

Adult

Sabbath School Lessons

Crisis,
Change, and Challenge



January, February, March 1991

Please Give Us the Tools And we will do the job!



What sometimes appears to be politically disruptive to a country, often turns out for the good of people and the growth of the church.

Prior to the change of government in Fiji in May 1987, it appeared as if the Indian population on these beautiful South Pacific islands was very indifferent to the Christian faith. However, the tide is turning.

In recent outreach initiatives to Fiji's Indian population of about 400,000 people, a new wave of receptivity has been detected. Every evangelistic outreach program is now also yielding some favourable response from the Hindi-speaking Indian community.

The Central Pacific Union Mission wants to take advantage of this new receptivity among the Indian population by establishing a Hindi Evangelistic Centre in Fiji. The present number of only about 200 Hindi-speaking Adventists in Fiji will be vastly increased by such a project.

A second project to benefit from this quarter's Thirteenth Sabbath Offering will be a day high school in Suva, Fiji. Such a facility is badly needed. When our youth graduate from primary school, there is no Adventist high school for them to attend. Over 500 young people need such a facility.

Please give generously this Thirteenth Sabbath and all quarter long so that these two important projects can be achieved.

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The Adult Sabbath School Lessons are prepared by the Department of Church Ministries of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. The preparation of the lessons is under the general direction of a worldwide Sabbath School Lesson Committee, the members of which serve as consulting editors. The published lesson quarterly reflects the input of the committee and thus does not solely or necessarily represent the intent of the authors.

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Adult Sabbath School Lessons (standard edition). (USPS 702-480.) Published quarterly by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 N. Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687, U.S.A. One year subscription in U.S.A., \$5.20; single copy, \$3.00. One-year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$8.20; single copy \$3.00. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Nampa, ID. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Adult Sabbath School Lessons (standard edition), P.O. Box 7000, Boise, ID 83707.

Editions in Braille available. See p. 98. Easy English Edition available.

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Adult Sabbath School Lessons (USPS 702-480)/No. 383 January-March 1991.

58 XL 91699 12/11/91
45A/75 44334 CPB 1C1

Meet the Principal Contributor of This Quarter's Lessons



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Mrs. Lee received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Union College, and served as Bible instructor in California, Nebraska, and Michigan. She was an instructor for the North American Division Evangelism Institute in Illinois before accepting the position in the Carolina Conference.

Mrs. Lee has written a previous set of Sabbath School lessons, *Songs of Experience*, on the Psalms, and authored a book entitled *Let Me Tell You About My God*. In addition she has written for several Adventist publications.

Cooking, writing, and bird-watching occupy Mrs. Lee's leisure moments. Her husband, Kenneth, is a retired pastor.

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for the companion book to the Sabbath
School Lessons.

Introduction to the Books of Samuel

A plaque in a mother's kitchen reads, "Lord, help us through the changes in our lives." We human beings do not take well to changes. We resist them, we resent them, and sometimes we reject them.

The stories we will consider during this series are about changes in the lives of God's people, and how they related to them. The period between the judges and the early monarchy covered in the books of Samuel were times of transition and change, times of political unrest and conflict in Israel and in the surrounding nations. The twelve tribes, initially bound together in a sort of loose confederacy, had no central government. "In those days there was no king in Israel: everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 21:25, NKJV). With the emergence of the kingship, adaptation and adjustment did not always take place smoothly. Serious conflicts had to be resolved, sometimes with tragic consequences.

The narratives in Samuel not only describe one crisis after another in Israel but they reveal individual people in crisis, men and women like ourselves—Hannah, Eli, Samuel, Saul, and David. Thus the books of Samuel deal with the same kind of challenges that continue to face us some thirty centuries later: the challenge of trusting versus distrusting God; the challenge of divine will versus human inclination; the challenge of human relationships and sometimes untamed emotions; the challenge of spiritual leadership versus the prostitution of sacred office.

First and Second Samuel appear as one book in the ancient Hebrew manuscripts. Samuel could not have authored all of the book bearing his name, because he died before the end of the first book. Yet the entire story stands as the "lengthened shadow" of the prophet who established the prophetic office and became the spiritual mentor of Israel's first two kings.

Finally, the stories in this book reveal much about our God: His patience and mercy in dealing with perverse human nature; His holy and righteous character, which cannot and will not tolerate evil; His insistence on obedience from the heart resulting from a personal relationship with Him. He sought not mere outward or formal compliance, but a faith that internalizes His law in the heart and demonstrates it in the life, a faith that acknowledges sin, accepts forgiveness, and forsakes sin.

It is that kind of faith in the face of change, crisis, and challenge that is so much needed in the lives of God's people today. These lessons have been written for our admonition to help us develop a deeper and stronger faith as we prepare for the final changes, crises, and challenges of this earth's history.

