this just a result of living in a sin-filled world?

Sometimes we know the answer—sometimes God specifically lets us know why something is going wrong in our life. Other times, we must just accept the situation and trust Him to help us through and to work in the midst of our situation.

Let's summarize:

- ☛ Everyone is a sinner. No one is perfect; therefore there are no perfect families.
- ☛ God's ways are good and will help you avoid many problems, if you will just obey Him. No one does this perfectly, since no one is perfect. But the more we obey Him, the fewer negative consequences we will have.
- ☛ Sin is terrible, and will harm the sinner and many other people. Often those who aren't even involved with the sin will be negatively affected.
- ☛ There is always hope with the Lord—hope that one day He will make all things new, hope that there will be no more sin or the resulting suffering it causes (see Revelation 21), hope for forgiveness, and hope that He will work all things for our good. Remember the story of Joseph in Genesis 37-50. God worked all things for good.¹
- ☛ You can't always figure out just why something is happening. Ask God. If He wants you to know, He will let you know.

1. If you have not yet read this story, it is well worth taking the time to see how God worked in the midst of a dysfunctional family, and brought good from their bad choices, even while they reaped negative results.

Amnon and Tamar

Now back to David's family. It is apparent, because God plainly said what would happen, that some of the things that happened in David's family are a direct result of David's sin. But some of the events are the result of other people's choices. We can guess which ones, but we aren't certain. So rather than trying to sort out David's situation, let us take heed to ourselves and seek to walk in God's ways. And then, as David did, we need to accept His forgiveness for our sins and failures, and when difficulties come, refuse to (or choose not to) become angry with God. David accepted blessing and difficulty from the hand of God, trusting that God was just and loving in and through it all.

David's family situation was far from good. Having multiple wives and concubines was a common practice in ancient times and is still practiced in some countries today. Although it was permitted in Old Testament times, it was not God's ideal. God's plan is that one man and one woman be joined and made "one flesh" (Genesis 2:23-24; see also Matthew 19:4-6). If you read through the Scriptures, you see the result of multiple wives and concubines—sorrow, envy and strife (see Genesis 16, 25, 29, 30).

David had many sons by his wives (see 1 Chronicles 3:1-9), and only one daughter that we know of (see chart on page 8).¹ His adult sons had houses of their own, while his daughter Tamar lived at the palace. Tamar was unmarried, a virgin, and very beautiful. She was the half-sister of David's firstborn son Amnon, and the full sister of David's third son, Absalom.

Second Samuel 13:1 says that Amnon "fell in love" with Tamar. His love was not God's type of love, but an emotion of desire and lust. He wanted Tamar physically, but couldn't figure out a way to get to her since she was carefully guarded. (As you can see, Amnon did not have the power his father David had, so he could not merely take what he wanted, as David had done with Bathsheba.) Amnon was so frustrated at his inability to have Tamar that he made himself sick. Now Amnon's friend, his cousin Jonadab, noticed that Amnon looked worse every day. When questioned, Amnon told him of his desire and frustration.

It is sad, but Jonadab was not aghast that Amnon would lust after his half-sister.² Instead he suggested a simple plan to get Tamar into Amnon's bedchamber: Amnon was to go to bed and pretend to be sick. When David came to check on him, Amnon would request that Tamar be allowed to come to him, prepare some special food while he watched, and feed it to him—as though this would make him feel better. Honestly, I can't figure out why this request didn't raise a "red flag" with David. Even if the brother and sister had been friends when they were children, the request makes no logical sense. But Amnon was the crown prince, the firstborn son, so perhaps David was not in the habit of either questioning or denying this son.

At her father's direction, Tamar went to Amnon's house and did as he requested, but when she tried to give him the bread he wouldn't eat until he had sent everyone from the room. Then he asked her to bring it to him in the bedroom. When she was close enough he grabbed her and demanded that she come to bed with him. She begged him, pleaded with him not to force her. She tried to get him to delay his passion, saying that if he would just ask their father, she knew David would allow them to marry. But Amnon was determined to have his way and since he was stronger than she was, he raped her.

It is funny how quickly lust can turn to hate once the lust has been spent. As much as he had desired her, he now hated even more the very sight of her. Her very presence was a reminder of his sin—a reminder of how selfish, cruel and perverted he was.

He demanded that she get up and get out. But Tamar was desperate. She had been defiled. To be cast off as a piece of trash that was no longer wanted was an even greater humiliation. She may have had hopes that he would at least marry her. But he humiliated her even more by having his servant put her out the door and lock it so that she couldn't get back in. Poor Tamar. She put ashes on her head and tore her robe as a sign of mourning and went away crying out loud.

Tamar's brother Absalom guessed what had happened. He calmed her down and encouraged her not to make the matter public. That would have been worse for her. Then he took her to his house to live.

Although David was furious with Amnon, there is no record that he did anything to rebuke him or to help his daughter.³ Absalom, too, said nothing one way or the other to Amnon, acting as if nothing had happened. But hatred and anger against Amnon were simmering in Absalom's heart. I imagine he must have felt a lot of resentment toward his father for not taking any action to try to correct or remedy what had been done to Tamar.

Why was David silent? Why didn't he take action? Was he indifferent to those in his own household? Did he believe this was God's judgment and he had to merely accept what had happened? Did mighty David just not know what to do? Did he feel that he had no right to say anything since Amnon's sin was a reflection of his own sin with Bathsheba? There is no excuse for David. The person who has smoked all his or her life and is dying of cancer should tell everyone, "Don't smoke." The alcoholic who has destroyed his health and the lives of those he loves can truly say, "Don't drink." So, regardless of what David had done, Amnon's sin against Tamar should have been dealt with.

Ecclesiastes 8:11 warns us, "When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong."

1. Second Samuel 13:18 refers to the kind of robes worn by the "virgin daughters" (plural) of the king. This may signify there were other daughters, and that only Tamar is mentioned in Scripture because of the incident we will be looking at today.

2. Although God had previously permitted marriage to close relatives, He forbade it when He gave the law to the Israelites (see Leviticus 18:9-18).

3. Deuteronomy 22:25-29 gives instructions for punishment in various situations of rape. In some cases the penalty is death; in some cases the man must marry and care for the woman for her entire life.

Absalom Takes Revenge

When a crisis occurs, emotions run high—anger, grief, shock. Then emotions begin to calm down or are buried, and often people try to go on as if nothing had happened. Too often, people just don't want to deal with the situation, so they ignore how others may be feeling, hoping it will all just go away or be forgotten.¹ But for those directly affected, like Tamar who remained desolate and Absalom whose hatred and resentment simmered in his heart, the emotions just don't go away. Proverbs 26:26 in the *New Living Translation* says, "While their hatred may be concealed by trickery, it will finally come to light for all to see." Absalom was biding his time, waiting for just the right moment to take his revenge.

Two years passed and nothing happened. It was sheep sheering time, which was a time of celebration. Absalom invited all his half-brothers to the festivities, and went personally to invite his father and his officials. When David made his excuses not to attend, Absalom requested that Amnon, the crown prince, be allowed to attend in David's place. David asked, "Why should he go?" (2 Samuel 13:26; you can't help but wonder if it crossed his mind that something was amiss). But when Absalom persisted, David relented and sent Amnon with the rest of his sons.

This, at last, was Absalom's opportunity—payback. He instructed his men to wait until Amnon was somewhat drunk and unable to properly defend himself, and then kill him. He told them not to worry about consequences; they would merely be following his orders. And so it happened—Amnon paid for his sin with Tamar, his life for his lust.

In the chaos that ensued, David's other sons must have feared for their lives, because they fled back to Jerusalem. Before they arrived, David received a report that they were all dead—and David tore his robe, fell on the ground and grieved.

For some reason, Jonadab, David's nephew, was at court with David that day. (This is the Jonadab who had given Amnon the idea of how to rape Tamar.) He knew that Absalom didn't want to kill all of David's sons. He knew that Absalom's express purpose had been to kill Amnon for raping Tamar, and he told David this.

When David's sons arrived back at the palace, they were still distressed. Their brother had been attacked and murdered right before their eyes, and they had feared they were going to be next. In the meantime, Absalom fled for safety to his maternal grandfather, Talmi son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur.

And again, David did nothing. This is so unlike David prior to his sin with Bathsheba—David, who sought God's guidance; David, who wanted to do what was right; David, who did mighty things for God. It is true that sin can cripple us. Accepting God's forgiveness is one thing, but forgiving ourselves is another. I have known people who were so appalled at their own sin, so ashamed of the pain they had caused

1. When we seek to walk with the Lord Jesus, it is a different matter all together. Depending on whether we are the one who was wronged or the one who did the wrong, there are steps we can take based on God's Word. When we bring situations to God, truly seeking His help, He can bring about healing and forgiveness.

others and the long-term effects of their sin, that they ceased to be a truly active and effective member of the body of Christ.

Ecclesiastes 10:1 says, "As dead flies give perfume a bad smell, so a little folly outweighs wisdom and honor." Our sin can destroy our testimony for the Lord. A person may have served the Lord in leadership within the church, or may have preached to thousands and led numerous people to the Lord, but if they are caught in just one sin, their ministry is destroyed. Because of sin, pastors have lost their pulpits, evangelists have lost the ability to be a light for the Lord, people in leadership have lost their right to lead, but none of these things should ever keep them or us from walking with the Lord and sharing His love with others—even though it may be in a different capacity. If you have sinned, ask God to forgive you, do what you can to make it right, then choose to walk with Him and serve Him daily, experiencing the joy of His salvation.

Absalom Returns

As I read through 2 Samuel 13:23-38, I tried to sort out what was right and what was wrong—who was right and who was wrong. After studying and struggling with this, and praying about this, and discussing this with others for weeks, I came to this conclusion: only God is right, only God is righteous.

In my limited sphere of existence I see how people take Scripture and twist it. They take God's Word and misquote it, read His direction and misapply it. Why then was I surprised that this same thing happened within David's family and David's kingdom?

After mourning for Amnon for nearly three years, David's heart turned toward Absalom, but he did nothing. Since Joab, David's cousin and head of his army, knew what was in David's heart, he devised a plan to help David feel justified in allowing Absalom to return to Jerusalem.

Joab instructed a woman from another town to come before David, pretend to be a widow with only two sons, and present a legal case for David to rule on for her. The story was that the two sons had fought, and one had struck the other and killed him. This woman supposedly had no other children to care for her or continue her family name. Her extended family wanted the living son executed, but she wanted him spared.

