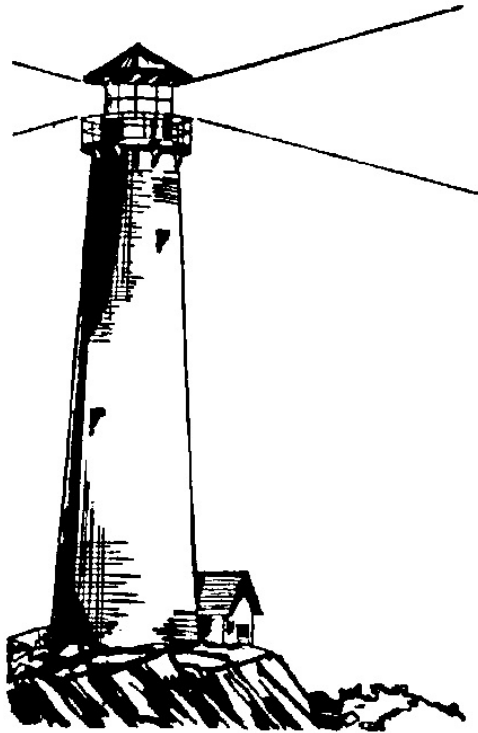


CHURCH OF GOD

SUNDAY SCHOOL QUARTERLY



**DAVID, A KING AFTER
GOD'S OWN HEART**

DAVID, A KING AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART

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NOTE TO THE TEACHERS

This booklet is intended to be a *help* in preparing Sunday school lessons. The title, subject, and topics are only the menu. It is *your responsibility* to prepare the meal.

The proper ingredients are the salty inspirations of the Holy Spirit, seasoned with His grace. Bake the ingredients at a hot temperature in the oven of prayer. The time-tested recipe for preparing a nutritious meal is found in 2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

LESSON 1

DAVID IS ANOINTED KING

Scripture Text: 1 Samuel 16

Man's judgment cannot be compared with God's, because man cannot see as God sees. Knowing this, Samuel sought God's counsel in all matters, not trusting his own. This was his secret to success as a prophet. This principle is still true today. The same success will result from our following it. We cannot afford not to follow it. Possession of the Holy Spirit is a requirement for making the right choices.

MEMORY VERSE: For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.

—1 Samuel 16:7

The Lord's Plan

1 Samuel 16:1-5 How long wilt thou mourn? God had rejected Saul from reigning over Israel. No doubt Samuel's grief was hindering his service to God, was filling too much of his thoughts. He could do nothing to change Saul's condition. The Lord knew that Samuel would benefit from having some task to do. **Fill thine horn with oil, and go ... I have provided me a king.** God cared about Saul, too, but He saw the whole picture. He was going forward. God will allow nothing man attempts to alter His plan. He put His plan into Samuel's hands to help carry it out. God's plan is always definite and complete. One of Jesse's sons was to be king. It belonged to God to provide or choose a ruler. The ruler was His to serve His purpose.

Samuel's last message from God to Saul had been very offensive to Saul. It had caused so much tension that "Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death" (1 Samuel 15:35). Saul felt jealousy toward whoever would take his place and suspicion toward Samuel, the probable one to anoint a new king. Samuel feared for his life should he do it with Saul's knowledge. His coming caused trembling in Bethlehem. The elders were thinking of Samuel's authority, and Saul's feelings, and were fearful to make any move. The Lord shielded the anointing from Saul's detection by ordering a sacrifice at the same time. Samuel prepared as he was told.

Jesse and sons and others must be sanctified to partake of the sacrifice. This was an outward ceremonial cleansing of the body and clothing to be

prepared for worship. It was symbolic of the inner heart cleansing we must have to truly worship. Worship must come from a pure heart (John 4:24).

Seven Sons Pass By

1 Samuel 16:6-10 The first to come before Samuel was the eldest son, Eliab. Samuel saw his fine physique and handsome face. "What a king he will make!" he thought. God thought differently because He saw differently. He looked on Eliab's heart, which was not as beautiful as his body. In the heart is the preparation for life, whatever course that life follows. It was the same with all seven sons. Try to imagine how perplexing this must have been for Samuel. Yet he listened and waited on the Lord.

The Lord knew whom He wanted for king before they passed in review, but He let Samuel view all before revealing His choice. Why? Perhaps it was to clarify Samuel's thoughts, to insure against later doubts as to the correctness of the choice. Perhaps to illustrate forcibly that outward appearances are not trustworthy guides. Perhaps to give Samuel an opportunity to exercise his will—whether to choose as he wished or to wait for God's Word. We have that power. God does not take it from us and overstep our will. If we make a choice by ourselves, we must take the consequence of that choice. It is good to listen to God's leading and obey Him.

David Is Chosen

1 Samuel 16:11-13 **Are here all?** If so, had he misunderstood the Lord? No, there was one more, the youngest. He was keeping the sheep and was probably the least important to Jesse. However, he was most important to God. He too was **of a beautiful countenance, and goodly** outwardly. The Lord chose him for his obedient heart (1 Samuel 13:14; 15:22-23). The Lord loves obedience above all other things. He did not have Saul's faults of rebellion and stubbornness. Samuel anointed him. Now he was king, although he did not rule actively until some time later. **The Spirit of the LORD came upon David** and remained.

1 Samuel 16:14-23 God's plan for David to rule His kingdom was in motion. He was summoned to play his harp before Saul and to be **his armour-bearer**. This gave him a useful acquaintance with the king's office. God was with him in slaying the lion and the bear before he faced Goliath and slew him (1 Samuel 17:34-36). God used these and many more victorious battles to prepare David to be Israel's greatest king.

What qualifications fit a man to rule a nation? With what did the Lord

qualify both Saul and David? (See 1 Samuel 10:10; 16:13.) This is more than the attributes usually considered essential today. God wants a disposition to obey Him rooted in our innermost beings.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The diamond cannot be polished without friction
nor man perfected without trials.**



LESSON 2

DAVID MADE KING OF JUDAH

Scripture Texts: Acts 13:21-23; 2 Samuel 1:11-16; 2:1-11

Today's lesson begins in an unsettled and fierce time in the history of Israel. The king was dead in battle. No king ruled for a time. Executions were made without trial or punishment. Last week we studied how God anointed David king over the people whom He had said would be a peculiar treasure unto Himself above all people. God's hand continues to be manifest in today's lesson. Now we look into the latter forty years of David's life.

MEMORY VERSE: And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?

—2 Samuel 1:14

David, Seed of Jesus Our Savior

Acts 13:21-23 This study should yield rich spiritual blessings to us. David was a man after God's own heart. He was the greatest king Israel ever had. He was an ancestor of Christ, Jesus often being called the Son of David. David's kingdom was a type of Christ's kingdom.

If we can find what in David's character pleased God, we will have examples to help us make our lives more pleasing to Him. There will also be dark spots, useful only as warnings. Let us watch for incidents revealing traits of David's character, that we may turn the facts into spiritual lessons to inspire us to more godly living.

Mourning for Saul and Jonathan

2 Samuel 1:11-16 The history in 2 Samuel follows immediately that in 1 Samuel. The last chapter there recorded the death of Saul and his three sons in Mount Gilboa. David, at the time, was farther south in battle with the Amalekites. Now he has withdrawn to the Philistine city of Ziklag.

A young Amalekite came to him with a story of having killed King Saul on Mount Gilboa. He brought Saul's crown and bracelet to David. By doing this, he sought to gain David's favor for having killed the enemy who, many times, had sought to kill David. But the motives of David's heart were not seeking revenge. Greater than love for himself was his love for his God, for

his friend, and for his nation, Israel. He rent his clothes (a Hebrew sign of sorrow), **mourned, and wept, and fasted until even.** David gave the command to kill the man who claimed to have killed Saul. Why? **For thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the LORD'S anointed,** the one chosen by God to rule Israel.

David's mourning for Jonathan, his dear friend, is understandable. But why should he honor Saul, his enemy and would-be murderer? Why would he grieve for him, punish his confessed slayer, and thank those who buried him? **Second Samuel 1:14** gives the reason. David's loyalty was not to this man alone, but to the One who had chosen the man. This is the way we should respect God's choice today. We have opportunities and relationships where we can show such respect. (See Romans 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.) Everyone, whether saint or sinner, can learn a great lesson from the experience of this Amalekite. God will deal with His anointed, but man had better not! This certainly refers to a God-called pastor who is anointed by God for the leadership of His people in spiritual things. To work against a man anointed by God will bring spiritual death as suddenly and surely as physical death was delivered to this man.