OVERVIEW OF 1 AND 2 SAMUEL

1 Samuel 1:1—7:17	1 Samuel 8:1—31:13	2 Samuel 1:1—24:25
The judgeship of Samuel	The reign of Saul	The reign of David

God Hears the Prayer of Faith

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 1:1-3:21.



MEMORY TEXT: "Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, Go, lie down; and it shall be, if he call thee, that thou shalt say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth" (1 Samuel 3:9).

GOD CALLS PEOPLE to follow His purposes and plans. Because they respond in different ways to His plans for them, the outcome of their lives is different. God's way leads to His healing salvation; the way of the evil one leads to destruction.

OUTLINE:

- I. A Mother's Faith (1 Sam. 1:1-2:10).
- II. A Father's Failure (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22-36).
- III. Samuel's Call (1 Sam. 2:11, 18-20; 3:1-21).

WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH. The various ways in which people respond to God's call are illustrated in this week's lesson by the experiences of Hannah, Eli, Eli's sons, and Samuel. The choices made by these individuals had consequences that affected the lives of all Israel.

The voices of Moses and Joshua had long since been silenced by death. During the turbulent period of the judges (spanning some four centuries) Israel was a loose-knit nation of tribal groups who found themselves facing a world of political unrest and constant threat of invading enemies. Weak leadership marked the era for the most part. Corruption in high places discouraged the saints and disgusted the indifferent.

Even more serious was the lack of prophetic revelation from God. "The word of the Lord was rare in those days" (1 Sam. 3:1, NKJV). "Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6, NKJV).

In every era God wants to communicate with His people. Even in times of greatest unrest and darkness He chooses men and women to shine as lights for Him. This is as true in our age as it was in the time of Samuel. We determine the effectiveness of our relationship with God, often limiting its effectiveness by our faulty responses.

The Lord called a humble but dedicated woman to give birth to and train one of the greatest prophets and reformers in Israel's history. And He called Eli to the exalted position of priest and pastor of His people. Eli's response illustrates the weakness of human nature and demonstrates how men whom God calls can thwart God's plans for them.

I. A MOTHER'S FAITH (1 Sam. 1:1-2:10).**1. Read the opening story in 1 Samuel 1:1-18. What can be learned from this introduction about the following?**

Elkanah and his family (vs. 2-5) _____

Moral conditions in Israel (vs. 13, 14) _____

Religious life in Israel (vs. 3-5) _____

The name *Elkanah* means "God has redeemed" or "God has created." Elkanah was a Levite and a descendant of Korah. (See 1 Chron. 6:16, 27, 33, 34.) Because he lived with his wives, Hannah and Peninnah, in the hill country of Ephraim, he was called an Ephraimite. Elkanah, a Levite, should have been serving at the Tabernacle in Shiloh, but "irregularities" in the Eli family of priests made his service there unnecessary. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 569.) He must have been a man of influence, because only the wealthy could afford two wives. "The desire to perpetuate his name led the husband—as it had led many others—to contract a second marriage. But this step, prompted by a lack of faith in God, did not bring happiness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 569. (Compare Gen. 16:1-3.) Disregard for God's ideal for marriage, for whatever reasons, can bring only unhappiness and discontent. Peninnah, like Hagar, "bore herself with pride and insolence."

2. How did Hannah respond to the constant harassment by her rival? What does this reveal about Hannah's character? 1 Sam. 1:10, 11.

Prayer is a powerful weapon. Hannah must have been in the habit of earnest supplication to God, but her request on this occasion was especially urgent. Her appeal reached the ears of a loving heavenly Father. Her faith had triumphed over despair!

3. What does Eli's response to Hannah's praying suggest regarding the social conditions in Israel at that time? 1 Sam. 1:12-16.

"Feasting revelry had well-nigh supplanted true godliness among the people of Israel. Instances of intemperance, even among women, were of frequent occurrence, and now Eli determined to administer what he considered a deserved rebuke."—Ellen G. White Comments, *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1008.

4. Using the chart on page 8, compare the similarities and contrasts between the birth and early childhood of Samuel with that of Samson, John the Baptist, and Jesus:

Samuel	Samson	John the Baptist	Jesus
1 Sam. 1:20; 2:21, 26	Judges 13:1-5, 24	Luke 1:5-7, 13, 15, 66, 80	Luke 1:30-34; 2:40, 52

MON

5. In what ways did Hannah show her faith after Samuel was born? 1 Sam. 1:19-28.

Hannah demonstrated her faith by the very name she gave her son: "Asked of the Lord," a name that would serve as a constant reminder to him of his dedication from birth. "I asked him for this child, and he gave me what I asked for. So I am dedicating him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he will belong to the Lord" (1 Sam. 1:27, 28, TEV).

Imagine what mixed emotions must have surged through her mother heart as she brought Samuel to Shiloh to dedicate him to the Lord forever; joy at being able to bring such a beautiful gift to God, pain at having to part with her precious child, and apprehension at leaving him exposed to Eli's evil sons.