Now God's Word instructs in many places that if a man murdered another man he was to be put to death. But according to Numbers 35, if a man accidentally killed another man,² he was to flee to a designated city, called a city of refuge, where he could live safely until a trial determined whether he was guilty of murder. (Flight to a city of refuge was not an option for a person who was guilty of murder.) If he was deemed innocent, he could live safely in that city until the current high priest died. If he was found guilty, he was to be put to death by a near kinsman (the avenger of blood) of the person who was murdered.

2. There are certain stipulations regarding what would be counted as murder and what would be accidental.

After listening to the woman's case, David promised that nothing would happen to the living son. She then posed another question. If David did this for her son, why didn't he do the same for his own son Absalom, and return him to Israel? Realizing that Joab was behind what the woman said, David sent him to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Although Absalom was permitted to live in Jerusalem, David refused to see him.

In looking at the woman's argument, you'll note that the situation the woman presented as her own and the situation with Absalom were not the same. She also misrepresented God when she said God doesn't take away life and doesn't approve of avenging the blood of a murdered person (see 2 Samuel 14:14 and Genesis 9:6). What she did say that was correct, though misunderstood, was that "he [God] devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him" (2 Samuel 14:14). What she failed to realize was that God does this while always maintaining justice and righteousness. God does not "wink" at sin. He doesn't just ignore it, as David did. No, God deals with sin. He is so serious about dealing with sin that He sent His Son to bear the penalty for our sin, so that He might be both just and the justifier of those who put their faith in Jesus (see Romans 3:26).

David did not deal with Amnon's sin against Tamar, and he did not deal with Absalom's revenge against Amnon. Ignoring sin doesn't make it go away. For two years Absalom lived in Jerusalem without any acknowledgement from his father—two years of a standoff with no action being taken—two years of ignoring sin.

Absalom finally had enough. After manipulating situations to get Joab to talk to him, he demanded that Joab tell his father to do something one way or the other—either accuse him of wrongdoing or accept him back into favor.

Joab presented Absalom's request, and David summoned Absalom, who bowed before his father. David kissed his son, thereby signifying acceptance and pardon, but nothing was truly resolved. No one's sin was addressed; sorrow and repentance were not mentioned. This was not the end of the problem.

Walk in God's Way

How often we want a problem to just go away. We pretend it doesn't exist, we act as if there is not a problem, and we want things to go back to the way they were before the problem happened. But sin needs to be acknowledged before the Lord and repented of. Restitution, reconciliation and forgiveness need to take place in the lives of those who have been wronged, as well as in the life of the one who did the wrong.

If you have wronged someone, first ask God for forgiveness; then go to the person you have wronged, seek their forgiveness, and attempt to make it right (see Matthew 5:23-24). If you have been wronged, go to the person who hurt you and seek to be reconciled. Matthew 18:15 says, "If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over." And finally Romans 12:17-19 tells us, "Do not

repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord."

What a difference it makes when we truly believe God and walk in His ways. We can't be responsible for what the other person does, but we are accountable for what we do. Ask God to help you believe what He says and live accordingly.

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the commentary on 2 Samuel 13-14.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 2 Samuel 13-14 or from your teacher's lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 15-17, concentrating on 15:1-12.

1. a. What did Absalom provide himself with? (2 Samuel 15:1)

b. Challenge: From the following verses, what did these things demonstrate about Absalom's ambition?
Genesis 41:42-43

1 Samuel 8:11

2. a. How did Absalom work to win the hearts of the people of Israel? (2 Samuel 15:2-6a, summarize briefly)

b. Did his work pay off? (2 Samuel 15:6b)

3. a. What reason did Absalom give his father, the king, when he asked permission to go to Hebron? (2 Samuel 15:7-8)

b. Challenge: Review 2 Samuel 5:3. What significant event in David's past had taken place in Hebron?

c. From David's answer to Absalom, did he appear to suspect Absalom's plot? (2 Samuel 15:9)

4. How did Absalom's plot to seize the throne of Israel grow and spread? (2 Samuel 15:10,12)

5. Who went with Absalom to Hebron? Did they know about his plan? (2 Samuel 15:11)

6. Personal: Absalom acted like a loyal son on the surface, but the reality was very different. How does Psalm 5:9 describe this kind of person? Have you ever been hurt or betrayed by a deceitful person? How did you react?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 15-17, concentrating on 15:13-23.

1. How did David find out about his son's treachery? (2 Samuel 15:13)

2. What did David decide to do? (2 Samuel 15:14)

3. Who left Jerusalem with the king, and who stayed behind? (2 Samuel 15:15-18)

4. a. The Kerethites, Pelethites and Gittites were foreign mercenaries employed as David's bodyguard, and Ittai was the leader of the Gittites.¹ What did David command Ittai to do? (2 Samuel 15:19-20)

- b. What was Ittai's response? (2 Samuel 15:21-22)

- c. Challenge: Compare Ittai's response to King David with Ruth 1:16-17. Ruth, a Moabite, said these words to her Israelite mother-in-law, Naomi.

5. Compare 2 Samuel 15:6 with 15:23. Does it appear that Absalom had truly stolen the hearts of *all* the people of Israel?

6. Personal: David faced a heartbreaking situation, having to flee from Jerusalem before the arrival of his treacherous son, Absalom, yet the loyalty of his officials and his bodyguard must have been a blessing to him. Do you have a relative or a friend who is facing a difficult situation? How can you express your love and loyalty to them, to help them during this difficult time?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 15-17, concentrating on 15:24-37.

1. a. Who else fled the city with King David, and what did they carry? (2 Samuel 15:24; review 2 Samuel 8:17 to see who Zadok and Abiathar were.)

- b. What did David command the priests to do? (2 Samuel 15:25a)

1. The Expositor's Bible Commentary. See notes on 2 Samuel 8:18; 15:18.

2. What was David's attitude about his situation? (2 Samuel 15:25b-26)
3. How did David and his followers express their grief as they continued away from Jerusalem? (2 Samuel 15:30)
4.
 - a. David was informed, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom" (2 Samuel 15:31a). Look ahead to 2 Samuel 16:23. Why was this disturbing news?
 - b. How did David deal with his concern about this report? (2 Samuel 15:31b)
 - c. Whom did David send back to Jerusalem to help in this matter? (2 Samuel 15:32-34,37)
5. How did David plan to get information from Zadok, Abiathar and Hushai? (2 Samuel 15:27-29, 35-36)
6. Personal: David accepted that God was in charge of his future (see 2 Samuel 15:25b-26), yet he also prayed that the Lord would "turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness" (2 Samuel 15:31), and he made arrangements to keep himself informed of matters in Jerusalem. Acceptance of God's sovereignty in your difficult situation doesn't mean that you must just sit there and do nothing to change it or deal with it. What situation do you face today that is causing you disappointment or heartbreak? How might David's example change your attitude and actions?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 15-17, concentrating on 16:1-14.

1.
 - a. Who brought supplies to David and his followers, and what did he bring? (2 Samuel 16:1-2)
 - b. What did Ziba report about Mephibosheth? (2 Samuel 16:3)
 - c. What did David decide to do after he heard this? (2 Samuel 16:4)
2. What did Shimei do when King David came to his town? (2 Samuel 16:5-8)
3. How did Abishai want to handle Shimei's behavior? (2 Samuel 16:9)
4. How did David again acknowledge God's sovereignty over even this event? (2 Samuel 16:10-13)
5. How did the stress of the flight from Jerusalem affect the king and his people? (2 Samuel 16:14)

6. Personal: David realized that God, in His sovereignty, allows distressing events in our lives. Sometimes, as Christians, we have the attitude that if we are in right relationship with the Lord, we will avoid all difficulties and problems. Do you ever feel that way? Read what the apostle Paul said about this in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. What or whom will you fix your eyes on as you experience problems?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 15-17, concentrating on 16:15—17:29.

1. How could Hushai's words to Absalom not only be interpreted favorably by Absalom, but also preserve Hushai's hidden loyalty to David? (2 Samuel 16:15-19)

2. How did Ahithophel suggest that Absalom strengthen his position as Israel's new king? (2 Samuel 16:20-23)

3. a. What additional advice does Ahithophel give that would quickly complete Absalom's takeover? (2 Samuel 17:1-3)

- b. When Absalom sought a second opinion, what advice did Hushai give on this matter? (2 Samuel 17:4-13; summarize briefly.)

- c. Which advice did Absalom decide to take, and why? (2 Samuel 17:14)

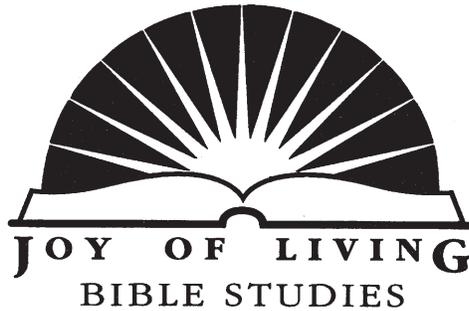
5. a. When Hushai sent word to David through the priests, what problem did their sons encounter? (2 Samuel 17:15-22, summarize briefly)

- b. How did Ahithophel react when his advice was not followed? (2 Samuel 17:23)

- c. Absalom and his troops followed David across the Jordan and camped in Gilead as they prepared to attack. What did David's friends do to help David and his troops prepare to engage Absalom and his army? (2 Samuel 17:24-29)

6. Personal: God was working behind the scenes on David's behalf (see 2 Samuel 17:14b). He had a plan for David, and He has a plan for you as well. Read Proverbs 21:30 and 2 Timothy 1:9-10. Have you answered God's call and accepted the gift of salvation through His Son? Are you trusting Him to work out His purpose in your life?

2 Samuel Lesson 8



2 Samuel Chapters 15-17

Evil appears in many forms. Sometimes it is easily recognizable; at other times it appears as something good, something to be desired. This is no surprise, since “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14).

Many believe that Isaiah 14:12-15 and Ezekiel 28:12-19 refer to Satan. In these passages he is described as beautiful, the model of perfection. He was in an exalted position, and yet he rebelled. He said, “I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High” (Isaiah 14:13-14). He was beautiful, and he desired to be like God and to take His throne. Satan continues to be a deceiver, continues to lead the world away from truth and away from the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (see Revelation 12:9). He is a liar, and there is no truth in him (see John 8:44).

Absalom, David’s eldest living son, was a reflection of all that Satan is. On the outside he was beautiful, and everyone praised him for that beauty. Second Samuel 14:25 says, “From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him.” Even his hair was a point of vanity. He only cut it when it became too heavy for him, and what was cut off weighed about five pounds. Nevertheless, that outward beauty, like Satan’s, was deceptive; it was a cover for the hatred, envy and rebellion residing in Absalom’s heart. As Scripture reveals, he was deceptive, and he determined to lead the hearts of Israel away from their rightful king.