David's grief for Saul was genuine. It was consistent with his usual behavior concerning Saul. He never tried to take advantage of him or seek revenge. He did not show any personal joy over Saul's downfall. David showed a high quality of forgiveness. How would we do under similar circumstances?

David Enquires of the Lord

2 Samuel 2:1-4 David at Ziklag wondered what his next step should be. He did not go to men but to the all-wise One. The Lord told him to go to Hebron in Judah. He obeyed.

The men of Judah came, leaders representing the people of the tribe of Judah. **They anointed David king over the house of Judah.** No doubt they had some knowledge of David's earlier accomplishments, his relations with King Saul, and his anointing as king years before (Lesson 1). Samuel had, at the command of God, anointed him while he was still a shepherd lad.

2 Samuel 2:5-11 Men of Jabeshgilead, from the land where Saul was killed, had buried Saul and his sons. They were men from the other part of Israel. David thanked them for their kindness to Saul for burying him. He gave them a broad hint that Judah had anointed him to be their king, and that they also made David their king.

David showed patience and faith in God for seven years and a half, waiting on God's next move. He was sure that the God who had started this work could also finish what He had begun. David knew he had been chosen by God and anointed king of all Israel years before, but he did not press his claim. Even when Abner made Ishbosheth king over the rest of Israel, David did not contest it. Even though war followed, it was of Abner's making, not of Joab's, David's captain. **David enquired of the LORD.** Therein laid his secret.

Our Part

We are sometimes tempted to take things out of God's hands into ours to hasten an end we think right. Abraham did. Jacob did. Peter did. How did their self-efforts succeed? Self-efforts show a weakness in faith. If God has promised or planned a thing, He will bring it to pass. Our part is to trust, pray, and obey. David's method was "more of God and less of me." It surely was successful.

JUST A THOUGHT

It is never the right time to do the wrong thing.



LESSON 3

DAVID MADE KING OF ISRAEL

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 3:8-11, 27-32; 5:1-12

What type of man was Abner, Saul's military leader? His anger against the house of Saul was so great that he betrayed his nation. His desire for turning the kingdom to David was motivated by personal revenge. He had known God's plan for David, but he had never aligned himself with it. We find very little in Abner's character to admire, but very much to shun.

We find here several scenes from David's life that reveal his character: his family life, his reactions to murders, and how he regarded the Lord's place in the ruling of a nation. We see some of the Lord's response to him, and we see much to praise in David's life.

MEMORY VERSE: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
—Luke 1:32

Abner Turns to David and Is Slain

2 Samuel 3:8-11 Abner, captain of Saul's army, had made Saul's son, Ishbosheth king of Israel, that is, of the tribes exclusive of Judah. He had done it partly from loyalty to Saul. Perhaps also from the desire for power, for Ishbosheth seems to have been weak and prone to yield to Abner.

But one day Ishbosheth accused Abner of immorality concerning Saul's concubine. This so angered Abner that he turned his support from his king and vowed to turn the kingdom from Saul's family to David. He declared this to accord with God's stated purpose for David—as **the LORD hath sworn to David**. His rage frightened Ishbosheth speechless. The enemy uses God's words to his advantage many times.

Abner sent word to David of his intention and received a favorable, but conditional, reply. He sought the approval of the elders of Israel and especially of Benjamin, the tribe from which King Saul had come. He used two arguments: (1) their former desire for David to be their king, and (2) the Lord's purpose for David (2 Samuel 3:17-18). Then he went to David and agreed to put the kingdom under his rule. David sent Abner away with his blessing.

2 Samuel 3:27-32 When Joab heard this, he was very displeased. Abner was his old enemy and slayer of his brother (2 Samuel 2:18-24). It was

probably now that he came to be his rival. Joab called him back from his homeward trip. On the pretense of a private conversation, Joab led Abner aside and killed him. Thus, he gained revenge for his brother's death and destroyed his rival. When David heard of it, he testified that he, or his kingdom, Judah, was guiltless of the blood of Abner. He showed his attitude toward murder in his prayer of concern (**verse 29**).

Abner was Saul's captain when Saul pursued David to kill him. Yet David mourned his death as that of a dear friend. He wept in real sorrow. He called the nation to mourning. They shared his feelings. David was admired and approved by his people, as we read in 2 Samuel 3:1 and 36.

With the strength of Abner gone, Ishbosheth became weaker than ever and his kingdom disorganized. In an overzealous attempt to make way for Israel to come under David's strong leadership, two of Ishbosheth's captains slew him. Thinking to gain approval, they brought his head to David. They knew little about David. Instead of praising, he ordered their execution.

Israel Anoints David King

2 Samuel 5:1-5 Now in need of a leader and prepared by Abner's negotiations, the elders of Israel came to David with three reasons he should be their king: (1) he and they shared common ancestry—the same **bone** and **flesh** (Abraham and Jacob); (2) David previously had done good service to these tribes under Saul (1 Samuel 18:12-16); and (3) it was the Lord's will that David be **captain over Israel**.

David made a league with them. No details are given. No doubt he promised to be a good king, and they promised to be loyal subjects. This would compare to the type of league we made with Christ when we came into His kingdom. **They anointed David king over Israel.** This anointing was done by men, but was in agreement with the choice of God signified earlier by the anointing He commanded Samuel to perform (1 Samuel, Chapter 16).

Acknowledging God's Hand

Abner and Joab each thought he saw problems ahead. Each used his own plan and effort to solve them. Baanah and Rechab allowed their own thoughts to control their actions. This was not necessary in order for God to give David the kingdom. God's power is not dependent upon our efforts. True, we can limit Him by doubt and disobedience, but He does not need our self efforts.

Consider Elijah pouring water over the sacrifice before praying for fire.

He removed all suspicion of man's help that God's action might be plainly seen. How does this compare with the actions of Baanah, Rechab, Abner, and Joab? God will work His plan unaided by our efforts. The only help He needs from us is obedience to Him alone.

2 Samuel 5:6-12 In these verses we find the following facts: (1) David grew great; (2) the Lord was with him; (3) David perceived that the Lord had established him as king; and (4) David knew the blessings upon him and the kingdom were for Israel's sake, not his. God directed David's path.

David's Response

The blind and the lame. This passage may be puzzling to many. Some suggest that the Jebusites thought David weak, so they put lame and nearly blind ones to defend Jerusalem. This was probably an exaggeration. They taunted him that to come in, he must overcome these weak ones. David took the challenge and smote them at the watercourse of the wall.

David's reign over Judah was administered from Hebron, a town some twelve miles south of Jerusalem. To rule all Israel, he moved to Zion, the eastern hill of Jerusalem. This is a type of Christ's spiritual kingdom. (Read Romans 11:26; Hebrews 12:22; Revelation 14:1.)

The LORD God of hosts was with him. No wonder David **grew great**. He **perceived that the LORD had established him as king**. This is valuable insight for any person to possess—to recognize God's hand in his accomplishments and not proudly take glory to himself. If we will meet His conditions, God will do for us as He did for David.

JUST A THOUGHT

**If you have God's promise for a thing,
isn't that enough?**



LESSON 4

DISASTER WHILE MOVING THE ARK

Scripture Text: 1 Chronicles 13:1-14

The Ark had been gone from Shiloh for twenty years. With the Ark gone, the years had been long and tiresome to Israel. Today's lesson teaches of some dangers in trying to move the Presence of God by our own methods. We find that new and more modern ways will not bring the approval of God. God has a means of letting us know when He is pleased or displeased with the way we handle His ark.

MEMORY VERSE: Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. —Psalm 33:8

Man's Plan to Move the Ark

1 Chronicles 13:1-6 The Ark had been gone from Shiloh, then the center of worship, for twenty years. It had been resting at Kirjath-jearim. It was a sad twenty years spiritually for Israel. Times are always long and sad and disastrous when a people forget God and let family altars and true worship decay. Nothing can make up for this loss, no material prosperity, or scientific progress. The bottom falls out when God is taken away. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.