6. Compare Hannah's song of thanksgiving at the birth of Samuel with the song of praise by another mother in Israel, centuries later. Luke 1:46-55.

"The humble round of duties which women have come to regard as a wearisome task should be looked upon as a grand and noble work. It is the mother's privilege to bless the world by her influence, and in doing this she will bring joy to her own heart. She may make straight paths for the feet of her children, through sunshine and shadow, to the glorious heights above."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 572.

Questions we should face. How do we react when the Lord requires us to wait for some good thing for which we have prayed? Do we cling by faith to Him even though our prayer is not answered in the way we desire? Do we remember the Lord when our petition is granted? What experience of answered prayer can you share with others?

II. A FATHER'S FAILURE (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22-36).

7. List some of the regulations of the Levitical code that Eli's sons were violating. 1 Sam. 2:12-17. (Compare Lev. 7:23-36; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 576.)

An understanding of God's holy nature and character was to be taught by the manner in which the priests carried out the services of the tabernacle as given in the Levitical code, Israel's guidebook for worship. Every detail of the service portrayed some aspect of God's great plan of redemption. Every violation of the sacred service marred its significance and weakened the message it conveyed, bringing contempt upon divine things.

TUE 8. Who had the greater responsibility for these sins, Eli's sons, or Eli himself? Why? 1 Sam. 2:22-29.

Eli was a good man, but his weakness in not restraining his sons, and worse, in permitting them to continue serving as priests, brought disgrace to God's work for years to come. Eventually his family line ceased to function as priests. However, the father's failure in no way excuses the sons. We each have individual responsibility for our sins.

The responsibility of parents and pastors. "We are just as responsible for evils that we might have checked in others by exercise of parental or pastoral authority as if the acts had been our own. . . . The influence of an ill-regulated family is widespread and disastrous to all society. It accumulates in a tide of evil that affects families, communities, and governments."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 578, 579.

9. What spiritual truth did the unknown prophet remind Eli would be fulfilled regarding his family? 1 Sam. 2:30-36.

"Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained" (1 Sam. 2:30, NIV) is no arbitrary judgment on God's part, but a great law of life. We reap what we sow. To despise God's order is to invite destruction. "Do not trifle with the sacred privileges of God's house! They will condemn where they do not uplift."—F. B. Meyer, *Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1984), p. 118.

The responsibility of spiritual leadership is awesome. While we must remember that those in sacred office are fallible human beings with feet of clay like our own, yet the fact that they have been called by God to perform His work places upon them great privilege and high accountability. How can the world believe the reality of the Christian message if it is not demonstrated in the lives of those who proclaim it?

"Great as are the evils of parental unfaithfulness under any circumstances, they are tenfold greater when they exist in the families of those appointed as teachers of the people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 579.

10. God promised to raise up a faithful priest, one whom He could trust, one who would not disappoint the people or dishonor Him. Who fulfilled this prophecy? 1 Sam. 2:35 (compare 1 Sam. 3:19-21).

Of this prophecy, "some scholars think it refers to Zadok, . . . Others think it refers to Christ, and still others feel the prophecy is fulfilled in Samuel and his work. But the important lesson of this statement is to be found in the fact that man cannot prevent the final accomplishment of God's desire to restore His own image in the heart of man."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 464.

Ask yourself, Am I an Eli, in the home, the school, or the church? If so, how can I change so that my responsibilities will be fulfilled in the manner that God approves?

WED

III. SAMUEL'S CALL (1 Sam. 2:11, 18-20; 3:1-21).

11. **What might have been some of Samuel's duties in his ministry as a boy priest? 1 Sam. 2:11, 18-20. (Compare 1 Sam. 3:15 and *Patriarchs and Prophets* pp. 573, 574.)**

The usual age for young men entering the priesthood was 25, but an exception was made for Samuel. Early in life he began wearing the linen ephod as a token of his dedication to the service of God. But his duties matched his age and abilities: Opening the doors of the tabernacle every morning, emptying the ashes from the altar, trimming the golden lampstands. Whatever the duties, he performed them faithfully. All the while he was training for higher responsibilities. No duty is unimportant when done to the glory of God.

12. **Why was the word of the Lord rare in the days of the judges, the time into which Samuel was born? When will such circumstances be repeated? Judges 6:1; Amos 8:11, 12.**

The book of Judges reveals a dark and shocking period of Israel's history. Shameful violence, gross immorality, brazen idolatry, and national apostasy pervaded the nation like a thick cloud. Samuel was to be the "morning star" of their reformation.

God will not tolerate evil. Judgment must come, but before His judgments were to fall on the wicked sons of Eli He already was preparing a deliverer through whom His grace and His power to save would be revealed.