Now remember that as the laws of inheritance go, Absalom was the next in line to inherit David’s throne. However, Absalom may have feared that since he had murdered his brother Amnon, his father would give the kingdom to one of his brothers. Or it is possible that because Amnon had taken all that Tamar valued most—her virginity, her dignity and her hope for a husband and family—and David did nothing about it, that Absalom wanted to take from David what he valued most—his kingdom, his dignity and his future as king.

Absalom’s Plot

As we have seen from his past actions, Absalom was calculating and willing to wait to accomplish his purposes. His first act in usurping the throne was to obtain a chariot and horses for himself. He also hired

fifty men to run ahead of the chariot.¹ Samuel had warned the Israelites prior to anointing Saul as king that this is what their kings would do. Although it was common for the kings of other countries and the pharaohs of Egypt to do this (see Genesis 41:43), this is the first time it was done in Israel. What a sight he must have been, like no other.

For four years, Absalom would show up every morning near the city gate where legal cases were settled.² As people would come to present their petitions, requesting that the king decide their complaints, Absalom would ask them where they were from. He would then inform them that there was no representative of the king to hear their case. But, he would tell them, their claim was legitimate, and if only he were a judge, a person of authority, he would see to it that they received justice. Then, if someone tried to bow down to him, he’d grab the person and kiss him. Everything Absalom did was carefully planned to show that he, not his father David, should be king. One by one, over the course of time, he won people over, all the while concealing his actions from his father.

Imagine yourself seeking justice, only to be told by the king’s son—this magnificent-looking man with all the trappings of royalty—that there was no representative of the king to hear you. Then imagine this royal personage showing concern for you and affirming the validity of your claim, and in the course of the conversation stating that he wished he had the authority to do something about your problem. You can see how, one by one, he stole the hearts and won the loyalty of the people of Israel. As Satan turns the affection and loyalty of humans away from God to anything and anyone else, so Absalom turned the people’s heart and loyalty away from David to himself.

At the end of the four-year period, Absalom began step two of his plan. He went before his father David and requested permission to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow he had made to the Lord when he was in exile in Aram: “If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron” (2 Samuel 15:8). This vow was reminiscent of one made by the patriarch, their ancestor Jacob (Genesis 28:20-22). Suspecting nothing, David gave him permission.

Now everything Absalom did was calculated to bring about his father David’s downfall and his own ascension as king. Even the selection of Hebron is significant, since it was where Absalom was born

1. It is possible that the fifty men functioned as Absalom’s personal bodyguard, just as the Kerethites, Pelethites and Gittites functioned for David.
2. See Genesis 19:1, Ruth 4:1, and Joshua 20:4 for examples of this practice.

and where David was first proclaimed king. (He reigned from there for seven and a half years.)

Absalom secretly sent messengers to the various tribes in Israel, telling them that at the sound of the trumpet they were to declare, "Absalom is king" (2 Samuel 15:10). Accompanying Absalom to Hebron were two hundred men from Jerusalem, who were his guests but were unaware of the plot. Absalom also sent for David's trusted counselor, Ahithophel, who readily joined him. Not only was Ahithophel a wise counselor, he was also Bathsheba's grandfather. It may be that Ahithophel harbored bitterness in his heart for the shameful treatment his granddaughter and her husband Uriah had received at the hands of David. On the other hand, it may simply have been that he believed Absalom would succeed in overthrowing David. In that case, even though Bathsheba was now David's wife and Ahithophel's great-grandson Solomon was a son of David, Ahithophel's position as counselor to Absalom might guarantee better treatment for Bathsheba and Solomon and a position of authority for himself when Absalom was king. Whatever Ahithophel's reasoning, he joined Absalom in Hebron. Absalom's position grew stronger and stronger, and the number of those who joined him increased.

David's Flight

When David was informed that Absalom had rebelled and that many Israelites were following him, David took action to protect the city and the people living there, as well as his own household and his officials. He knew how ruthless Absalom was, and he knew that to get at him, Absalom would attack Jerusalem and even lay siege to it; therefore, David planned to leave the city.

Thus David, his officials, the Pelethites, Kerethites and Gittites (along with their families), and David's entire household fled the city, leaving it to Absalom. Ten of David's concubines were left to take care of the palace.

To the west of Jerusalem lay the land of the Philistines, and not knowing the loyalty of the tribes to the north and the south, David fled east across the Jordan (the only logical direction). After leading the people for a distance from the city, David stopped and let them pass in front of him. David encouraged Ittai, the leader of the Gittites, to return to Jerusalem, where he was certain Absalom would welcome them, but Ittai refused, swearing allegiance to David, whether he lived or died. So David acquiesced, and Ittai, his men, and all their families moved past David, joining him in his flight. Zadok and all the Levites were there with the Ark of the Lord. Abiathar the priest offered sacrifices until all the people had safely left the city.

Although there were many siding with Absalom, many were still loyal to David. All the countryside wept as David and those with him crossed the Kidron Valley and moved on toward the desert.

Imagine what that day must have been like: David's troops marching in orderly fashion, rank after rank; the multitude of men, women and children hurriedly streaming out of Jerusalem carrying their belongings; mighty King David walking barefoot with his head covered;

and all the while the priests standing before the Ark of the Lord, offering sacrifice after sacrifice, while those living round about Jerusalem wailed and mourned. What a contrast to the joyful procession that had been led by David when the ark had been brought to Jerusalem.

When all his followers were safely out of Jerusalem, David instructed Zadok to take the ark and return to the city where the ark belonged. David's heart was right with God. He knew that if God allowed, he would return to Jerusalem one day and see the ark in its rightful place. But if this was part of God's judgment on him because of his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah, he was willing to bow before the Lord and say, "Let Him do to me whatever seems good to Him" (2 Samuel 15:26).

Are we willing to have that same attitude of submission to the Lord? There are days of sunshine and joyful blessings, but in this life there are also days of difficulty and darkness, hard times, times of sadness and sorrow. Are we willing to trust God in those times, knowing that He loves us and allows difficulty in our lives for our own good? Lord, help us to say with David, "Let Him do to me whatever seems good to Him," and with Jesus, "Your will be done" (Matthew 26:42).

Trusting God does not necessarily mean inaction. David asked Zadok, Abiathar, and their two sons to act as spies when they returned to Jerusalem. He would wait at the fords of the Jordan River to receive word from them about Absalom's plans before he proceeded with his own plans.

Trusting God doesn't mean that we are never sad over situations, or that we "like" everything that happens. Grief and joy are not mutually exclusive. We can rejoice that God loves us, that our sin is forgiven, and that God works everything for our good, even while we grieve.

Nor does trusting God mean that we cease to pray; it encourages us to pray (see Philippians 4:6-7). When David learned that Ahithophel had become one of the conspirators and joined Absalom, he prayed that God would turn Ahithophel's wise counsel to foolishness.

So when times are difficult, remember to "be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12), knowing that you are in God's loving hands.

As Zadok and Abiathar and their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, returned to Jerusalem with the Ark of the Lord, David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping, barefoot, his head covered.

When David reached the summit, yet another friend, Hushai, was there to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head,¹ ready to follow David into exile. But David asked an even greater task of Hushai. He requested that Hushai return to Jerusalem, join Absalom's forces, and attempt to thwart Ahithophel's counsel, all the while gathering information about Absalom's plans. Hushai was to pass any information he obtained to Zadok or Abiathar, who would in turn give the information to their sons to relay to David, who would wait by the fords of the Jordan River to hear from them. Hushai immediately set off to do as David requested.

1. These were signs of grief and mourning.

David continued but a short distance before encountering Ziba. (If you recall, Ziba had at one time been a servant of Saul, then was made steward to Mephibosheth.)¹ Ziba had brought a string of donkeys loaded with supplies to meet the needs of David and those fleeing with him. Surprised that Mephibosheth was not with him, David questioned Ziba about the absence of his master. Ziba told him that Mephibosheth had stayed in Jerusalem, believing the kingdom would be given to him. Mephibosheth's absence coupled with David's uncertainty about whom he could trust caused David to take Ziba's words at face value. Because of Ziba's seeming loyalty and aid to him, David gave him all that belonged to Mephibosheth.

Shimei's Curse

Reading these passages covering David's flight reminds me of a play where one player after another enters the spotlight to speak to the lead character then steps back into shadow while the next one steps up. So far, each of these players has been "for" David. As David traveled on, however, he met Shimei, who was not at all "for" him. Shimei, a member of the same clan as Saul's family, believed that David was a wicked, cruel man, a scoundrel who had usurped Saul's throne and was responsible for bloodshed within Saul's household. He believed that Absalom's conspiracy was God's judgment on David for this bloodshed.

And so Shimei cursed David and threw stones that struck David and his officials. When Abishai, David's nephew, wanted to kill Shimei for this behavior, David wouldn't permit it. He addressed Abishai and all his officials, explaining his action. He said if his own son, his own flesh and blood, was trying to kill him, it was no surprise that a member of Saul's clan would curse him, so they were to just leave Shimei alone. David wasn't certain what God's plan was, but he knew God, and so he hoped—he hoped that as God saw his submission to His will and the distress he was in, perhaps God would change Shimei's cursing to blessing.

At David's command, no action was taken against Shimei. And David and his entourage continued their flight, with Shimei cursing and pelting them with stones and dirt. When they finally arrived at the fords of the Jordan River, they were exhausted, but at last they could stop and rest.

David had acknowledged that he was guilty—not of the sin of which Shimei accused him, but of his sin with Bathsheba and of the murder of Uriah. He knew God's judgment was right, and he accepted whatever God allowed. If God had told Shimei to curse him, who was he not to accept it? About one thousand years later, David's descendant, our Lord Jesus Christ, was mocked and insulted as He hung on the cross, paying the price for our sins. Referring to this incident, 1 Peter 2:23 says, "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly."

Romans 12:18-21 says, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends,

1. Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson.

but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Perhaps there is someone who has slandered you or done some other wrong to you. You've gone to them, sought to make peace with them and to resolve the conflict, but they just refuse. Matthew 5:13 tells us that as believers we are the "salt of the earth." Think a moment. Besides making food taste better, one of the many things we use salt for is to preserve food. It inhibits the growth of bacteria. When someone does evil to us we can stop that evil, just as salt stops bacteria from spreading. Instead of becoming angry and retaliating or taking our anger out on someone else—being overcome by evil ourselves—we can take the wrong that person has done to us to the Lord. We can ask Him to take care of the situation and to help us forgive them. You may even find yourself praying for the person who has done evil to you, because what they have planted, they will reap (see Galatians 6:7). Then, as God gives you opportunity, you can do good to them (see Galatians 6:10). Perhaps that person will have a change of heart, but even if they don't, you will have not allowed their evil to continue; you've overcome their evil with good.