David consulted ... with every leader ... If it seem good unto you, and that it be of the LORD. This was good, but it was not the best way to arrive at a decision. (Compare 2 Samuel 2:1 and 5:23.) The plan to **bring the ark of God** home was a good one. The method was unwise. The Ark was important. It was the most sacred article in the Tabernacle of the Lord and was meant to rest in the most sacred place—the Holy of Holies. It was to be visited once a year by the high priest after he was sanctified by careful cleansings. From the mercy seat on top of the Ark, God spoke to him.

In that time of the Law, the Ark was a vital connection between man and God, a symbol of the presence of God. It was a type of the closest union of God and man, which we now have through the infilling of the Holy Spirit. Israel needed the Ark. God met them there. **David gathered all Israel together**—representatives from all the people. **From Shihor to Hemath** (from the extreme south to the extreme north). This large undertaking involved the serious attention of all the nation.

God's Way Not Man's Way

1 Chronicles 13:7-10 The important task was carefully planned. It must be done in the best way. (God's plan for moving the Ark was given in Exodus 25:10-16.) They provided a **new cart** never before used. Uzza and Ahio drove the oxen. Organized musicians brought music with instruments and singing in which all joined, including King David. They praised God as they went to Abinadab's house, placed the Ark on the cart, and started back to Jerusalem. Joy and enthusiasm ran high as they **played before God with all their might**.

Then **the oxen stumbled**, the cart shook, and the Ark tipped dangerously. Uzza naturally reached to steady the Ark. Immediately, God struck him dead in anger. Why? (Read Numbers 4:15, 19-20.) To touch God's ark today, except in accordance with His instruction, brings spiritual death. God will not tolerate new, modern ways that men choose to carry His ark. He counsels us to stay in "the old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16).

Sincerity Not Enough

David and his people were reverent and sincere in moving the ark. It was a self-planned, natural, human reverence. It seemed good, but it was disobedient to God's plan. God had not asked for a new cart. The Philistines had done well in moving the Ark without fear, but the Philistines did not have the Word of God.

David had the Word of God and could have looked into it. We, too, have it. We must measure our worship by it. We must worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Worship is the pouring out of the heart to God. We have not worshiped by merely attending a church service. Quietness, soft lights, music, and stained glass windows are not worship. These are outside of us. Worship is not in programs, forms, knowledgeable language, trained skills, or bowed heads and bent knees. These also are on the outside. A worshipping heart is a true, obedient heart.

David's Plan Deferred

1 Chronicles 13:11-14 **David was displeased**. Noting David's reverence at other times, we conclude that his displeasure was not with God, but with the death of Uzza. He was troubled. **David was afraid of God**—a right fear. **How shall I bring the ark?** So he searched for the reason of Uzza's death and for the correct way to bring the Ark—a wise consideration on his part.

He left the Ark at Obedom's house while he searched for God's blessing. **The LORD blessed the house of Obedom.** God had not changed His purpose to bless through the Ark. It would have been much better if David had sought God's pleasure in the beginning.

David Feared God

It was right for David to feel this way. A man had died while doing what he thought had God's blessing. Why? God did this to put fear into the hearts of these men. How does this compare today to men who claim to be preaching "thus saith the LORD," yet we see folks dying spiritually all around them? What end did this act of God serve? In the next lesson, we shall see how it served David.

JUST A THOUGHT

**The most important piece of furniture
for the home is the family altar.**



LESSON 5

GOD'S WAY FOR MOVING THE ARK

Scripture Texts: 1 Chronicles 15:1-5, 11-15, 25-26; 16:1; Romans 8:8-9

To have God's approval, we must do things God's way. The presence of God, of which the Ark was a type, must be carried in the hearts of saints, not separated from them. The work of the church is to rest directly upon the saints of the church, not on a mechanical, human organization.

MEMORY VERSE: Then David said, None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto him for ever. —1 Chronicles 15:2

David Learned His Lesson

1 Chronicles 15:1-5 In the three months that the Ark waited at Obededom's house, David searched the Law of God and found the reason for the failure of the first attempt to bring the Ark to Jerusalem. Now he was confident in his moves. Knowledge of God's Law and direction on any work brings real confidence. **None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the LORD chosen.** Levites were the priestly tribe set apart for the service of God about the tabernacle, the building sacred to the presence of God. The Ark was the most sacred piece in the Tabernacle (Numbers 3:5-10). On the previous trip, David had substituted a cart and oxen for the Levites.

David **prepared a place for the ark of God, and pitched for it a tent.** He called representatives, once again, of all Israel and carefully selected the Levites. It was a large company, 862 Levites alone, besides many from other tribes.

1 Chronicles 15:11-13 David separated the two priests and six chief Levites to carry the Ark. Levites were sanctified—cleansed and set apart—to be fit to do God's work. First, sanctification of the tribe was done by shaving, washings, sacrifices, and the offering of themselves (Numbers, Chapter 8). Now David directed these Levites to **sanctify yourselves.** He plainly said the disaster of Uzza's death on the first trip was because they did not go to God for direction or follow His rules.

God Arranged Strict Rules

The Levites were chosen by God and cleansed as His priestly tribe to serve about the Tabernacle. Only those who were the sons of Aaron were priests. Kohathite Levites were carriers of the Ark and other sanctuary vessels after they were covered by priests. "They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (Numbers 4:15). God meant for these careful arrangements and rules to be strict because the priestly tribe was to be a type of the church, God's cleansed and called-out people. He "hast made us unto our God kings and priests" (Revelation 5:10). The Tabernacle vessels were types of the provisions God has given the church—the Savior, cleansing from sin, food and light of God's Word, prayer, consecration, and Holy Spirit baptism.

He shows us here how things are to be handled now and who is to do it. Unsaved "strangers" have no part in the work of the church. God is teaching us a lesson of reverence that He requires in all sanctuary vessels. God punished carelessness and disobedience so severely to show how the Gospel and all God's gifts must be treated. The penalty for irreverent handling and unholy touching of spiritual work is a termination of spiritual life.

Carried on the Shoulders

1 Chronicles 15:14-15 The Levites bare the ark of God upon their shoulders with the staves thereon ... according to the word of the LORD.

Exodus 25:13-15 tells what the staves are to be made of and how they are to be used. Not upon a cart, but **upon their shoulders**—close, personal contact. It must be done as God said.

Why did God decree that "the staves shall be in ... they shall not be taken from it" (Exodus 25:15)? Because the Ark represented God's presence, and God's presence was necessary to Israel in all places at all times. This is true in our lives as its antitype. We must take our God into all phases of our lives. This is significant in Jesus' statement that the Spirit "shall be in you" (John 14:17)—that He may "abide with you for ever" (John 14:16).

Nothing was to be placed between God's Ark and His chosen carriers. Jesus, our High Priest, carries the government of the church on His shoulder (Isaiah 9:6-7). Saints are priests, and they are to carry the work of the church as He directs. Using a cart created a serious problem. Many problems in the church might be eliminated by discarding carts of human organizations, man-made rules, programs, and boards. They must be removed from local church work. The responsibility for spiritual life (which proceeds from the Holy Spirit) cannot be removed from the shoulders of individual saints

and successfully transferred to the pastor or denominational head. Outward activity or church membership cannot take the place of personal contact with God.

With Joy and Worship

1 Chronicles 15:25-26; 16:1 The company went **with joy**, knowing they were in the will of the Lord. **God helped the Levites**. They stopped and offered sacrifices in thanksgiving and worship. They moved along with shouting, singing, music, and joyous dancing. When the Ark was settled in its prepared place in Jerusalem, David gave the people food and drink to celebrate. He set priests and Levites to care for the Ark and serve continually before it.

The difference between the joy shown on the first trip and that on the second resulted from knowing God's will. By doing God's will, acting in God's strength and not their own, and following God's plan, their joy was full.

Antitype of the Ark

Romans 8:8-9 The Ark in the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle represented the closest communion of God with man *then*. God met the high priest there. The Ark is a type of Jesus Christ who, through His sacrifice on the Cross, made possible the experience of the closest communion between God and man *now*. Saved people are priests (Revelation 1:6) who are allowed to approach God. When Jesus died, the veil of the temple, which separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies, was "rent in twain" (Matthew 27:51) opening the way for all of God's people to come into God's presence.