13. **Review the story of Samuel's call from the Lord by completing the following:**

When did the call come? 1 Sam. 3:2-4 _____

How did Samuel respond? 1 Sam. 3:5-8 _____

Who interpreted the call of God to Samuel? 1 Sam. 3:9 _____

The seven golden lamps were to be kept burning constantly, and trimmed every morning and evening. "Before dawn, while the lamp was still burning" (1 Sam. 3:3, TEV) Samuel awakened to a voice calling his name. Thinking that Eli had called him, Samuel hastened to his side. The third time this happened Eli realized that the call was from God. He instructed Samuel how to answer. Because Samuel had never before had a direct encounter with God, he needed the aged priest's affirmation that it was indeed the voice of God that spoke to him.

God's call confirmed by the church. The voice that called young Samuel to the prophetic office was the same voice that later called Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Saul's call then was confirmed by the church through Ananias. (See Acts 9:10-15.) David, when called and anointed by Samuel to be king over Israel, waited many years until the nation confirmed that call with a coronation.

Samuel answered God's call, but waited for God to lead him into the fulfillment of the prophetic office.

14. If you had been in Samuel's place, how would you have responded to the unpleasant task of revealing to your superior the message given by God (1 Sam. 3:11-18)?
-

We are to give God's message faithfully. "As we see the fulfillment of prophecy, our faith in the final triumph of Christ's kingdom should strengthen; and we should go forth with renewed courage to do our appointed work.

"The solemn, sacred message of warning must be proclaimed in the most difficult fields and in the most sinful cities, in every place where the light of the great threefold gospel message has not yet dawned."—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 26, 27.

15. What does Eli's response to Samuel's message tell us about his attitude? Would it have been too late at this point for Eli or his sons to repent? 1 Sam. 3:18.
-

"Eli did not manifest the fruits of true repentance. He confessed his guilt, but failed to renounce the sin. Year after year the Lord delayed His threatened judgments. Much might have been done in those years to redeem the failures of the past, but the aged priest took no effective measures to correct the evils that were polluting the sanctuary of the Lord and leading thousands in Israel to ruin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 582.

16. Though exposed to the same environment, Eli's sons chose opposite paths to those Samuel chose. What factors made the difference in Samuel's spiritual growth and development?

17. What do these words mean: "The Lord was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground" (1 Sam. 3:19, NKJV)?
-

"As Samuel grew up, the Lord was with him, and made come true everything that Samuel said. So all the people of Israel, from one end of the country to the other, knew that Samuel was indeed a prophet of the Lord. The Lord continued to reveal himself at Shiloh, where he had appeared to Samuel and had spoken to him. And when Samuel spoke, all Israel listened" (1 Sam. 3:19-21, TEV).

HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME? How do I respond to the call of God when He asks me to do something for Him? I can cooperate with the Lord and the church in fulfilling the divine call in the ways that follow:

FRI **FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION:** Read "The Child Samuel" and "Eli and His Sons" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 569-580. If available, read the *SDA Bible Commentary* on 1 Samuel 1-3. Read the entire text for today's lesson in several modern translations if possible.

SUMMARY: In the same way that God called Samuel to the prophetic office, He calls each of us to fellowship with Himself and to service to His church and the world. When God calls me by name, am I ready to respond, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant hears"?

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What Do They Believe?

SKIP McCARTY

Reverence for the Holy

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 4:1-7:14.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the Lord their God" (Exodus 29:45, 46).

RESPECT FOR GOD'S PRESENCE. We are blessed as we show love and reverence for God in our homes, our schools, our hospitals, and our churches. Israel and her enemies perverted the use of the visible symbols of the divine Presence and thereby lost the blessing.

OUTLINE:

- I. Israel's Error (1 Sam. 4:1-22).
- II. The Philistine's Offense (1 Sam. 5:1-6:21).
- III. From Defeat to Victory (1 Sam. 7:1-14).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ARK. Though the people of Israel "knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord" (1 Sam. 3:20), spiritual life in the nation was at a low ebb. The evil influence of Eli's sons in the sanctuary at Shiloh had brought the sacred services into public contempt. Even the neighboring nations, knowing of the scandal, became bolder in their idolatry and crime. "But a day of retribution was approaching. God's authority had been set aside, and His worship neglected and despised, and it became necessary for Him to interpose, that the honor of His name might be maintained."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 583.

The ark of the covenant was the symbol of God's presence. It was the focal point of the sanctuary services. God had given careful instruction regarding the building and handling of this sacred chest. (See Ex. 25:10-16.) But the people of Israel, their senses dulled by sin and influenced by Eli's sons, had borrowed some of the pagan ideas of their idolatrous neighbors. They regarded the ark as an object of worship. How God brought them through tragedy, defeat, and finally to revival and victory is the subject we will study this week.

SUN I. ISRAEL'S ERROR (1 Sam. 4:1-22).