Absalom Takes Over

Our focus now turns to the events that were transpiring in Jerusalem. Absalom and his men, accompanied by Ahithophel, had arrived in Jerusalem at the same time Hushai, David's friend and advisor, arrived. It is interesting to read how Hushai addressed Absalom. He gave the appearance of acknowledging Absalom as king without actually saying it. You may want to re-read this portion of Scripture and see how carefully phrased Hushai's address to Absalom was.

Although he conspired against his own father, Absalom seemed surprised that Hushai would betray David. But Hushai put his mind at ease with another carefully worded speech. He was accepted and was now in a position to obtain the information David would need.

Having obtained Jerusalem, Absalom turned to Ahithophel for guidance on what he should do next. Now Ahithophel was wise—not with godly wisdom, but crafty—and both Absalom and David trusted that with his guidance they would accomplish their goals. Ahithophel's response was immediate, "Lie with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself an offense to your father's nostrils, and the hands of everyone with you will be strengthened" (2 Samuel 16:21).

And so, a tent was erected on the roof of the palace (the very roof where David had first lusted after Bathsheba), and Absalom, in the sight of all Israel, went in and lay with the concubines David had left to take care of the palace.

This act accomplished four things:

- ☛ It made it evident that Absalom and his father were divided, and that there could be no reconciliation.

- ☛ It bore witness that Absalom was now in power, since a king's harem was expected to be passed on to his successor.¹
- ☛ It encouraged Absalom's supporters that their cause was gaining strength.
- ☛ It fulfilled the final part of God's judgment on David (see 2 Samuel 12:11).

Let us think back to the judgment God had pronounced on David through Nathan the prophet (see 2 Samuel 12:10-14):

- ☛ The sword would never depart from David's house—this had already begun when Absalom killed Amnon.
- ☛ Out of David's own house God would bring calamity on him—this too had happened with Amnon's rape of Tamar, Absalom's murder of Amnon, and all the actions Absalom had taken so far in his conspiracy against David.
- ☛ God would take David's wives and give them to someone close to him; that person would lie with David's wives in broad daylight in view of all Israel—this we have just seen fulfilled by Absalom.

God's Word is true! It sometimes seems that those who do wrong get away with it... but trust God, they won't. If He has promised something, whether judgment or blessing, it will come to pass!

Ahithophel's Ruin

Next Ahithophel advised Absalom to immediately take twelve thousand men and go after David. He could then attack while David and his followers were still tired and in a weakened condition. Everyone would scatter, and Absalom could capture and kill David. There would be little bloodshed, and David's followers would no longer have a leader to rally behind. They would willingly return to Jerusalem, and all Israel would be united under Absalom.

This was shrewd advice, but Absalom decided to consult Hushai also. In an effort to thwart Ahithophel's advice and buy David some time, Hushai gave much different advice, accompanied by what appeared to be logical reasoning.

First, to discredit Ahithophel's advice, he said that David's men were fierce and experienced fighters and would easily defeat a mere twelve thousand men. With their defeat, Absalom's followers would lose courage and his coup would fail. Hushai also stated that David would not remain with the main body of the troops, but would be hidden in a cave or elsewhere, and they would not be able to find him to kill him.

Then to buy David additional time, Hushai suggested Absalom gather troops from all Israel and march out against David in great numbers, with Absalom himself leading them. Then, by sheer force of numbers, they could find and overwhelm David and his troops, wherever they might seek to hide.

Then, only because the Lord had decided to bring disaster on Absalom, he and all those following him decided to take Hushai's advice. Knowing that disaster was bound to follow, that following Hushai's plan would cause David to triumph, Ahithophel went home, put his affairs in order, and hung himself. Instead of facing the death of a traitor he took his own life.

Encouragement at Mahanaim

In the meantime, Hushai got word to Zadok and Abiathar about Ahithophel's plan. Not being certain whose advice Absalom would actually choose to follow, they in turn got word to their sons, who set off to inform David that he must not stay where he was, on the west side, of the Jordan, but must cross over immediately.

However, the sons were spotted, and Absalom sent men to capture them. The young men went to the home of a man in Bahurim,² who hid them in a well in his yard. His wife covered the opening and placed grain on top of the covering. When Absalom's men arrived, she sent them in another direction, and when the search was unsuccessful, they gave up and returned to Jerusalem.

Ahimaaz and Jonathan, the priests' sons, climbed out of the well and continued on to warn David. Upon hearing their warning, David and all the people with him crossed the Jordan and traveled on to Mahanaim, seeking some semblance of safety.

Mahanaim had been a part of Israel's history for a long time. If you recall from the lesson two commentary, after the death of Saul, his son Ish-bosheth fled to Mahanaim and established it as his capital for a short time. And over eight hundred years before that, their ancestor Jacob had named that spot near the Jabbok River "Mahanaim," meaning two camps. He had been about to meet his brother Esau, who had vowed to kill him, when he saw an encampment of God's angels, thereby naming the place Mahanaim (see Genesis 32). God had encouraged Jacob, and He was about to encourage David.

Friends of David met him at Mahanaim with bedding and pottery, wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils, honey and curds, sheep and cheese, an abundance of supplies for the people and the army. When they would finally have to confront Absalom, they would be well fed and rested.

As God had met Jacob's need at Mahanaim, He now met David's need. And as God met their needs, He also longs to meet yours. Do you need encouragement? Safety? Perhaps you have some tangible need? Trust the Lord. He has promised in Philippians 4:19, "And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."

1. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, see notes on 2 Samuel 16:23.

2. Bahurim is a small village just east of Jerusalem on the old road between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the commentary on 2 Samuel 15-17.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 2 Samuel 15-17 or from your teacher's lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 18-20, concentrating on 18:1-18.

1. a. What did David plan to do in the battle against Absalom's army? (2 Samuel 18:1-2)

 b. Why did his men object to this? (2 Samuel 18:3)

 c. How did David respond to them? (2 Samuel 18:4)

2. What was David's final order to his commanders before the battle? (2 Samuel 18:5)

3. What was the outcome of the battle? (2 Samuel 18:6-8)

4. a. What happened to Absalom as he rode through the forest during the battle? (2 Samuel 18:9)

 b. How did Joab take advantage of the situation? (2 Samuel 18:10-15)

 c. Once Absalom was dead, what happened to the battle? (2 Samuel 18:16,17b)

5. a. What did Joab and his men do with Absalom's body? (2 Samuel 18:17a)

 b. How does the narrator contrast the marking of Absalom's grave with the monument Absalom himself had earlier erected to himself? (2 Samuel 18:18)

6. a. Absalom spent his life trying to make a name for himself among the Israelites, even erecting a monument to himself. Read the following verses and write what you learn about pride.

Proverbs 16:18

James 4:6

1 Peter 5:6

- b. Personal: Do you struggle with pride? Do you feel that you are better than others? Or perhaps you struggle with inferiority. Read 1 Corinthians 4:7. Are you able to list anything that isn't a gift from God, including how you look, your talents, or your abilities? Does this help you see yourself differently? Will you thank God for making you who you are? Read John 10:14 and 2 Timothy 2:19.

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 18-20, concentrating on 18:19—19:8.

1. How did there happen to be two messengers sent to take the news of the battle to the king? (2 Samuel 18:19-23)

2. What did David assume as he heard the reports about each approaching messenger? (2 Samuel 18:24-27)

3. a. What was the only news David was interested in hearing? (2 Samuel 18:28-32)

- b. What was the king's reaction to the news he heard? (2 Samuel 18:33)

4. What was the effect of David's mourning on his army? (2 Samuel 19:1-4)

5. a. How did Joab rebuke David, and what did he say that David must do? (2 Samuel 19:5-7)

- b. Did David heed Joab's words? (2 Samuel 19:8)

6. Personal: David was emotionally devastated by Absalom's death. Yet, as Joab pointed out, he had a responsibility to all of his people who were still alive. David had to set aside his mourning sufficiently to continue to function as Israel's king. Have you had a similar problem when you lost someone dear to you? Did you have difficulty focusing on the needs of the living—family members, friends, or co-workers? What does the Lord promise in Psalm 91:14-16? Does this help you face whatever trouble may come?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 18-20, concentrating on 19:9-23.

1. a. After David's victory against Absalom's army, was there a unanimous desire in Israel to have him return as their king? (2 Samuel 19:9-10)

b. What tribe of Israel agreed first to ask David to return as their king? (2 Samuel 19:11,12,14)
2. Whom did David make commander of his army in place of Joab? (2 Samuel 19:13)
3. When David returned as far as the Jordan River, who came along with the men of Judah to meet him, and what did they all want to do? (2 Samuel 19:15-18a)
4. a. What did Shimei tell the king? (2 Samuel 19:18b-20)

b. Challenge: Review 2 Samuel 16:5-8 to see what Shimei was apologizing for.
5. a. What did Abishai again want to do? (2 Samuel 16:9 and 19:21)

b. What did David again reply? (2 Samuel 16:10-12 and 19:22-23)
6. Personal: When Shimei repented and asked for forgiveness, Abishai wanted to enforce the letter of the law, as "to curse the king was considered a capital offense, like cursing God."¹ But David was willing to forgive Shimei, just as he had earlier shown forbearance when Shimei originally cursed him. If someone wrongs you, but later asks forgiveness, are you willing to forgive and forget? What have you done in the past?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 18-20, concentrating on 19:24-43.

1. What was Mephibosheth's appearance like when he went to meet the king? (2 Samuel 19:24)
2. a. How did Mephibosheth answer David regarding why he didn't leave Jerusalem with the king? (2 Samuel 19:25-28)

b. How did David decide the issue, and what was Mephibosheth's response? (2 Samuel 19:29-30)
3. a. What had Barzillai done for the king during his exile, and how did David want to repay him? (2 Samuel 19:31-33)

1. 1. *The Expositors Bible Commentary*, see note on 2 Samuel 19:21.

- b. What did Barzillai suggest instead, and did the king agree? (2 Samuel 19:34-39, summarize briefly)

4. What did the men of Israel—all the other tribes except Judah—complain about to the king? (2 Samuel 19:40-41)

5. How did the argument escalate? (2 Samuel 19:42-43)

6. Personal: How typical this is of human nature! In our natural selves, we jockey for position and recognition and prestige—for ourselves, our children, our group, etc. Read Philippians 2:3-4. How are followers of Christ to act? Do you find it hard to do this? In what situations? Why not pray about this now?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 18-20, concentrating on chapter 20.