Israel needed the Ark as a contact with God. We need its anti-type—salvation through Jesus Christ—as our contact with God. We cannot please God while living in the flesh. We must live in the Spirit. He comes after one has repented and been justified by faith in the blood of Jesus. He comes when one surrenders himself to the Spirit to take complete control and opens his heart for His entrance.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Jumping at conclusions is not half as good exercise
as digging for facts.**



LESSON 6

A HOUSE FOR GOD, A HOUSE FOR DAVID

Scripture Texts: 1 Chronicles 17:1-12, 16, 23-24; Isaiah 9:6-7; Luke 1:32

God may refuse our plans to give us His better ones. The house God promised to build is the Church of God, spiritual Israel. The seed He promised is Jesus, sitting on David's throne as King and Savior.

David was a good man. So was Nathan. Their motives were good. How then could their plan be so displeasing to God? We cannot judge the rightness of a proposal by the character of its maker. In the church today, what method of forming plans will receive God's blessing? How can we enter into that method?

MEMORY VERSE: He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.
—Luke 1:32

Plans of Good People

1 Chronicles 17:1-5 The Ark of the Covenant was now in Jerusalem under the tent prepared for it. This pleased David. He wanted to honor God more by providing a better house for it. Nathan, the prophet, agreed this would be good. Having confidence God was with David, he assumed God approved of David's plan. How mistaken he was! To assume that a move is right without God's sanction can lead to bad planning.

That night, God spoke to Nathan. Why not to David? Nathan was the prophet, God's spokesman. Also, Nathan had given approval and the sanction of God without authorization. Now he must retract his steps. **Tell David my servant, Thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in.** The plan came not from Him (1 Chronicles 17:6) but from David (1 Chronicles 22:7-10).

God did not desire a permanent, material house. "God ... seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts 17:24). The Law was to serve for but a time, then to be followed by something greater. The Tabernacle was temporary. It and its furniture were material symbols of spiritual experiences to come later. God looked ahead from the temporary symbols to the eternal spiritual realities. He desired a permanent dwelling place. It would be His church (Ephesians 2:21-22; Revelation 21:3).

What house can we now provide for God? The many costly church buildings we see around our cities are not the houses of God. It is incorrect to call such a building a sanctuary. If God should speak to us as He did to Nathan, what might He say about the splendid buildings and the money they cost? The true sanctuary can only be found in the hearts of men and women. This is the only place God dwells today.

God's Plan for His People

1 Chronicles 17:6-9 Nathan told David the rest of the message God had spoken to him. God had never commanded His leaders to build Him a house of wood.

The important thing is not what man can do for God, but what God can do for man. God said, **I will ordain a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell ... and shall be moved no more.** Yet we know Israel and Judah were carried away captive, and the nation was scattered over all the earth. God's promise to David was a promise of spiritual blessings. God desired a people, and He has them—those who obey Him and have His Spirit within. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ... But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ... in the spirit" (Romans 2:28-29). God counts His people not by nationality, but by hearts that partake of His salvation (Romans 9:6-8). The church is spiritual Israel.

The promise to permanently establish His people was made for His church, the Church of God. Later, Jesus said He would build His church upon the rock, and the gates of hell would not prevail against it (Matthew 16:18). Jesus said in Luke 12:32, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

God's Promise to David's Seed

1 Chronicles 17:10-12 **The LORD will build thee an house.** God does not build as men do with wood or stone. The house He built for David was of men, **of thy sons**, descendants ending in Jesus Christ and His people. The Lord would both build this house and dwell in it. "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation" (Psalm 132:13; Ephesians 2:19-22). Jesus is both the Son of David and the Son of God.

I will raise up thy seed ... I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. Solomon, David's son born later, did build a material house, a temple for the worship of God. Solomon's reign was a peaceful one, but the continuing of his kingdom was

conditional upon his obedience (1 Chronicles 22:13). The throne, which was to be established forever, was that of Christ. God's promise was fulfilled in Jesus and His house, the Church of God.

David's Attitude

1 Chronicles 17:16, 23-24 David did not doubt God's promise, nor did he try to reason it out. He saw it real and true; a great blessing of the great God. God's greatness showed David his smallness. He prayed, **Who am I, O LORD God?** He asked that through this **thy name may be magnified**. David accepted God's refusal of His plan. His reaction to the unfolding of God's plan was that he had received a tremendous favor from God to him and his family. He felt no pride, but felt humble before God that he had been chosen above his fellows.

A Son to Be Given

Isaiah 9:6-7 God gave promises from time to time, very specifically detailed. Through Isaiah, He promised a Son who would be God and would carry **the government ... upon his shoulder**. The authority, leadership, and command were to be His. That this promise is a continuation of the one made to David is seen in the fact that this Son was to rule upon the throne of David. Also, **his government and peace** were to increase continually and be established **even for ever**.

Luke 1:32 When the angel Gabriel came to Mary with the news of the coming birth of Jesus, he said, **God shall give unto him the throne of his father David**. This reveals the Son Isaiah wrote of (and David's seed who was to have an eternal throne) is Jesus Christ. Is it any wonder that David felt, **Who am I?**

JUST A THOUGHT

**The man who invented the eraser
had the human race pretty well sized up.**

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LESSON 7

KING DAVID KEEPS A PROMISE

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 8:1-18; 9:1-10

David had great success in military campaigns. It was not because of his wisdom or superior numbers. **And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went.** The Lord did this because David kept his vows. Promises must be kept. It is God who gives success and victory. Our salvation is by the love and grace of God. We may all have His preserving power as David did, and under the same conditions.

MEMORY VERSE: Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay. —Ecclesiastes 5:5

Enemies Subdued

2 Samuel 8:1-14 After God gave David the wonderful news of the coming Messiah, David fought battles with the surrounding peoples. The Philistines, Moab, a combination of Syrian kingdoms, and Edom all felt the power of his mighty sword. In the statement **And the LORD preserved David whithersoever he went**, we find the secret of David's success over his enemies.

In gratitude for the defeat of his enemy, the king of Zobah, King Toi of Hamath sent thanks and gifts of silver, gold, and brass to David. David dedicated these and other gifts and spoils to the Lord to be used later in the temple's building. The kingdom of Israel increased in size and strength, as well as internal solidarity. The record further tells of David's conquests of Ammon and their hired Syrian allies. Again we read, **And the LORD preserved David.**

Administrative Genius

2 Samuel 8:15-18 The organization of the kingdom resulted from long years of effort and planning by David. He was the head, "the anointed of the LORD" (1 Samuel 24:6). He was the leader of a great nation. In him, God placed all the qualities of kingship that characterized an ideal king.

Under the king were countless officials in Jerusalem and throughout the land who administered the numerous activities of the government. Some of these were the keeper of the treasury, the recorder of records, the scribe or

secretary, and many counselors, who were David's own sons. He had his advisors, one of whom was the Prophet Nathan. Then there were the priests who headed the religious system and the leaders of armies and affairs of war. There were overseers of his royal estate and hundreds who cared for his storehouses.

It must be remembered that, despite these intricate details of an amazing organization, David always thought of himself as the representative of the Divine Sovereign. To Him, he was directly responsible, and he tried to be a king after God's own heart. He **executed judgment and justice unto all his people**.

A Vow Kept

2 Samuel 9:1-4 At the height of his power, when there was a pause in his political duties, David thought of Jonathan, his dearly loved friend, son of King Saul. He remembered the day when he fled for his life from Saul, and Jonathan helped him. He remembered his vow made (1 Samuel 20:14-15, 42) to show kindness forever to Jonathan's house. He must keep it. To do so, he started a search, found a servant of Saul, and through him, a crippled son of Jonathan. The only member of Saul's house who was still alive was Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, who lived in hiding in the home of Machir, a wealthy citizen of Lo-debar.

The youth, Mephibosheth, having been fortunate enough to escape destruction when his family was destroyed, had also been unfortunate. The Bible records that when he was five years old, upon learning of Israel's defeat at Mount Gilboa and the death of Saul and Jonathan, his nurse took up the child and fled. In her haste to get away, "he fell, and became lame" (2 Samuel 4:4). Incapable of contributing to his own support, he found shelter in the neighborhood where his uncle, Ishbosheth, had unsuccessfully set up his kingdom in rebellion against David. Here he lived, neglected and unknown until this time.

Kindness to Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9:5-10 David now called Mephibosheth to him. In dejection and with a fearful heart, he fell on his face before the king, ready to hear words of condemnation and death for himself as the last descendant of Saul. Instead, for the sake of Jonathan, his father, David restored unto him all the land of Saul, made him a member of his own house, and invited him to eat regularly at the king's table as one of his sons.