1. Why was Israel defeated by the Philistines when they went out to battle against them (1 Sam. 4:1, 2)? Deut. 20:1-4 (compare 7:18-21).

“This expedition was undertaken by the Israelites without counsel from God, without the concurrence of high priest or prophet.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 583. God had promised to fight Israel’s battles for her. He knew that even at best the people would be no match for the powerful enemies they would meet. At this point in time the tribes of Israel were a loosely knit, poorly organized confederacy with virtually no equipment to match the military might of their troublesome enemy. The Philistines, on the other hand, were well organized, and superior in military know-how and sheer numbers. Their monopoly of the use of iron weapons and their four-wheeled wooden ox-carts made them a formidable enemy.

To their credit, the elders of Israel recognized that their disastrous defeat was the result of not allowing the Lord to guide them. In trying to make amends they made matters worse by calling for the ark to be taken into battle with them.

2. **On what basis did the Israelites make this decision? 1 Sam. 4:3-6 (compare Joshua 6:1-16). What fallacy prompted this action? 1 Sam. 4:7, 8.**

The only record of the ark accompanying the Israelites to battle was under the leadership of Joshua in the taking of Jericho. At that time, they did so under the specific supervision and instruction of God.

Possibly the Philistines’ fish god, Dagon, accompanied the wily enemies of Israel to the battlefield. Perhaps the influence of such pagan customs led the Israelites to believe that the ark would somehow ensure God’s presence with them. The elders decided to take the ark into battle without securing divine permission.

The Israelites’ presumption. “They did not consider that it was the law of God which alone gave to the ark its sacredness, and that its presence would bring them prosperity only as they obeyed that law. . . .

“The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, eagerly acceded to the proposal to bear the ark into the camp. Without the consent of the high priest, they ventured presumptuously into the holy of holies, and took from thence the ark of God. Filled with pride, and elated with the expectation of speedy victory, they bore it to the camp. And the people, beholding, as they thought, the token of Jehovah’s presence, ‘shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.’ ”—Ellen G. White *Comments, SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1011.

3. **Under what circumstances was the Lord enthroned above the ark of the covenant? Ex. 25:8, 21, 22; 29:45, 46.**

Israelites, like their enemies, had come to look upon the ark as a kind of good-luck charm, if not a god. The ark was sacred because, when it was placed in the Most Holy apartment of the sanctuary, it was the place where the person of God was manifested. Nature testifies to God’s glory, but na-

ture is not God. So the ark testified to God's presence in the sanctuary, but the ark was not God. This great truth distinguished Israel's God and Israel's religion from false gods and false religions.

4. What lessons can we learn from the tragic events that followed? 1 Sam. 4:9-21.

"The most terrifying calamity that could occur had befallen Israel. . . . The wife of Phinehas, notwithstanding the impiety of her husband, was a woman who feared the Lord. . . . She felt that the last hope of Israel was gone; and she named the child born in this hour of adversity, Ichabod, or 'inglorious'; . . . 'The glory is departed from Israel: for the ark of God is taken.'"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 584, 585.

What is true reverence? Israel assumed that God was with them because they honored the symbol of His presence. In what ways do we sometimes make the same mistake?

II. THE PHILISTINES' OFFENSE (1 Sam. 5:1-6:21).

5. Read 1 Samuel 5 for the account of the Philistines' experience with the sacred ark. Note how God cared for the ark and, despite the failure of His people, defended His own honor:

Verse 3 _____

Verse 4 _____

Verse 6 _____

Verse 9 _____

Verses 11, 12 _____

An opportunity lost. Think of the missionary impact this experience could have had on the idolatrous Philistines. Notice the advice of the priests and diviners who suggested they "give glory unto the God of Israel" (1 Sam. 6:5).

6. What might have happened if the Philistines had been sincere in this acknowledgement of the true God? 1 Sam. 6:1-12.

"These wise men acknowledged a mysterious power accompanying the ark. . . . Yet they did not counsel the people to turn from their idolatry to serve the Lord. They still hated the God of Israel, though compelled by overwhelming judgments to submit to His authority."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 587.

TUE

7. Why were the Israelites of Beth-shemesh not better prepared than the Philistines to have the ark among them? 1 Sam. 6:13-21.

Notice the reasons pointed out in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 589:

- The worshipers failed to repent of their sins.
- They were not faithfully obeying God's law.
- They looked at the return of the ark as a harbinger of good, but had no true sense of its sacredness.
- Instead of finding a suitable place for it, they left it in the harvest field where it had arrived.
- They became familiar with it, then curious to see its contents, and finally emboldened to remove the sacred coverings. Only the high priest was permitted to behold the ark, and that once a year. (See Heb. 9:7; Lev. 16:2, 29-31.) Even the Philistines had not dared to open it. The Israelites' sin was a daring violation of God's command to honor the ark with reverence and awe.