1. As the argument continued between Judah (one of the tribes of Israel) and Israel (all the other combined tribes), who started another rebellion against David's rule, and what was the result? (2 Samuel 20:1-2)

2. How did David deal with the ten concubines with whom Absalom had publicly laid? (2 Samuel 20:3; see also 16:21-22)

3. a. After sending Amasa, his army commander, to summon the men of Judah, David apparently lost patience or feared Amasa had defected to Israel's side. What did David then order Abishai to do about Sheba? (2 Samuel 20:4-7)

- b. David had appointed Amasa, formerly Absalom's commander, to replace Joab as David's commander. How did Joab and his men get rid of Amasa? (2 Samuel 20:8-13, summarize briefly)

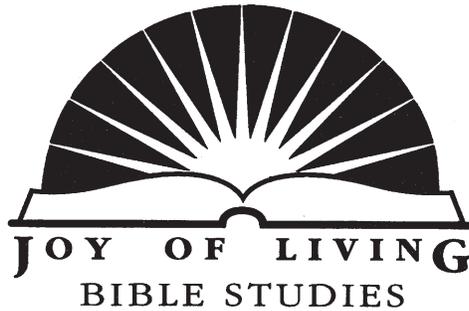
4. a. What did David's men do when they found the place where Sheba had gone? (2 Samuel 20:14-15)

- b. How did a wise woman keep her city from destruction? (2 Samuel 20:16-22, summarize briefly)

5. From the list of David's officials in 2 Samuel 20:23-26, what position did Joab regain after his murder of Amasa?

6. Personal: Although David was "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22), his kingdom was still torn by violence, arguments and rebellion. Today we may elect godly leaders, and yet humanity's sin will continue to cause problems here on earth until Jesus Christ returns to bring an end to evil for all eternity. Read Revelation 21:3-7. Do you look forward to this? How does knowing that this will take place help you deal with today's evil?

2 Samuel Lesson 9



2 Samuel Chapters 18-20

Now that David and those who had fled with him were in a place of relative safety and were rested, it was time for David to take action. He would not sit still and wait for Absalom to attack; he would go out to meet him on the battlefield. David mustered the men who were with him, including his private army of trained professional soldiers. He organized them under three leaders—Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite—and planned that he himself would lead them into battle.

However, his men recognized how important it was for David to stay out of harm's way, to remain alive. He was needed to rule Israel, for Israel's sake.¹ Just as Ahithophel had said, if Absalom killed David there would be no reason for those who were loyal to David to continue to fight Absalom. At his men's insistence, David acquiesced; he would support them from the city. He stood by the city gate as the men marched past him, many going to their death to defend their king. Despite this, David's mind was on Absalom. In the hearing of the troops, David counseled Joab, Abishai and Ittai to be gentle with Absalom, for his sake.

The battle began. The part-time soldiers of Absalom's army were no match for David's trained fighting men. David's army defeated Absalom's army, and twenty thousand men died that day. The battle took place in the forest of Ephraim.² Somehow Absalom, who was on his mule, became separated from the body of his army and came upon David's men. In his flight, his head became entangled in the tree branches.³ His mule kept going while he was left hanging. Because of David's exhortation to "be gentle" with his son, he was left untouched.

One young man, however, reported the incident to Joab, who rebuked him for not killing Absalom. Knowing that as long as Absalom lived the life of David and the unity of the kingdom were in danger, Joab took three javelins and, while Absalom was still alive and hanging in the tree, stabbed him in the heart. Ten of Joab's men then surrounded Absalom and finished the job.

Joab blew the trumpet signaling victory. David's men ceased their pursuit of the Israelite soldiers, who fled to their homes in defeat. Ab-

1. Despite his personal failures, David was a good king (see 2 Samuel 8:15).
2. The exact location of the Forest of Ephraim is unknown. The terrain must have been rugged, because more soldiers lost their lives from the forest than from the battle.
3. It may be that his neck was caught in the fork of a tree, or perhaps his hair, of which he was so proud, became entangled in low-hanging branches.

salom's body was taken down, thrown into a pit there in the forest, and covered with a pile of stones.

What a contrast—in Absalom's lifetime he had erected a pillar in the King's Valley as a monument to himself. Now, in his death, his monument was an unmarked pile of stones over his body in an unknown section of the forest.

David himself wrote, "Wait for the LORD and keep his way. He will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, you will see it. I have seen a wicked and ruthless man flourishing like a green tree in its native soil, but he soon passed away and was no more; though I looked for him, he could not be found" (Psalm 37:34-36). It may appear to us that those who do evil are the ones who succeed. However, that is only an illusion!

Stop and consider: Isaiah 48:22 says, "'There is no peace,' says the LORD, 'for the wicked.'" So even in life, regardless of whatever else the wicked may have, they have no peace. Psalm 73:16-20, after describing the apparent ease and prosperity of many wicked people, says, "When I tried to understand all this, it was oppressive to me till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely, you place them [the wicked] on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors! As a dream when one awakes, so when you arise, O Lord, you will despise them as fantasies." The final destiny of the wicked is certain; God's judgment will not fail.

So, remember—wait on the Lord, and keep in His way. You cannot make anyone serve the Lord, even your own loved ones; you can only be responsible for your own walk with God.

David's Grief

The soldiers were rejoicing over their victory. Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, wanted to run and tell David the good news, but Joab knew that the death of Absalom would not be good news to David. He did not want David, in the future, to be reminded of the death of his son every time he looked at Ahimaaz or Zadok, so he sent a foreigner, a Cushite, to deliver the message. Nevertheless, as Ahimaaz continued to plead, Joab relented, believing the other runner would arrive first.

Ahimaaz took a longer but quicker route, and arrived at Mahanaim before the Cushite. David's hopes rose as first Ahimaaz, then the other runner appeared. Their first words were of victory, but David's

first words were a question about Absalom. Upon hearing of Absalom's death, David began to weep and grieve. Instead of waiting for the return of the victorious troops, David retired to a private room, saying as he went, "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2 Samuel 18:33).

When Joab was informed of the king's reaction, he took action. He knew that the troops had slunk into the city as if they had run from the battle, rather than parading in victoriously to the praise of the king and the accolades of the people.

When Joab entered David's presence, he held nothing back. He told David that his actions could cost him his kingdom because:

- ☛ David had humiliated the troops, who had risked their lives to save the lives of David, his wives, his concubines, and all his children. He made them feel as if their victory was wrong.
- ☛ David made his men and their commanders feel as though they meant nothing to David, and that he would have preferred that they had all died rather than Absalom.

Joab warned David that if he did not stop wallowing in grief and go out to show his appreciation to his troops, they might desert him. Joab is a difficult character. We have read of how he served David loyally, of how he faithfully led David's army in multiple victories, and of how he sought to please David by arranging his initial reconciliation with Absalom. We have also read of his unconscionable murder of Abner, who had slain Joab's brother in self-defense, and of Joab's complicity in the murder of Uriah the Hittite. Sometimes his advice to David was good advice; sometimes it wasn't. This time it was, and David, once again listening to Joab's advice, got up and sat on his royal seat at the city gate. All the men presented themselves to David, and morale was restored.

David was emotionally devastated by Absalom's death. Yet, as Joab pointed out, he had a responsibility to all of his people. David had to set aside his personal mourning sufficiently to continue to function as Israel's king. Have you had a similar problem when you lost someone dear to you? Did you have difficulty focusing on the needs of the living—family members, friends, or co-workers? Perhaps your grief was caused by something else—a divorce, the betrayal of a friend, the rebellious actions of a child, etc. Whatever the cause, we cannot allow grief to incapacitate us. We must continue to live—live for the Lord. God has promised us His grace and strength for whatever comes our way, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). We must remember to put our trust in Him, and know that He will give us the peace that "transcends all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

Negotiations

David and his men had won the battle, and Absalom, who had begun the rebellion, was dead, but the discontent Absalom had stirred up in Israel remained. Knowing this, David did not immediately return to Jerusalem. There were some, however, who argued for his immedi-

ate return. Their reasoning was that they had no leader (Absalom was dead) and that David, after all, had been the one who had delivered them from their enemies.

While these arguments ensued, David contacted Abiathar and Zadok, the priests, and instructed them to contact the leaders of the tribe of Judah. Over twenty years earlier, after the death of Saul, David had not been willing to return from the land of the Philistines (where he had fled for safety from Saul) until the tribe of Judah was willing to welcome him and crown him king. David now turned again to Judah to be the first tribe to bring him back to Jerusalem as king. His message to them was tactful. Although Absalom's rebellion had begun in Hebron of Judah, David reminded them that they were from the same tribe as he was—they were family. If they were ready to welcome him back as king, he was willing to accept their offer.

He then extended an offer to his nephew Amasa, who had led Absalom's army in the revolt—David would make him commander of his army in place of Joab. What an act of mercy (Amasa deserved to die for treason), and what a wise political move. In winning over Amasa, David would also gain the loyalty of Amasa's men. Step by step, David was endeavoring to undo the damage Absalom had caused and to restore unity to his kingdom.

David's Return to Jerusalem

David succeeded in winning the hearts of the men of Judah, and at their invitation he and those who had fled with him began the process of returning to Jerusalem. The men of Judah met him at the Jordan River to usher him across the water and back to Jerusalem.

Just as the recounting of David's flight from Jerusalem seemed like a play, with actors moving onto the stage, saying their lines to the lead character, and then stepping back into the shadows, so did his return to Jerusalem.

The first to arrive were Shimei, accompanied by a thousand men from the tribe of Benjamin, and Ziba, steward of Saul's household. Shimei stated that he was the first person from the "whole house of Joseph" (2 Samuel 19:20)—meaning from all the tribes of Israel (other than Judah)—to welcome him back. Remember, this was the man who had cursed David and thrown rocks and dirt at him as he fled from Absalom. Now, instead of cursing David, Shimei was on his face before David, begging for his forgiveness, proclaiming him king.

Abishai was again ready to kill Shimei for his previous actions, but David, being diplomatic, pardoned him. After all, if the first of those who had rebelled against David and then sought forgiveness and reconciliation was put to death, the remainder might have feared for their own lives and not welcomed his return.

Next to meet David was Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. In our previous lesson we learned that when Mephibosheth's steward Ziba had brought supplies to aid David in his flight, Mephibosheth had not been with him (see 2 Samuel 16:1-4). Ziba had told David that Mephibosheth had stayed in Jerusalem, believing that he would be given the kingdom since he was Saul's grand-

son. However, when Mephibosheth now met David it was obvious that he had not groomed himself or washed his clothes the entire time David had been in exile. This was a sign of mourning, and it made Mephibosheth ceremonially unclean. Of course, David questioned Mephibosheth about his failure to join him in his flight. Mephibosheth replied that he had planned to go. Since he was lame, he would have had to ride his donkey—but Ziba had “betrayed” him. This may mean that Ziba had taken Mephibosheth’s personal donkey when he went to meet David, leaving him without transportation. Mephibosheth said Ziba had also slandered him in his earlier report to David.