In gratitude, Mephibosheth cried out, **What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?** Instead of disgrace, shame, and death as the descendant of Saul, David's worst enemy, Mephibosheth, now became a member of the royal family. The restored land was put into the hands of Ziba to till and take care of. All this was because David had so greatly loved Jonathan, the father.

This is a touching scene, as David, at the zenith of his power, reveals the true nature of his character. As king, he would have had every right to do away with this despised descendant of Saul. But power and success had not changed his inner nature. **For Jonathan thy father's sake and the kindness of God** are expressions from the lips of David, showing his heart was filled with love to God and his fellow men.

David's Nature

David felt obligated to keep his vow to Jonathan because he loved him dearly. His sincere promise was binding. Someone has said, "Make few promises, but keep those you make." We must keep promises just as God keeps His promises. Children should be taught the sacredness of a promise. The only time a promise should be broken is when it will be a sin to keep it.

Today we have seen David at war. This is the strong, commanding, severe side of David's nature. He was a man of war who had shed much blood. This is partly the reason for God's refusal of David's plan to build a temple of worship.

David also had another side, shown in his treatment of Mephibosheth and in his desire to keep his vow. Mephibosheth's experience may be considered a type of salvation. In God's sight, the sinner is even more helpless and more worthy of condemnation than Mephibosheth. Yet even while we were sinners, Christ died for us, and through His death, we are cleansed of our sin and restored to our rightful position as sons of God and members of His family. Jesus invites us, unworthy though we are, to sit at His table and partake of His body and blood.

God Keeps His Promises

In the continual fightings of the Old Testament, we see in Israel the physical counterpart of the Christian's battles against those spiritual forces that are continually opposing him. Joshua, David, and other great warriors of Israel were not only fighting political and military battles, they were at the same time fighting the forces of darkness and heathenism, which were intent

on destroying God's people and true religion.

It is significant that in *Pilgrim's Progress*, John Bunyan saw Christian fitted out as a warrior before he made his way to the City of Zion. He was led into the armory where he was shown all manner of equipment that the Lord provided for pilgrims—sword, shield, helmet, breastplate, all-prayer, and shoes that would not wear out. God will keep His promises, He will preserve us as He did David, if we keep our promise to Him.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Promises are empty words
if you are not keeping them.**

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LESSON 8

DAVID'S SIN AND REPENTANCE

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 12:1-14

In the previous lesson, we were studying about David, the soldier, the king, and the statesman. In today's lesson, we are not dealing so much with the military and political activities of David; rather, we are looking into the heart of this great man, where we see revealed his weaknesses and remorse, his humility, and spiritual anguish. We learn that even though his sin with Bathsheba was forgiven, its effects lingered on, for David's life was full of trouble and bitter sorrow from that day on.

MEMORY VERSE: He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. —Proverbs 28:13

Allowing Temptation

2 Samuel 11:1-3 David tarried still at Jerusalem. David was not in the place he was supposed to be. His place was out **to battle**, not at home. Israel was again at war. Joab and the army had partial victory over Amon and now were besieging the city of Rabbah. David (at home in Jerusalem, burdened with cares) no doubt became restless and bored—a dangerous condition, indeed. He took an evening walk on the flat housetop. There, the devil brought a temptation before him. David saw Bathsheba—nothing wrong with that, for we all are tempted unexpectedly. But David allowed the temptation room, which was very dangerous. He thought on it and followed it by an inquiry, thus opening the door wider. He put no obstruction in the way of temptation.

Yielding to Temptation

2 Samuel 11:4-5 Having gone this far, David fell completely. He actively carried out the sin. Temptation is not sin (James 1:13-15), but yielding is sin. Inseparably joined with sin is trouble. In this case, it followed quickly. The message came, **I am with child**. Imagine David's fear. All would now know. And Uriah—what would be his reaction?

2 Samuel 11:6-27 Sin binds and draws one deeper. So it was with David. He had walked in easily; to get out was harder. Sin always demands more sin in an attempt to cover it. First adultery, then, a big lie to Uriah. No doubt,

it was with a feeling of desperation that he sent for Uriah. To deceive Uriah and the public was contrary to David's usual habit. Sin always leads one to stray from the game plan for his life. Sin takes everyone farther than they want to go. David was pressed by fear of detection, but his scheme failed. Uriah, ignorant of David's purpose, did not follow the pattern David had hoped for.

Now what? Sin, deeper yet. This time it was murder, murder covered to appear as an accident of war. What should be done with sin? There is only one successful covering for sin (Luke 12:2). Nothing of this was hidden from God. David tried to be as honorable as possible by giving Bathsheba and the baby a home with him. Still, the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. None of it had escaped the eye of God.

Flee Temptation

The sin of David is a black spot on the pages of sacred history. Yet this story in the Scripture has a definite purpose. We see in it what destruction sin can bring. We see here not only the terrible remorse of a truly penitent man who seeks God's forgiveness, but also the blessed peace of one who has found God's forgiveness and who has been restored to fellowship with Him. Do not believe it when someone says that his sin is no one's business but his own. Each of our sins affects others' lives around us. David's sin caused several men to lose their lives unnecessarily.

Can anyone excuse his sin with, "I couldn't help it"? Perhaps it seems so at the time. It would have been easier to resist if David had made an effort earlier (1 Corinthians 10:13). One cannot safely nurse a temptation. How should one meet temptation? (Read 1 Corinthians 6:18). David could have avoided all the trouble he had in this episode (Matthew 26:41). Any person, friend, relative, place, or thing that is a temptation to you, or an influence to lead you to do wrong, should be left out of your activities. Replace them with others that will be a strength to your spiritual condition.

Nathan's Message

2 Samuel 12:1-9 God's method of showing man his sin today is through a message from a true man of God. To show David the terribleness of his sin, the Lord sent a parable through the Prophet Nathan. In judging the injustice of the rich man's treatment of the poor man, David judged himself worthy of death. Nathan pointed the finger of rebuke at David with the words, **Thou art the man**. He was brought to see his own action in its true, horrible light.

The Holy Spirit, through the power of conviction, causes us to judge ourselves when the message of God comes to us and points the finger of guilt. Sin condemns all men to death (Romans 6:23). David could see the sin of the man in the parable, but he had to have his own sin pointed out. Is this still a problem today?

2 Samuel 12:9-12 Through Nathan, the Lord pronounced David's punishment. **Thou hast killed Uriah ... with the sword ... The sword shall never depart from thine house I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives I will do this thing before all Israel.** "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Galatians 6:7). Oh, what a payment David was going to have to make!

David's Response

2 Samuel 12:13-14 **I have sinned against the LORD.** No waiting, no excuses, no explanations, no shifting of blame. David's repentance seems complete. Psalm 51 shows his openhearted baring of sin. He confessed and forsook it and received mercy. **The LORD also hath put away thy sin.** Here, we see the love and mercy of God. David deserved death, but was forgiven. God saw his broken and contrite heart and did not despise it. David shows his joy and gratitude in Psalm 32.

David threw himself entirely on God's mercy, and he was forgiven. But, from that day on, there was to be sorrow and sadness in David's house. When our actions give occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, they will be followed with sadness all the days of our lives, even though we repent of them. David, like all of us, had to bear the results of sin.

JUST A THOUGHT

**It is better to look ahead and prepare
than to look back and regret.**



LESSON 9

DAVID REAPS THROUGH HIS SONS

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 13:1, 14-15, 22, 28-29, 38-39; 15:1-14; 18:6-15, 33

To sow sin is to reap sorrow. Sin also brings suffering to innocent ones. God's Word always comes true. David's sin even weakened the bonds of morality in his own household. His own example of laxity of morals was imitated by his oldest son, Amnon, who ravished his half sister. In order to avenge the dishonor of his sister, Absalom murdered Amnon and was for a time banished from the presence of the king.

MEMORY VERSE: Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. —Galatians 6:7

Amnon's Sin

2 Samuel 13:1, 14-15 Amnon, son of David, was greatly attracted to his half sister, Tamar. He might have successfully resisted the temptation that came to him as he did for a time. Amnon's conscience was not the strongest; yet it was guiding him rightly at the start of his temptation. It might have kept him from his sin had he continued to listen to it. But his cousin, Jonadab, was there with evil counsel. His wicked advice overrode Amnon's better thoughts, and he sinned against her. Was Jonadab truly a friend? How did he get the reputation of "subtil" (verse 3)? How does 1 Corinthians 15:33 and Psalm 1:1 apply here?