What are the results of irreverence in the church today? What does Israel's experience teach us regarding the sacredness of the symbols of God's presence? How would you suggest that irreverence in God's house should be corrected?

III. FROM DEFEAT TO VICTORY (1 Sam. 7:1-14).

8. Where did the ark finally find a safe resting place? 1 Sam. 7:1, 2.

Apparently the people of Beth-shemesh, including the Levites among them, did not repent of their sin, but appealed to the men of Kirjath-jearim to take the ark. "With solemn gladness they brought it to their city and placed it in the house of Abinadab, a Levite. This man appointed his son Eleazar to take charge of it, and it remained there for many years."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 589.

Archeological evidence supports the idea that Shiloh most likely was destroyed by the Philistines during the battle of Aphek. There is no more mention of it in the book of Samuel. (See Ps. 78:60-64.) Nob became the home of the sanctuary during the reign of Saul. (See 1 Sam. 22:19.) The ark remained in the house of Abinadab for twenty years until the time of David's reign.

WED

9. What was it likely that Samuel was doing during the twenty-year period after Israel's terrible defeat? What relationship existed between Israel and the Philistines? 1 Sam. 7:3.

Samuel must have carried a heavy burden on his heart for his wayward people. Imagine him walking the dusty roads of his country, from village

to village, from home to home, pleading for the people to return to God, warning them, and praying with and for them.

While there evidently was no deportation of Israelites to Philistia, they were subject to the Philistines, paying tribute, and serving them in various ways. Social and business relationships brought them into constant contact with Philistines. While the Israelites hated being in bondage to them, they came to love their ways, accepting their customs, their gods, and their evils.

The strange gods they adopted included the female deity, Ashtaroth, who was the consort of both the Philistine fish god, Dagon, and the Canaanite Baal. "Her worship usually consisted of lewd orgies, fostered many times by leading women who became her devotees and were known as 'sacred women,' or temple prostitutes."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 480.

- 10. When the Israelites began to turn their hearts to the Lord, what course did Samuel specify that they must take as evidence of their repentance? 1 Sam. 7:3, 4.**

The psalmist declared: "With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!" "I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes" (Ps. 119:10, 112, NKJV). Seeking God with the whole heart involves turning to Him in obedience to His commands, repenting of sins, and turning away from habits, attitudes, idols, or whatever separates us from Him. This leads to genuine revival.

"He who searches the heart, desires to win His people from every species of idolatry. . . . O that you would search your hearts as with a lighted candle, and discover and break the finest thread that binds you to worldly habits, which divert the mind from God."—*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 318.

- 11. Compare Samuel's appeal to the people to "return unto the Lord, with all your hearts," with the following: 1 Kings 8:46-50; Isa. 55:6, 7. What do these references tell us about our God?**

"All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. Tongue cannot utter it; pen cannot portray it. . . . Eternity itself can never fully reveal it."—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 740.

"There is need today of such a revival of true heart religion as was experienced by ancient Israel."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 590.

- 12. What was the Philistines' reaction to Israel's revival? 1 Sam. 7:5-7. Do you see any parallels in this experience to that of our church today? Rev. 12:10-12.**

"The lords of the Philistines recognized this to be tantamount to a declaration of independence. . . . The Philistines attacked with such speed that the Israelites, assembled from various parts of the country with peaceful intentions, were compelled to meet them, unprepared for warfare. The only way out was through prayer."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 482.

The enemy of our souls is not too concerned about us as long as he thinks he has us in his grip. But when revival comes to us and he sees we are in earnest about breaking our ties with him, he attacks speedily and fiercely.

- 13. Compare Israel's response to the Philistine threat this time with their reaction 20 years earlier. Compare the results of this battle with the earlier one. What made the difference? 1 Sam. 7:8-10; 1 Sam. 4:1-3.**

What a change from the overconfident, self-reliant people of twenty years earlier, now humbled and totally surrendered to the Lord, pleading, "'Do not cease to cry out to the Lord our God for us'" (1 Sam. 7:8, NKJV). What a difference the prophet's prayers made! How easily God defeated their enemies when they relied on Him to fight their battles for them! "For nations as well as for individuals, the path of obedience to God is the path of safety and happiness."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 591.

- 14. How did Israel celebrate God's intervention in their behalf? What were the long-range results of their victory? 1 Sam. 7:12-14.**

"'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,' and He will help us to the end. 1 Samuel 7:12. Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us, . . . thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage."—*Steps to Christ*, p. 125.

WHERE IS MY ALLEGIANCE? Do I place more emphasis on the symbols of religion than on the presence of God in my life? Check the suggestions below which you consider to be the best solutions to this problem.

___ Do away with religious symbols, such as churches, religious art and music, the communion service, baptism.

___ Invent new religious symbols that will be more spiritually meaningful to me.

___ Constantly remind myself that religious symbols have no real significance apart from the spiritual relationship with God that they represent.