David was faced with conflicting stories. Mephibosheth’s attitude was one of humility, submission and gratefulness for all that David had already done for him. His unkempt appearance belied the thought that he might have been seeking kingship. On the other had, Ziba had provided much-needed help when David was vulnerable. Again, David acted diplomatically. Saul’s property, which had been first given to Mephibosheth as Saul’s descendant and then given to Ziba as a reward when it appeared that Mephibosheth had betrayed David, was now to be divided equally between the two men. Mephibosheth accepted David’s decree, and David continued on.

Barzillai the Gileadite arrived next on the scene. While David was in exile in Mahanaim, Barzillai had provided for him. Although he was a very old man, Barzillai had traveled from his home to accompany David across the Jordan. In gratitude, David invited him to join him in Jerusalem, where he would provide for Barzillai. Barzillai declined because of his age, but presented an alternative—Kimham, who was quite possibly Barzillai’s son. David promised to take Kimham and do for him all that Barzillai desired. After David and all the people had been successfully escorted across the river, he gave Barzillai his blessing. Barzillai returned home while David, accompanied by Kimham, continued toward Jerusalem.

Let us remember to be thankful for the blessings the Lord freely gives us. Like Mephibosheth, we deserve nothing, but God, in His love for us, pours His blessings on us. And as Barzillai sought David’s favor for Kimham, we should remember to pray and seek God’s blessing for others.

Sheba’s Uprising

Imagine the picture—David, his private army, and the people who had fled from Jerusalem with him were escorted by “all the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel” (2 Samuel 19:40), all making the triumphal journey to Jerusalem. As they traveled along, more men from Israel arrived on the scene. Many of these had been part of Absalom’s rebellion but were now coming to acknowledge David as king. However, there was a problem. Instead of considering themselves as one nation bringing home their king, the other tribes accused the tribe of Judah of trying to take preeminence.

The tribes of Israel and the tribe of Judah began bickering with each other about who had greater claim to the king. James 3:16 says, “For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.” The discord among the men provided Sheba,

an Israelite troublemaker, an opportunity to draw men to himself. He blew a trumpet and shouted, “We have no share in David, no part in Jesse’s son! Every man to his tent, O Israel!” (2 Samuel 20:1). So the very men of Israel who had first rebelled against David, then had come to accept him as king, rebelled once again and followed Sheba. And David let them go—for the moment.

Order Is Restored

Upon David’s arrival in Jerusalem, the ten concubines that had been left to care for the palace (and that Absalom had defiled) were separated from the rest of his household and placed in permanent confinement. He provided for them throughout their lifetime, but they lived as widows. David never went to them again.

As soon as he was settled in the palace, David instructed Amasa to gather the men of Judah to him within three days. Sheba’s uprising needed to be squelched before it gained momentum.

Remember, Joab had been in charge of David’s army. However, in spite of David’s order, Joab had killed Absalom. Although David said nothing to Joab about his actions, he put Amasa in charge of the army, replacing Joab. Amasa’s appointment had accomplished a twofold purpose. It showed the rebel army that David offered them amnesty, and it showed the Israelite army that even Joab could not disobey the king’s command without suffering consequences.

When Amasa didn’t return with the men of Judah after the three days, David put Abishai in charge of his private army and sent them after Sheba. Note that when Amasa failed to return, David still did not return Joab to his former position, but Joab’s loyalty to David remained. Although not officially in charge, Joab went out with the army to get Sheba.

Are we willing to serve in the place where God puts us? Are we angry if we have served in a place of authority or prominence and then have to serve in a more humble position? Psalm 75:7 says, “He [God] brings one down, he exalts another.” This applies both to your “Christian” service and to the workplace. Colossians 3:23 says, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men.”

Did Amasa’s delay mean that his loyalty was not with David, or did it show his incompetence? Whatever it meant, Joab planned to put an end to it. When Amasa finally joined them, Joab moved as if to kiss Amasa in greeting. Instead Joab “plunged [his dagger] into [Amasa’s] belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground” (2 Samuel 20:10). While Amasa lay dying, wallowing in his own blood, Joab and Abishai went after Sheba. One of Joab’s men called for all those who were loyal to Joab and to David to follow Joab. With Amasa’s body removed from the road and covered, the army went forth under the command of Joab to put down this new rebellion.

Sheba needed to organize his army and gain more troops before engaging in battle with David’s army. He traveled north through Israel to the walled city of Abel Beth Maacah, adding men to his army as he went.

Joab and the army were not far behind. They besieged the city and began to batter the walls. Within that city lived a wise woman, who sought an audience with Joab. She explained that the city had always been peaceful and loyal, and she questioned why he wanted to destroy it. Joab explained that his purpose was not to destroy the city but to protect the king and preserve the kingdom. All he wanted was to stop this man who had rebelled against the king. If the city would hand over this one man, David's army would withdraw from the city.

The woman presented Joab's offer to the people of the city. They accepted it, cut off Sheba's head and threw it to Joab. With its leader removed, the rebellion had been diffused. Joab then blew the trumpet, and the troops withdrew. They returned to their homes, and Joab returned victorious to David, who restored him as head of the army.

David and those he appointed once again ruled the kingdom. Chaos was gone—order was restored.

Intercession Through Prayer

As we wind up this lesson, my thoughts go to the unnamed wise woman of Abel Beth Maacah who had interceded with Joab, not just for herself, but also on behalf of the entire city. Because of her intercession the entire city was saved from certain destruction. As Christians, we have the responsibility of interceding for others. As God's children, we have the privilege of going right to the throne of grace (see Hebrews 4:16). You may feel as if you are unable to help others, but the Bible tells us that our prayers make a difference (see 2 Corinthians 10:4 and James 5:16). Won't you commit yourself to pray and intercede for others on a regular basis? You'll never know what God will do until you pray.

Study Questions

Before you begin your study this week:

- ☞ Pray and ask God to speak to you through His Holy Spirit.
- ☞ Use only the Bible for your answers.
- ☞ Write down your answers and the verses you used.
- ☞ Answer the “Challenge” questions if you have the time and want to do them.
- ☞ Share your answers to the “Personal” questions with the class only if you want to share them.

First Day: Read the commentary on 2 Samuel 18-20.

1. What meaningful or new thought did you find in the commentary on 2 Samuel 18-20 or from your teacher's lecture? What personal application did you choose to apply to your life?

2. Look for a verse in the lesson to memorize this week. Write it down, carry it with you, or post it in a prominent place. Make a real effort to learn the verse and its “address” (reference of where it is found in the Bible).

Second Day: Read 2 Samuel 21-24, concentrating on chapter 21.

1. a. What problem did Israel face, and what did David do about it? (2 Samuel 21:1a)

 b. What did the Lord tell David was the reason for the famine? (2 Samuel 21:1b)

 c. Challenge: From Numbers 35:33, how does bloodshed affect the land, and what is required to atone for it?

2. a. The Gibeonites had made a treaty with Israel that granted them life (see Joshua 9), and Saul had violated this treaty by trying to annihilate them. How did David try to rectify the situation? (2 Samuel 21:2-4)

 b. What did the Gibeonites request as retribution for Saul's actions? (2 Samuel 21:5-6a)

3. a. After David handed over seven of Saul's descendants for execution, who kept vigil over their bodies? (2 Samuel 21:6b-10)

 b. After hearing of this, how did David give them a proper burial? (2 Samuel 21:11-14a)

4. Did these actions atone for the blood wrongly shed by Saul? (2 Samuel 21:14b)

5. Challenge: In 2 Samuel 21:15-22, the narrator summarizes four noteworthy battles that David and his men fought. What enemy people did Israel fight against, and who prevailed?

6. a. God holds humanity accountable for its actions. Sometimes His judgment comes soon, as with the three-year famine in Israel, but His judgment may also be delayed. What do you learn in Hebrews 9:27 about the coming judgment? How does verse 28 say we can be saved from this judgment of our sins?

- b. Personal: How do you feel about the coming judgment? Have you accepted God's gift of salvation through Christ's sacrifice for your sin?

Third Day: Review 2 Samuel 21-24, concentrating on 22:1-30.

1. a. 2 Samuel 22 contains one of the oldest major poems in the Old Testament, and it is almost the same as Psalm 18. When did David sing this song, and to whom did he sing? (2 Samuel 22:1)

b. What is the Lord to David? (2 Samuel 22:2-4)

2. a. In what situation did David call out to the Lord? (2 Samuel 22:5-7a)

b. Did God hear David's cry? (2 Samuel 22:7b)

3. a. How does 2 Samuel 22:8-16 describe the greatness of God?

b. What did the Lord do for David? Why did God do this? (2 Samuel 22:17-20)

4. a. In 2 Samuel 22:21-22a David declared that God had dealt with him according to his (David's) righteousness and because he had kept the ways of the Lord. From 2 Samuel 22:22b-25, what was David's basis for saying he had kept the ways of the Lord? What sin or evil did he say he had not done?

b. It may appear from 2 Samuel 22:24-25 that David was claiming to be justified by his own righteousness. Read Romans 4:1-8. How does the apostle Paul explain that David, who we know had sinned, could call himself righteous and blameless?

5. How is God's justice evident in His actions? (2 Samuel 22:26-30)

6. Personal: If you are a Christian, you can echo David's words in 2 Samuel 22:2-30. Choose your favorite verses and write them with your name in them, if you would like to. How does knowing that such a great God is on your side make you feel?

Fourth Day: Review 2 Samuel 21-24, concentrating on chapter 22:31-51.

1. David's song continues in 2 Samuel 22:31-51. How does God, whose way is perfect, make David's way perfect? (2 Samuel 22:31-37)

2. Since God has strengthened and equipped him, what was David able to do? (2 Samuel 22:38-46)

3. a. What very important fact about the Lord does David declare in 2 Samuel 22:47a?

b. Challenge: Read Isaiah 41:21-24. Why is this fact about God so important?

4. Why is David determined to praise God to every person? (2 Samuel 22:47b-51)

5. Personal: Write a prayer or a psalm of praise to God here. Specifically list what He has done for you personally. Are you willing and eager to tell other people these things? Whom will you tell?

Fifth Day: Review 2 Samuel 21-24, concentrating on chapter 23.