Having sinned so grievously, Amnon's so-called love turned to hatred. He roughly cast Tamar out. Amnon found he did not want what he had taken dishonorably. His changed feeling, the sense of revulsion, followed a pattern frequently followed today in the case of illicit relations. Lust is not love; physical attractions fade. To depend upon promises and claims of love based on these is to risk waking up holding only false and bitter ashes. True happiness grows only from the foundation of true honor and righteousness. Amnon's experience should have taught him that. Tamar tried to tell him, but he would not listen. God's laws are made to suit man's greatest good. Those laws still stand unchanged and unchangeable.

Absalom quieted his sister about this, no doubt planning revenge against Amnon, but David heard of it. **He was very wroth.** No doubt, his memory

went back to his own sin and the sentence pronounced by the Lord (2 Samuel 12:9-12). Sin brings multiplied evil.

Absalom Slays Amnon

2 Samuel 13:22, 28-29, 38-39 Absalom, filled with anger and hatred, deliberately planned to kill Amnon. As soon as he accomplished this, Absalom fled to Geshur, to his grandfather (2 Samuel 3:3), to escape his father's anger and just punishment. David's bitter grief was now double—for the firstborn son who was dead, and for the son who was a murderer. He was torn between longing to go to Absalom and the abhorrence of his crime. Did Jonadab feel any guilt in Amnon's death (2 Samuel 13:32)? Should he have?

For five years, David did not see Absalom face to face. When they met at Absalom's request, there appeared to be submission from Absalom and love from David (2 Samuel, Chapter 14). How real each was can best be judged by later actions.

Absalom Revolts

2 Samuel 15:1-14 Absalom began a well-planned scheme to steal the rulership from his father. As eldest son and natural heir to his father's throne, Absalom felt he should be recognized as king. So he made every effort to strengthen his position with the people. He used the fact that he was naturally handsome to his advantage. Then he tried to undermine his father's hold on the people by encouraging a feeling among them of discontent with existing conditions. He gave heed to their every wish and cry until he **stole the hearts of the men of Israel**.

Since there seemed to be no hope of becoming associated with his father in the kingdom, Absalom finally carried out his plan to seize the throne for himself. Deceiving his father as to his purpose, he went to Hebron and proclaimed himself king and gathered his friends and followers. At this news, David and his servants fled from Jerusalem to save his life and to spare the city the destruction of war.

Absalom's Death

2 Samuel 18:6-15 The battle was in the wood of Ephraim, a hazardous place for fighting. **The wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.** Absalom himself fell victim, caught by an oak bough. Joab heard of it, went, and thrust darts through his heart, completely disregarding

David's request to **deal gently for my sake with the young man**. Then, caught up in the mob spirit, ten of his young men rushed in with many unneeded blows to finish the terrible deed. They gave Absalom's body a dishonored grave in a pit in the wood, covered with **a very great heap of stones**.

Reaping of Sin

2 Samuel 18:33 In Absalom's death, David reaped a heavy penalty. His grief was pitiful. It was more for Absalom's loss than for his own. **Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!** What was Absalom's loss? What is always one's loss to die a sinner? Why was there all of this evil? Running through some of it was a chain leading back to David's sin. His children must have had knowledge of past events in David's life. How many of these later happenings were results of example? We can be sure that some of it was punishment—paying the consequences.

David sowed. Amnon sowed. Absalom sowed. What did each reap? Were the sowers alone in the reaping? Is it a characteristic of sin that it injures innocent ones, as well as the guilty? Sin is not just. God's Word of years before came true. "The sword shall never depart ... evil against thee out of thine own house ... shall lie with thy wives" (2 Samuel 12:10-11). Read 2 Samuel 16:22. It is true that one always reaps as he sows.

David's Character

Throughout the bitter experience of Absalom's rebellion, David showed himself to be a man of great spiritual insight and character, filled with deep sympathy even for those who opposed him. He was willing to take the cursing and stoning of Shimei, one of Saul's family, as a direct punishment from God (2 Samuel 16:5-8). Despite Absalom's character and terrible deeds, David loved him and mourned bitterly for him.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Discipline is not punishment,
it is training.**



LESSON 10

DAVID BROUGHT BACK BY HIS PEOPLE

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 19:1-23, 43; 20:1-2; 21:1-6, 14

In today's world, no one lives to himself but must have contact with many others. Our attitude toward them is important, both to us and to them. Yes, and to God. Two tendencies are to excuse oneself and blame others or to blame oneself and excuse others. Was David's disposition of a Christian nature? What is the Christian disposition? What is necessary that we may truly forgive and forget real injuries? Forgiveness of those who sin against us; the duty of peace-making; repentance and obedience when punished by God; necessity of an atonement for sin; seeing sin as God does.

MEMORY VERSE: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

—Ephesians 4:32

Joab Reprimands David

2 Samuel 19:1-10 Absalom had been killed in battle as he was rebelling against and seeking to take the crown from his father. David, waiting at Mahanaim, was overwhelmed with grief at Absalom's death. When the men of his army heard how he mourned, they returned stealthily as defeated men, ashamed of pursuing and killing Absalom.

Joab immediately went to David with stern, harsh words. **Thou hast shamed ... all thy servants ... thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends.** He commanded David to go out and speak to the people or **there will not tarry one with thee this night.** Joab's sense of security and superiority must have been strong to allow him to speak in this way to the king. David went, sat in the gate, and met the people. The people were confused and divided. They felt David, once strong, had weakened before Absalom. Now they wished to bring him back home to restore normal conditions.

David Returns to Jerusalem

2 Samuel 19:11-18 David sent, urging Judah to bring him to Jerusalem. He based his claim on kingship, since he was of the tribe of Judah. They joined in loyalty to him and ferried him and his party over Jordan near

Gilgal.

2 Samuel 19:18-23 Shimei hurried to meet David and confess his sin in cursing him as he fled from Jerusalem (2 Samuel 16:5-13). Was he sincerely repentant? He had cursed then because he thought David was defeated. Now, might he be asking pardon to escape punishment from a victorious David? No matter. David forgave him, at least outwardly and temporarily. Abishai was for killing him now, just as he had been when he cursed, but David forbade him.

David was lenient with Shimei on the first occasion because he felt it was a just punishment to himself from God. Now he was lenient because he felt himself blessed in being yet king. Actually, David only postponed punishment (1 Kings 2:8-9).

Blessed Are the Peacemakers

2 Samuel 19:43 The tribe of Judah had been foremost in bringing back the king. This stirred jealousy in the other tribes, usually called Israel. Angry words flew. The hurt feelings of the men of Israel at not being included in Judah's plans for returning the king caused dissension. Angry words aggravated it. **Sheba** had the opportunity to influence the situation (**2 Samuel 20:1-2**). What would he do? He seems to have been a man of some power and leadership. He could drop in the oil of peace or the poison of strife. Being a wicked man, he did the latter. His reaping was as he sowed (2 Samuel 20:14-22).

We all meet such opportunities in the church and in our respective communities, although, in most instances, on a smaller scale. What can we do to promote peace between our brethren and others? A peacemaker always makes peace. This is the duty of all of God's people (Matthew 5:9; Romans 14:19; James 3:17-18).

The Reason for Famine

2 Samuel 21:1-4 Physical famine is a fearful thing. It came to Israel in three consecutive years. Finally, **David enquired of the LORD** as to the reason for the famine. He looked for a moral cause. When he found it, he sought the remedy for it.

The presence of the Gibeonites in Israel in the first place was because of failure to enquire of the Lord (Joshua 9:14-19). David asked the Gibeonites how to atone for Saul's earlier slaying of their people. Saul had broken the league Joshua had made with them. Was David's method wise? Would it be

wise for present-day leaders to use this method in the many serious events and problems having moral causes today? Is failing to enquire of the Lord the cause of spiritual famine today? This is more fearful than the other. Why?

2 Samuel 21:5-6, 14 The requirements of the Gibeonites were severe—the death of seven descendants of Saul. King David agreed. **And after that God was intreated for the land.** When the sin was out of the way, God heard their prayer. The famine was broken. This is the only way to break the famine of spiritual food in our world today.

God sends natural disasters to lead man in a certain direction. The things we see happen and read about today are not completely accidental. God uses them to get our attention. Each of us is responsible for enquiring into causes. When the cause is found, we must then seek the remedy.