___ Invite Christ to come into my heart, to take over the direction of my life, and trust Him for guidance and protection.

FRI

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read "The Ark Taken by the Philistines" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 581-591. Study a good map of ancient Palestine to become familiar with the places of today's lesson and the topography of the land. If you have a Bible dictionary, look up further information on the Philistines.

SUMMARY: God entrusted His people Israel with the sacred ark of the covenant, containing His holy law. He revealed His presence above the ark, where He made known His will. But when Israel treated the ark as a god instead of a symbol of His presence, and when they regarded it as commonplace, He withdrew His favor. When we engage in religious activities and enter into worship services without the presence of Christ in our hearts, we expose ourselves to the same risk of spiritual and eternal loss that many experienced in ancient Israel.



**Is Christ the center of your financial life?
Remember the South Pacific Division this quarter.**

God's Rule or Human Rule?

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 7:15-8:22.

**SAB
PM**

MEMORY TEXT: "And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (1 Samuel 8:7).

IGNORING DIVINE GUIDANCE HAS TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES. When God's people ignore His counsel and insist on having their own way, the Lord sometimes acknowledges their choice, obliging them to live with the consequences.

OUTLINE:

- I. Samuel's Ministry; Schools of the Prophets (1 Sam. 7:15-17).
- II. "We Want a King" (1 Sam. 8:1-9).
- III. Dangers of a Monarchy (1 Sam. 8:9-22).

PROPHETS SPEAK FOR GOD. From earliest Bible times God chose men and women to speak for Him. Abraham was called a prophet. (See Gen. 20:7.) Moses enjoyed a relationship with God that went beyond that of prophets in general. (See Num. 12:6-8.) Samuel's ministry marked a new era. He was the first to establish the prophetic office. As founder and president of the schools of the prophets, he trained young men to assist him in his teaching ministry and in shepherding his people Israel.

What a disappointment to him, then, to find the people dissatisfied with the system of prophet-judge under the kingship of God! They clamored for a king, so that they might be "like the other nations." Samuel knew that the entire future history of Israel was at stake in this decision.

God treats His children as intelligent, rational creatures. He warns them of dangers and appeals for them to accept His plans, but then He allows them freedom of choice. This understanding of God's dealing with humans is well illustrated in today's lesson.

I. SAMUEL'S MINISTRY; SCHOOLS OF THE PROPHETS (1 Sam. 7:15-17).

1. What three major offices did Samuel hold as leader of God's people? 1 Sam. 3:20; 7:9, 15-17.

Samuel's work and ministry marked a transition period in Israel's history. He was the last of the judges, and the first of the official prophets. He also served as a Levitical priest in the absence of the sanctuary services, which had been discontinued with the destruction of the tabernacle at Shiloh. God used Samuel to set up a new form of government at this perilous time in Israel's history.

2. What other important work occupied Samuel's energies? 1 Sam. 19:20.

Samuel was the founder and president of the schools of the prophets. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 593, 663.) He gathered companies of dedicated young men, known as "sons of the prophets," to these schools to train them as leaders and teachers of the oracles of God. The term *Nai-oth in Ramah* (1 Sam. 19:18, 19) refers to "a place 'in Ramah,' where Samuel and the 'sons of the prophets' dwelt, and where David stayed for some time while hiding from Saul (1 Sa 19:18, 19, 22, 23; 20:1). Some have suggested that the Hebrew term may mean 'dwelling,' in the sense of a 'dormitory' in which prophets lived."—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, revised edition, p. 776.

The schools of the prophets were located at Ramah and Kirjath-jearim. Later under the ministry of Elijah and Elisha there were others at Jericho, Bethel, and Gilgal.

"The 'sons of the prophets' were not necessarily direct recipients of the prophetic gift, but were divinely called, as are gospel ministers today, to instruct the people in the will and ways of God. The schools of the prophets were a powerful force to restrain the tide of evil that often threatened to submerge the Hebrew people in a flood of idolatry, materialism, and injustice, and provided a barrier against the fast-spreading wave of corruption."—*SDA Bible Dictionary*, revised edition, p. 903.

3. Study the following facts about the schools of the prophets as outlined by Ellen White, and supported by other Bible scholars. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 592-602.) Do you see any parallels to the pattern God has given His modern-day church for education?

Purpose of the schools:

a. To supplement the educational process provided by the home and parents, especially for those who desired to search deeper into spiritual truth.

b. To serve as a barrier against widespread corruption.

c. To provide for the moral and spiritual welfare of youth.

d. To promote the future prosperity of the nation by "furnishing it with men qualified to act in the fear of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 593.

Course of Study:

a. The law of God as given through Moses.

b. Sacred history.

- c. Sacred music and poetry.
- d. Practical training in the vocations such as tilling the soil and mechanical skills.
- e. The cultivation of personal piety and devotion.