1. Second Samuel 23:1-7 are David's final solemn declaration to Israel. To whom does David give the credit for his success? (2 Samuel 23:1)

2. Who is the source of the declaration that David has for Israel? (2 Samuel 23:2-3a)

3. a. What did the Lord say enables a king to rule righteously? (2 Samuel 23:3b)

b. What is the result for his people when a king rules righteously? (2 Samuel 23:4)

4. a. In light of the Lord's words about righteous leadership, how does David evaluate his record? (2 Samuel 23:5)

b. In contrast, what is the fate of evil men? (2 Samuel 23:6-7)

5. Challenge: 2 Samuel 23:8-39 is a list of David's mighty men and some of their exploits. A parallel list is found in 1 Chronicles 11. What does 1 Chronicles 11:10 say these mighty men did for David's reign?

6. Personal: David was successful as Israel's king because he ruled "in the fear of God" (2 Samuel 23:3). Whatever we do in our lives will be judged successful or unsuccessful in the eyes of the Lord for the same reason. What does Colossians 3:23-24 say about this? Is this how you live your life?

Sixth Day: Review 2 Samuel 21-24, concentrating on chapter 24.

1. a. The Bible does not tell us for what sin the Lord's anger burned against Israel this time. What did he incite David to do? (2 Samuel 24:1)

b. Challenge: Read Exodus 30:11-12 and Numbers 1:1-2. From these verses, does it seem that census-taking was sinful in and of itself?

2. a. When David commanded Joab to take the census, what was Joab's question? What decision did David make? (2 Samuel 24:2-4)

b. Challenge: Read and summarize 1 Chronicles 21:3 and 27:23-24, which speak of this same event. Some Bible commentators say that David's sin may have been that he was acting in pride—wanting to know exactly how many men were available for his army—rather than depending on the faithfulness of God to keep His promise to make Israel "as numerous as the stars in the sky," and the power of God, who can "save by many or few" (1 Samuel 14:6).

3. After Joab reported the number of men to David, what did David realize, and what did he do about it? (2 Samuel 24:9-10)

4. a. What three punishments did the Lord allow David to choose from? (2 Samuel 24:11-13)

b. Which one did David choose, and why? (2 Samuel 24:14)

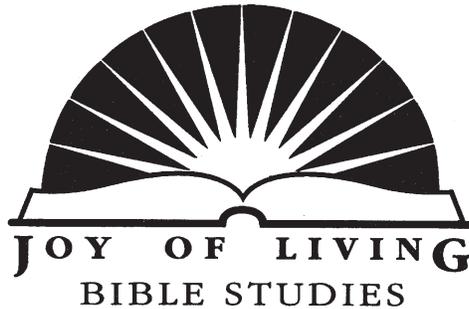
5. a. Why did the Lord stop the angel before he destroyed Jerusalem? (2 Samuel 24:15-16)

b. What did David do as he saw his people's suffering? (2 Samuel 24:17)

c. In response to David's prayer, what did the Lord command him to do so that the plague would end? (2 Samuel 24:18-25)

6. Personal: This terrible period of punishment and death was ended by David's repentance and sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22 tells us, "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Verse 28 goes on to say, "Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people." Have you repented of your sin and accepted God's gift of forgiveness? Who do you know that needs to hear about this gift?

2 Samuel Lesson 10



2 Samuel 21-24

In our society today, many Christian principles and truths are being rejected or perverted by the New Age movement, whose central precepts have been described as “drawing on both Eastern and Western spiritual and metaphysical traditions and infusing them with influences from self-help and motivational psychology...It aims to create ‘a spirituality without borders or confining dogmas’ that is inclusive and pluralistic.”¹

This movement not only sounds horrible (which it is), but it is also deceptive—it often appears “good.” It has so permeated our culture that many Christians—those who don’t study God’s Word—don’t know what is true and what isn’t:

- ☛ They don’t understand that Christian freedom isn’t freedom to do whatever a person feels like doing, but rather is freedom from sin in order to do right.
- ☛ They believe God’s mercy can be extended without justice; they forget that it cost the death of His Son for God to be able to extend mercy to sinful humanity and still maintain His justice.
- ☛ They forget that sin has far-reaching consequences, and that merely saying “I’m sorry” or “My bad” doesn’t remove the effect their sin caused.
- ☛ They forget that everything God says is true and just.

I was recently teaching a group, and to make a point I brought up the fact that God instituted the death sentence for murder (not for accidental killing or for killing in warfare; see Exodus 21:12-13). One woman said she had a hard time with that. She thought that the death penalty for murder was only to be applied under Mosaic Law, and that the New Testament taught that we were to forgive. I explained that over fifteen hundred years before the Mosaic Law was given (when Noah was leaving the ark and mankind was being given a second chance), God said, “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God has God made man” (Genesis 9:6). This is not revenge, and there can be forgiveness, but God establishes government for the orderly ruling of humanity (Romans 13:1-7), and consequences must follow disobedience. Ecclesiastes 8:11 warns us, “When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, the hearts of the people are filled with schemes to do wrong.” God knows what He is doing and why He instituted certain rules.

1. Nevill Drury. *The New Age: The History of a Movement*. (London, England, UK: Thames and Hudson, 2004).

Famine in Israel

And so we come to the famine in the land of Israel.² Thankfully in our country in our generation we have not experienced a real famine, where there is not enough food to sustain the life of people and animals. After three years, David realized this was not a natural phenomenon, and he sought the Lord to see what had caused the famine and what could be done about it. The answer was not long in coming.

Around four hundred years earlier, when Joshua led the people in conquering the land, the Gibeonites (one of the peoples who had inhabited Canaan) had believed that God was going to give the Israelites the land and had tricked them into sparing their lives. A covenant was made, and God instructed Israel to honor that covenant (see Joshua 9).

During Saul’s reign, however, he decided to destroy all the Gibeonites. Only the ones who had fled beyond the borders of Israel escaped. Because Saul broke that covenant and shed innocent blood, the land was polluted and the famine was destroying the Israelites.

Numbers 35:33 says, “Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.” In 2 Samuel 21:5-6, the Gibeonites requested only what the law demanded. Seven of Saul’s male offspring³ were to be slain at Gibeah, Saul’s hometown. David did as they requested, but spared Jonathan’s son Mephibosheth because of his promise to Jonathan (see 1 Samuel 20:12-17).

After the requisite time David had their bones gathered, and, along with the bones of Saul and Jonathan that he gathered from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead (who had buried them after taking them from the wall in Beth Shan), buried them in the tomb of Saul’s father Kish. Then God answered prayer and the famine was averted.

We may not always like the way the government runs, but we are commanded by God to obey its laws unless it causes us to disobey the Lord (see Acts 4:19; 5:29). Thankfully in our country we are able to vote, run for office and influence our government in a godly way. We are also commanded to pray for our government (see 1 Timothy 2:1-2). Are you regularly praying for those in authority over you?

2. The final four chapters of 2 Samuel are an epilogue, providing supplementary information to the history covered in 1 and 2 Samuel. It is unknown exactly when in the life of David the events in these chapters took place.
3. Seven represents completeness. (*The NIV Study Bible*. See note on 2 Samuel 21:6.)

The Descendents of Rapha

Second Samuel 21:15-22 tells of several battles with the Philistines that involved skirmishes with Rephaites, or descendants of Rapha (which may be another name for the Anakites, or related to the Anakites).¹ These unusually large people inhabited some parts of Canaan. Some people deny that they ever existed; however, the Bible mentions them in many passages. These giants ranged in size. Goliath was roughly nine feet tall (see 1 Samuel 17:4), while Og king of Bashan may have been closer to thirteen feet (see Deuteronomy 3:11). The fact that groups of people collectively known as pygmies, who are less than 4 feet 9 inches tall, still exist today should reinforce the truth that people groups over 7 feet tall existed in the past.

By faith in the Lord God, David, when he was but a youth, had killed Goliath. However, these huge men were fierce fighters. David, who had gone with his men to fight against the Philistines, became exhausted in one of these battles, and another of the Rephaites had determined to kill him. David's nephew Abishai (Joab's brother) rescued David. After witnessing this close call, and knowing David's importance as leader of Israel, his men swore that he should never again go into battle.

A Psalm of Praise

In 2 Samuel 22 we find a beautiful psalm of praise that David wrote when the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. This is also included in the Bible as Psalm 18. David wrote this in response to his deliverance from physical enemies. Most of us have probably never been in that type of physical danger; however, we have a spiritual adversary who is determined to bring about our destruction. As we look at David's psalm, we can see how the truths he expressed apply to our own lives.

David said the Lord is his rock, his fortress and his deliverer. Let us look at a rock—not a pebble or a small stone, but a large rock.

- ☛ When we build a house, we want to build it on bedrock, not on sand (see Matthew 7:24-27). Why? ...because it is firm and won't shift. Our God and His Word do not shift and change (see James 1:17). We can build our lives on His Word. Then when the storms and floods of life sweep down on us (and they do come), we are not swept away—we will stand.
- ☛ When we battle (and we do battle spiritually), if we are on a rock it places us above our enemies and gives our feet secure footing so we can stand and withstand the enemy (see Psalm 27:5-6; Ephesians 6:11-18).
- ☛ Finally, a great rock can supply shade from the sun (see Isaiah 32:2b). When people and circumstances seem to beat down on us like the unrelenting sun in a desert, we can find shelter in the Lord. Psalm 91:1-2 says, "He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.'"

1. Ibid. See note on 2 Samuel 21:16.

God is also our fortress, our stronghold. Many believers have been saved from physical harm because of the Lord, but many have also suffered greatly for Him (see Hebrews 11:32-39)—yet they are triumphant. Their physical bodies may perish, but their souls will live with Him forever (see 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Do you dwell—that is continually live—in fellowship with the Lord, so that whatever comes your way, you live triumphantly (see Romans 8:37)? If not, why don't you begin today—right now? Ask God to help you keep your mind on Him so that you are aware of Him in all you do.

Trust God for Deliverance

David next described the mortal danger he experienced and the mighty deliverance God provided. Again, you may never have been in such a dangerous situation, but perhaps you've experienced or are experiencing such deep depression that it feels as if the torrents of destruction have overwhelmed you. In your distress, call out to the Lord—as David did. God is able and will, in His time, bring you up out of those deep waters. He and His Word will be a shield to you from the fiery darts—condemning, hopeless words—that the enemy of your soul throws at you. He will bring you out to a spacious place.

I personally have experienced this. I suffered from depression and anxiety for years, even after I came to know the Lord. Sometimes the fear would be so great and would overwhelm me, so that I couldn't even voice my cry to the Lord, but my heart cried out to Him. In the midst of my fear, I trusted Him (see Psalm 56:3). I continued to read and study His Word, and I discovered the wonderful truth in Romans 8:28-29, that God would work everything for my good to make me like Himself. Oh, how I wanted to be like Jesus, to be all that He wanted me to be. One evening, as the fear began to descend on me, I knelt beside my bed, lifted my arms to the Lord and prayed, "If this is what it takes to make me like You, so be it." And I began to praise His name. The fear and anxiety fled. I still have times when I feel discouraged (when my eyes are on me instead of the Lord), or when I get concerned about some situation (when I look at the situation rather than the Lord), but never again have I been afflicted with the fear and anxiety that I once lived in.