The Remedy

The seven sons of Saul were innocent of the sin of killing the Gibeonites; yet their lives were given to atone for it. Their sacrifice was delegated—one person in place of another. It was accepted by God and because of it, He removed the penalty, the famine. This is a type of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the innocent One in place of the guilty. His dying removed the penalty of death by famine.

Does the sacrifice of these lives seem too severe, unjust? Was the death of Christ just? It was necessary because there was no other way for atonement to be made.

What is the nature of sin? Does God see it as a little mistake, or a death, corruption, separation, and abomination? He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). For this reason, "your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). Because God loves us, He hates sin. He must deal with it exceedingly severely. We must view sin as God does. Sin is no small matter. The type we saw above is not too extreme.

JUST A THOUGHT

Tragedy is not what we suffer but what we miss.



LESSON 11

KING DAVID'S DEEP REVERENCE

Scripture Texts: 2 Samuel 23:1-17; 22:1-30

God held David in a higher position than all the kings of the earth. He showed great reverence and fear to the God of Israel, because he remembered His greatness at all times. (Read Psalm 89:1-37.) God promised an everlasting Savior. He saves every repentant sinner as He did David. A good ruler rules in the fear of God. We must reverence holy things.

MEMORY VERSE: God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him. —Psalm 89:7

What a Ruler Should Be

2 Samuel 23:1-2 The last words of David—presumed to be his last preserved writings. David had been chosen and placed by God in his position as leader of Israel (1 Samuel, Chapter 16). **The Spirit of the LORD spake by me.** David was a prophet, a spokesman for God (Acts 2:30). Who can read his psalms attentively and not recognize the voice of God—sometimes in foretelling events or in revealing His nature or in promises, etc.? These are things David did not learn from a Bible. He wrote them. He could have learned them only from the Spirit of God, for "the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). God reveals them to men by His Spirit. David received them because he was a prophet and in contact with God. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God ... they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). It was the Holy Spirit who spoke personally with David, not a mere influence impressing him.

2 Samuel 23:3-4 The Rock of Israel told David that rulers **must be just**, honest, impartial, right, fair, judging a matter solely on its merits, never by self-interest. **Ruling in the fear of God.** How would the world be changed if all rulers acted as those who will give account to God? For they surely will. This applies not only to kings and presidents, but to governors, judges, mayors, clerks, school board members, and all. Rulers of this kind are a blessing to the people whom they represent. They are as welcome as a cool breeze on a hot day or a cold drink of water when one is very thirsty. David said they are as welcome as the dawn, a cloudless morning, or tender growing grass.

2 Samuel 23:5 David modestly disclaimed, measuring perfectly to the standard he had just spoken. Yet, despite his shortcomings, God had made the covenant with him (2 Samuel, Chapter 7). He clearly saw it as an established and everlasting promise and plan. He knew it meant his salvation in the promise of a Savior, a King with an everlasting kingdom. In this covenant, David anchored his deepest hope and desire.

David accepted the promise by first accepting the Promiser. His wholehearted acceptance of Him opened the way for God to reveal to him the truths he expressed prophetically in his writings. Unless we accept God wholeheartedly, none of His promises belong to us.

An Offering of Water

2 Samuel 23:13-15 There was war again with the Philistines. David was with his soldiers, hiding and resting in the cave of Adullam. He had used this cave as a refuge long before when fleeing from King Saul (1 Samuel 22:1-2). Being thirsty, he remembered the cool, refreshing water he used to drink from the well at Bethlehem when he was a boy. Now Bethlehem was in the hands of the enemy. David's men heard him speak his great desire for a drink from that well.

2 Samuel 23:16-17 David's people loved him. Unknown to David, his **three mighty men**, Adino, Eleazar, and Shammah, managed to slip through the enemy lines and draw some water from that well. If we truly love the Lord, we will go to any length to accomplish what we know He desires.

When the water was brought to David, he realized the risk of life it had cost the men. This was more than mere water. It was blood and life, a gift too precious for him to use. It was the sacred symbol of **the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives**. David treated it just as the Law of God said blood must be treated (Deuteronomy 12:16). He **poured it out unto the LORD**, an offering in worship to Him.

Hope for Sinners

2 Samuel 22:1-30 Much about David is revealed in 2 Samuel, Chapter 22. **The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer**. Here is trust. **The horn of my salvation ... my saviour**. From what was David saved? Is there any joy, strength, or confidence here? Did David experience the Presence of God, and personal contact with Him, or not? Find words in the Scripture to support each answer. David had sinned grievously. Does anything here suggest whether God forgave him?

David was a sinner. In 2 Samuel 12:13 and Psalm 51, we find his confession and repentance. What does repentance and faith always bring? David's faith was placed in God, the Father, and in the promise of a Savior Who was to come. This was the equivalent of our faith now, which is placed in the Savior Who has come, the Lord Jesus Christ. Was David's sin covered? What hope for sinners now is seen in David's experience (1 John 1:9)?

Reverence

David was a man of fine sensibilities. His heart was easily touched. Common things spoke a message to him of their Maker. To him, the stars spoke of the glory of God. Caring for sheep reminded him of the Father's care for him. The strength of the waves of the sea turned his thoughts to the greater power of God. He had a keen sense of his own responsibility to God. In times of trouble or of joy, he turned to the Lord.

David's love for God was coupled with a reverence for Him. He walked carefully in God's presence and kept his hands from the careless touching of sacred things. No doubt, these attitudes of his heart were strong influences, helping turn him back to God when he fell into sin. If we lose our reverence for God and holy things, our chance of being turned back to God is also lost.

In these days of much and growing blasphemy and disrespect for holy things, how can we teach and be taught reverence? For the Church of God? For God's property? For the true pastors of God's people? For the people of God? For our home and parents? For the Sunday school teacher? There is no substitute for reverence.

JUST A THOUGHT

**No one is a failure in this world who
lightens a burden for someone else.**



LESSON 12

PUNISHMENT FOR NUMBERING ISRAEL

Scripture Text: 2 Samuel 24:1-25

Sin brings punishment; repentance brings forgiveness; Christ is the only atonement for our sins. For Christ to be our sacrifice, He must be accepted by us.

Because of some sin Israel had committed and the census that David was taking of the people in order to ascertain their military strength, God sent a terrible plague upon Israel. In less than one day, seventy thousand men died throughout the land. When David saw the great plague, he cried unto the Lord, saying, **Lo, I have sinned.**

MEMORY VERSE: I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. —Psalm 32:5

David Stubbornly Numbers Israel

2 Samuel 24:1-9 God is never angry without reason. His cause for anger against Israel here is not given. No doubt it was for pride or rebellion. David obviously had conquest in mind when he sought to number Israel, for only men of fighting age were counted (2 Samuel 24:9). David did not seek the Lord's will in this, as we can see God was not pleased. It was sin for David.

Samuel says **the LORD... moved David** to do this. First Chronicles 21:1 says Satan, or an adversary, provoked him to do it. James 1:13 says God does not tempt us to do evil. No doubt Satan tempted him and God allowed it for punishment, because Israel was not in a condition to receive God's help. Numbering people is not evil of itself, only if done from a wrong motive. (First Chronicles, Chapter 21, adds more detail.) David's motive was to lean on the strength of man with many soldiers. He failed to lean on God Who had taken him through other battles of the past, regardless of numbers.

Joab tried to persuade David otherwise, but could not. After nearly ten months, they returned with the report. There is a discrepancy between the figures given in the two accounts. This may have resulted from copiers misreading the Hebrew characters denoting numbers, some of which are easily mistaken for others, or if a small line on one became obliterated with age, it might appear as another.

The Blessing of Repentance

2 Samuel 24:10 David now realized the wrong of his act. **I have sinned greatly.** God put conviction in his heart. Conviction of sin is sent for the purpose of turning one away from the sin and to God. David responded to Him with confession and repentance. **I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity.** Now David was on the way to forgiveness.

One door which **MUST** be passed through to reach God is repentance. Although confession and repentance are painful, they are great blessings because of what they accomplish. Repentance is a shedding, separation from the sin, a clearing of ourselves. Repentance leads to God, to union with Him, to cleansing from sin, and brings peace to the heart.

David sinned deeply, yet his psalms abound in joy, confidence, assurance, and hope. "The LORD is the strength of my life" (Psalm 27:1). "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous" (Psalm 33:1). "I will bless the LORD at all times" (Psalm 34:1). This was because of the quality of his repentance.

David opened his heart with childlike simplicity—quickly, freely, fully, no reservations, or covering up. We must guard against partial repentance. To try to reform in our own strength, to blame others, to excuse self, to cling to a bit of sin, to cover it, to delay—these keep us from the blessing of forgiveness. "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Romans 2:4).

A Choice of Punishment

2 Samuel 24:11-17 God spoke to David through His prophet Gad. David was given the choice of three: (1) seven years of famine, (2) three months of war, or (3) three days of pestilence. David chose to fall into the hands of God and not man. He believed in God's goodness and mercy; he trusted Him; he yielded to Him. So the Lord sent a pestilence. Seventy thousand died.

The servant of God who brought the pestilence was an angel. The Lord stopped him just short of destroying the people of Jerusalem. When David saw the angel, the sight seems to have brought him to a fresh rush of repentance and submission toward God and pity for his people. He cried unto the Lord, saying, **Lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? let thine hand ... be against me.** Like Moses of old, who prayed that God would blot him out of the Book of Life instead of the children of Israel (Exodus 32:32), David took the blame, accused no one else, and willingly yielded to punishment. These are the marks of complete and genuine repentance. The hand of the angel was stayed, and the people were spared further trouble.

Atonement Made

2 Samuel 24:18-25 Another message from God came to David through Gad. **Rear an altar ...** that is, offer a sacrifice to the Lord. It was to be offered at the place where the pestilence was stayed, where the angel stopped at the threshingfloor of Araunah. David obeyed. Araunah would have freely given the floor and all with it to David. But David felt the offering would not be truly his if it cost him nothing. So he paid. Had he not paid, it would have been Araunah's sacrifice, not his, and so of no avail as satisfaction for David's sin. By paying, he made it his and offered it as his. **The plague was stayed.** The Lord confirmed His acceptance by sending fire upon David's sacrifice. This answer from Heaven gave David sure confidence.

On this same spot, where Abraham had willingly placed his son, Isaac, on an altar as a sacrifice to God a thousand years before, but was prevented from killing him by the angel, God's mercy had once again been shown toward Israel. It is little wonder then that this hallowed place was selected later on as the site of Solomon's Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1).

Christ Is Our Atonement

Seventy thousand of Israel died for the sin of numbering the people and the sin that angered the Lord in the first place. No doubt many of these were innocent. There are many examples of innocent animals of sacrifice that died to atone for sin. These are types to teach us sin has a substitutionary sacrifice. They point to the only sacrifice to atone for our sins, Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:24).

David had to make the properties his own before the sacrifice could atone for HIS sin. He bought them, and then gave them as his own. Christ must be our own before His sacrifice can atone for OUR sins. What do we pay to make Him ours? Ourselves. Yes, our lives, our love, our trust, our all. This is the only sacrifice He accepts.

JUST A THOUGHT

**When you make a choice,
you also choose a consequence.**



LESSON 13

DAVID'S LAST DAYS

Scripture Texts: 1 Chronicles 28:1-10; 1 Kings 2:1-11

As we come to the end of this study of David, we feel that we have been dealing with one of the greatest men of all history. Militarily, politically, administratively, and religiously, he was of highest quality. No ruler since his day has compared with him in the exercise of these powers.

Many of God's promises and blessings are conditional. Our salvation is conditional upon our belief and obedience—in our seeking and obeying God. An everlasting King was promised. He is reigning today.

MEMORY VERSE: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
—2 Peter 1:11

David's Final Message

1 Chronicles 28:1-4 David was an old man. His time to leave this world was near. He called all leaders in Israel to receive his final message. David told of his hope to build a temple of God. **An house of rest for the ark**—a safe and settled place for the precious symbol of the closest association in this world of God with man. **And for the footstool of our God**—suggestive of submission and worship at the feet of the great Ruler of the universe.

But God, Who does not see as man sees, did not allow David to build the house because of his shedding of blood. This reveals something of God's feeling about war. He allows it as inevitable because of sin. But its stain must not be on His holy house. Yet God did not shut out David completely. He allowed him to gather a vast amount of materials for the house. He gave to him the pattern for it (1 Chronicles 28:11-19). David did not rebel against the decision of the Lord.

God's Promise and Condition

1 Chronicles 28:5-8 God approved Solomon as king. Concerning him, God said, (1) he was to build the house of the Lord, (2) God would bless him as a father does a son and give him a peaceful reign, and (3) the covenant made with David was continued to him. **I will establish his kingdom for**

ever. The forever part looked forward to the coming of Christ. Later, an angel would say to Mary, "The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32).

There was a condition attached to God's blessing of Solomon—**If he be constant to do my commandments.** No one can continue in favor with God and not continue to obey His commandments. Solomon could not. Israel could not. We cannot. Sin cuts one off from God. When Solomon and his sons turned from God into sin, the kingdom in Israel failed, and foreign powers took the rule.

The part of the prophecy concerning Christ could not fail. It was of an everlasting, real, spiritual kingdom. Christ did come and now reigns on the throne of David. Israel's temporal kingdom and Christ's eternal kingdom here are intertwined, yet distinct. In the line of descent from David and Solomon, Jesus was born a King and is sitting on the throne of David. The promise of this was sure and unchangeable. The temporal government of Israel in the intervening years was conditional (1 Kings 2:4). David charged Israel to obey God's commands. This was the condition upon which they would possess the land and pass it on to their children.

Charge to Solomon

1 Chronicles 28:9-10 David's charge is weighty with vital words to light the path of every person from then to now and forever. We do well to heed them. **Know thou the God.** Solomon had seen His hand in David's life. He should have made contact with Him for himself. To KNOW God is life eternal (John 17:3). **Serve him with a perfect heart**—a heart cleansed from sin, open to God. **With a willing mind**—our will in accordance with God's will. No rebellion. Desiring and acting to obey Him. **The LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations.** Nothing is hid from Him (Luke 12:2-3). **If thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.**

David's Death and Burial

1 Kings 2:1-4 David knew he was near death. If ever one speaks seriously, it is then. **Shew thyself a man.** A man is a soul made in the image of God, made from the dust of the ground and the breath of God. Solomon was charged to lift himself to his full height, to make real his possibilities. David told him to do something worth dying for, something to show that he had a mind and a heart and a soul within him. The continuation of Solomon's and

his family's reign in literal Israel was conditioned upon his (and their) obeying this charge.

1 Kings 2:10-11 David's last days were not without trouble. Another son rebelled against his father's will. Adonijah, full brother of Absalom, proclaimed himself king, but did not succeed in holding the position. David saw Solomon established there.

Then David died after forty years of turbulent reign. From that day, he has been held as Israel's greatest king. Yet, the One who is now sitting on David's throne is greater. Is He your King?

Conditional

What basis is there for the teaching that salvation is all of grace and not dependent in any way upon the life and deeds of the receiver? The promise to Solomon of the continuing earthly throne depended upon his obedience. The promise to Israel of possession of the land depended upon their obedience. The promise to us of salvation and Heaven is conditional. Jesus said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Paul wrote, "But toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Romans 11:22).

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10). "And they were judged every man according to their works" (Revelation 20:13). Do you see the fine balance here of grace and works? Of works done not in your own strength but by the power of God working in the redeemed by grace? Can man fall into sin and still retain his position in Christ?

What might now be Israel's history had she continued to obey God? What might be the situation of our own nation if we were listening to and obeying God? What is our personal position before God, each of us? Are we enjoying fully the blessings provided for us?

Salvation Has Emotion

Many Christians have lost the joy of their early Christian experience. Their religion has become cold and formal, with looks of scorn upon any emotional expression of those giving true praise to God. They claim such emotional outbursts show instability, lack of culture, and even lack of intelli-

gence. They are willing for us to shout our heads off at a football game, or to go practically insane with excitement at other sports events, but they insist we should restrain ourselves when we feel joyful at the thought of what God has done for us in Christ, or when we seem to be especially blessed. The real danger to Christianity is not from the fanatic who becomes enthusiastic about his faith, rather from the cold, formal religionist, who because of lack of warmth and fervor, can attract no one to Christ.

JUST A THOUGHT

**Since you cannot change facts,
try changing your attitudes.**

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NOTES

NOTES

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