Like David, as I have learned to abide, to dwell, to live in the Lord, to trust Him even when I don't understand my situation, His peace (even in the midst of chaos) has become mine. As long as we live in this world, there will always be times of difficulty, times of trial (see John 16:33), but the Lord will always bring us through to a "spacious place." He will always work everything for our good. We can always trust Him.

Righteousness Apart from Works

In 2 Samuel 22:21 David stated, "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me." This may leave you puzzled—you know that David was far from righteous. So, what could he have meant? From studying David's life and from the testimony of Scripture we know that David was a man who trusted the Lord. The kings of the surrounding peoples did not honor or worship the Lord, but David did. He says that he did not do evil by "by turning from" his God. Not once do we

hear of David serving another god. When he sinned, he repented and confessed his sin, and God forgave him.

Paul writes in Romans 4:3 that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. He continues in verse 5-8, "To the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.'"

Look at your own life. Have you trusted Jesus to forgive you and to take away your sin? He counts that faith and trust as righteousness. But God doesn't stop there. He begins to work in us and to change us, to make us like Himself. Also, note that God deals with us individually.

I have seven adult children. As they were growing up, I was amazed that the same two parents raising these children in the same environment could produce children with such varied personalities. I had to deal with each one according to who they were. One child was very hard headed, and I had to discipline him almost daily. Another was always trying to please, and was just crushed if she felt that she didn't meet our expectations. I rarely had to be stern with her. Yet another was all over the place and into everything, so I had to keep an extra close watch on her. Each child was different, and so the way I handled each was different.

I am grateful that God deals with us as individuals, that He knows just what I need and how best to work in my life. He is the one who equips me to triumph in the situations that arise in this world and the one who prepares me for eternity.

The Oracle of David

In 2 Samuel 23:1-7 we are given David's final words, probably his final psalm. In the first line, David states that his words are God's words—an oracle. Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is God-breathed." And 2 Peter 1:20-21 tells us, "No prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." David wanted all who read or heard this psalm to know who had exalted him, blessed him and anointed him. It was not the one of the gods of the nations round about them; it was the Most High, who is the God of Jacob, the God of Israel.

More and more people groups are making the United States their home, and they are bringing their cultures and their gods with them. With the influence of New Age beliefs and their view of tolerance and love, many people believe that the god or gods that other religions worship are just another identity for the only God there is. I have even heard Christians say that "Allah" is just another name for God. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said,

It is certainly true that the word 'Allah' is the Arabic word for deity. [Some] suggest that the Arabic word can be used as a generic term for deity. [They] argue that Allah can be used in a generic way to refer to any (presumably monotheistic) deity. This case will be very difficult to make. Language, theology,

and worship are so closely intertwined that it is difficult, if not impossible, to argue for a generic use of Allah. Further evidence against this is the fact that non-Arabic speaking Muslims also use Allah when referring to their god. [Others] make the case that Allah and God refer to the same deity. This represents a huge problem for both Muslims and Christians. Allah is not a personal deity in the sense that the God of the Bible is. Furthermore, the Qur'an explicitly denies that Allah has a son, and Islam considers the notion of a triune God to be blasphemy.

Thus, from its very starting point Islam denies what Christianity takes as its central truth claim—the fact that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of the Father. If Allah has no son by definition, Allah is not the God who revealed himself in the Son."¹

I am glad that David was careful to state exactly who had raised him up and made him ruler over Israel, who had given him songs to sing, and who spoke through him—it was the Most High, the God of Jacob, the Rock of Israel. God's message through David was that if a person rules in the fear of God, he is a blessing, and he will cause his land to be blessed. Throughout the ages, God's Word has proven true.

David's Mighty Men

Second Samuel 23:8-29 gives a partial list of David's mighty men and describes some of their exploits. Verses 13-17 give an example of their deep love for and loyalty to him. At the time of the event, David's hometown of Bethlehem was in the hands of the Philistines. David commented how he longed for a drink of water from the well in Bethlehem. Three of his mighty men took it upon themselves to infiltrate the enemy camp, obtain some of the water, and take it back to David.

When David discovered how they had risked their lives to obtain the water for him, he refused to drink it. He said it was too precious; it was as if it were their blood, since they had risked their lives to obtain it. And so, he poured it out as an offering to the Lord.

God's Wrath Against Israel

In the final chapter of 2 Samuel, we see that the Lord was angry with Israel and incited David to number them, to take a census of Israel and Judah. First Chronicles chapter 21 tells of the same incident, noting that Satan rose up against Israel and incited David. These passages might seem contradictory...if you don't look at God's Word as a whole.

Satan is crafty; however, his craftiness cannot be compared to God's wisdom and knowledge. God even uses him to accomplish His purposes. At first glance, when you read the opening chapter of the book of Job, it almost appears that Satan taunted God into allowing him to afflict Job. However, if you look closely, you will notice that it is God that brings Job into the conversation. Part of God's plan was to bless Job, to bless all of those who, through the centuries, have benefited from the book of Job, and to glorify His name. Now you know

1. From the sermon, "What Does God Care What We Call Him?" By Albert Mohler, President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (April 4, 2008), posted on Christianity.com.

that Satan didn't plan for any of that to happen—but God used him to accomplish just that!

David instructed Joab (who tried to dissuade him) to number the fighting men of Israel. According to Exodus 30:11-12 and Numbers 1:1-2, a census in and of itself was not wrong. However, if a census was taken, it was required that each person counted was to pay the Lord a ransom for his life—otherwise a plague would come upon them. Nothing is mentioned about Joab collecting this ransom. Also, from Joab's dialog with David, it appears that David wanted to number the fighting men to determine his military might—thus placing his trust in their number and strength rather than in the Lord.

Nearly ten months later, when Joab finished with the census, David was stricken with guilt and asked the Lord's forgiveness. When we who have put our trust in Jesus Christ ask God to forgive us, He does it, and fellowship with Him will be restored. Often, however, there are still consequences from our sin (such as the alcoholic who has his sin forgiven and has a new lease on life, but may still have to deal with liver damage from the alcohol). God gave David a choice—would it be three years of famine, three months of being swept away before his enemies with their swords overtaking them, or three days of the sword of the Lord (i.e. days of plague throughout the land)? David threw himself on God's mercy, preferring to fall into God's merciful hands rather than into men's violent hands.

And thus the plague began. David and the elders of Israel were gathered together in Jerusalem, clothed in sackcloth. Seventy thousand people throughout the land died. At the end of the three-day time period, as the angel was poised, ready to strike Jerusalem, the Lord in His mercy halted him. At that moment David looked up and saw the angel of the Lord hovering over Jerusalem, and he fell down before the Lord and said, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family" (2 Samuel 24:17).

God instructed David through the prophet Gad to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place where the Lord halted the plague.¹ As we will see, God had prepared the way for David to accomplish what He told him to do. Has God asked you to do something—something that seems impossible to accomplish? Whatever God calls you to do, He will make the way for you to do it. Think of the Israelites fleeing from Egypt. God parted the Red Sea for them (see Exodus 14).

Araunah and his sons had been on the threshing floor threshing wheat when they turned and saw the angel of the Lord (see 1 Chronicles 21:20). Araunah's sons hid, but as Araunah turned, David was approaching with his request to purchase this piece of land to build an altar, to offer a sacrifice to stop the plague. Being aware of impending doom, Araunah was ready not just to sell the land to David, but to give David the land, his oxen for the sacrifice and his sledges and ox yokes for the wood to burn the offering.

However, David was not willing to offer to the Lord what wasn't his own, nor would he offer a burnt offering of something that cost him

nothing. Thus he purchased the land and the oxen from Araunah at a fair price.² The burnt offering was to make atonement for his sin. God showed that He accepted it by sending fire from heaven to consume it (see 1 Chronicles 21:26).

The End of David's Story

And thus the book of 2 Samuel ends, but it is not the end of David's story. First Chronicles and 1 Kings tell of the vast preparations David made in order that his son Solomon could eventually build the temple. First Kings also tells of the attempted coup by David's son Adonijah, and how this forced David to immediately crown Solomon king of all Israel.

First Chronicles 29:26-28 sums up David's life, saying, "David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. He ruled over Israel for forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded him as king."

But even this is not the end of David's story. Over nine hundred years later, in fulfillment of God's promise to David, a child—a descendant of David—was born to a virgin in Bethlehem. This child was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came to pay the price for our sin and to reconcile us to God.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ paid the price for your sin when He died on the cross? And that He rose from the dead and is now seated in heaven at the right hand of God the Father? Do you believe Ephesians 2:8-9, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast"? Why don't you take a moment now to thank Him for all He has done for you.

And now, the finish of David's story; it is our finish, too, if we've trusted Jesus Christ, the offspring of David, to forgive our sin. Hear the words of the apostle John in Revelation 21:1-5,

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End..."

This is the end of the study on 2 Samuel. There are no Study Questions for Lesson 10.

1. The threshing floor of Araunah would later become the site of the temple (see 1 Chronicles 21:28—22:1).

2. Second Samuel 24:24 gives the price David paid for the threshing floor and oxen; 1 Chronicles 21:25 gives the price for the threshing floor, oxen, and the encircling property on which the temple would eventually be built.

2 SAMUEL

Commentary by Nancy J. Collins

Daily study questions by Kathy Rowland

The book of 2 Samuel continues the narrative begun in 1 Samuel, with David being acclaimed king in Israel. He makes Jerusalem his royal city and brings the Ark of the Lord there. We see the glory and success of David's reign, as well as his weaknesses and failures. Within the pages of 2 Samuel God uncovers David's humanity. You will discover that this "man after God's own heart" (see Acts 13:22) was a sinful human, like us all, who had to depend on God's mercy and faithfulness.

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Nancy J. Collins is the director of **Joy of Living Bible Studies**. She has been a speaker and Bible teacher for over 40 years, ministering to both children and adults. Nancy holds a B. A. in Biblical Studies, and is the author of 3 complete Joy of Living courses, the commentary portion of 5 Joy of Living courses, the study questions for over 10 Joy of Living courses, and 3 Joy of Living pre-school studies. She also co-authored the *Leadership Training Guide*, and has edited many of the Joy of Living courses. She and her husband, Chuck, live in Southern California. They have 7 children and numerous grandchildren.

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