Learning was experiential, not merely academic. "A spirit of devotion was cherished. Not only were students taught the duty of prayer, but they were taught how to pray, how to approach their Creator, how to exercise faith in Him, and how to understand and obey the teachings of His Spirit. Sanctified intellects brought forth from the treasure house of God things new and old, and the Spirit of God was manifested in prophecy and sacred song."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 594.

What major differences do you see between the kind of education given in the schools of the prophets and that usually given in schools and colleges today? Where are your children being trained? Why is Christian education so important?

II. "WE WANT A KING" (1 Sam. 8:1-9).

4. **What specific circumstances prompted the elders in Israel to ask Samuel to give them a king? 1 Sam. 8:1-5.**

"It was with the full assent of the nation that Samuel had appointed his sons to office; but they did not prove themselves worthy of their father's choice. . . . The sons of the prophet had not heeded the precepts which he had sought to impress upon their minds. . . . The warning given to Eli had not exerted the influence upon the mind of Samuel that it should have done. He had been to some extent too indulgent with his sons, and the result was apparent in their character and life. . . . Had the evil course of his sons been known to him, he would have removed them without delay; but this was not what the petitioners desired."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 604.

5. **What was the real reason for Israel's wanting a king? 1 Sam. 8:20.**
-

This was not the first time Israel had thought of having a king. In the days of the judges, some of the men of Israel tried to make Gideon their king. (See Judges 8:22, 23.) Later the men of Shechem made Abimelech, Gideon's son, their king for a time. (See Judges 9:1-6.)

Israel's government during the period of the judges was a rather loose-knit confederacy of the twelve tribes. Politically, it was a time of turmoil when Israel was often subject to defeat. The judgeship system seemed to have failed. The arguments of the elders for combining the tribes into a monarchy for stronger military defense, and for continuity of leadership sounded logical from a human viewpoint.

The real issue was not in Israel's system of government but in her

failure to obey God's laws. The future history of Israel and Judah would prove all too tragically that a monarchy would be no more effective than the spirituality and integrity of the king on the throne.

The elders seemed to forget that if the priest's sons could be vile, and the prophet's sons dishonest, the king's sons might also be corrupt. Moreover, in a monarchy it would be most difficult to change leaders.

6. What was Samuel's response to this request? What did he do?
1 Sam. 8:6.

What would you have done? Put yourself in Samuel's place. Try to imagine your own emotional reaction to this situation. Have you ever been in a similar circumstance? How did you react? Did you remember to pray?

TUE

The Real Problem. "Samuel saw that their real motive was discontent and pride, and that their demand was the result of a deliberate and determined purpose. No complaint had been made against Samuel. All acknowledged the integrity and wisdom of his administration; but the aged prophet looked upon the request as a censure upon himself, and a direct effort to set him aside. He did not, however, reveal his feelings; he uttered no reproach, but carried the matter to the Lord in prayer, and sought counsel from Him alone."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 604, 605.

7. What was God's response? 1 Sam. 8:7. Read the texts below and list other instances in Israel's history when God agreed to let His people have their own way, even though it was not in their best interest.

Num. 11:4-6, 18-20, 31-34 _____

Num. 13:30-33; 14:22-24 _____

God said, in effect, "Don't feel bad, Samuel; this is the way they've been treating Me 'since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day'" (1 Sam. 8:8).

"How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! Again and again they tried God's patience and provoked the Holy One of Israel" (Ps. 78:40, 41, NEB).

What have been the results in your life when God has allowed you to have your own way regarding something that you knew in your heart was not His will for you?

III. DANGERS OF A MONARCHY (1 Sam. 8:9-22).

8. Before giving the people their request, what warning was Samuel instructed to deliver? 1 Sam. 8:9-18.

9. Contrast the excuses Israel gave for wanting a king with the warnings God gave against having one:

Why Israel Wanted a King: 1 Sam. 8:5, 20.	Why God Said It Was Not Best: 1 Sam. 8:11-17
Discontent with Samuel's sons.	Misuse of power over subjects.
Wanted to be like the nations. (Compare Lev. 18:2-4.)	King would demand best resources to enrich himself.
Wanted a king to judge them. (Compare Deut. 17:8-13.)	High taxes to support a monarchy.
Wanted a king to fight their battles. (Compare Deut. 20:4; 7:18-21; 9:3.)	Conscription to military would take their sons. Oppression of the people was likely. God promised to fight for them.

10. Study the following examples of the fulfillment of these predictions in the reigns of some of the kings of Israel and Judah:

- High taxes: 1 Kings 10:25.
- Service for the king: 1 Kings 10:25, 26.
- Best of the land: 1 Kings 21:1-16.
- Oppression of the people: 1 Kings 12:1-14.
- Military conscription: 1 Chron. 21:1-4, 7.

WED

11. What lay at the root of Israel's problem throughout history? What lessons can I learn for myself and my church? Compare Deut. 1:30-32; Ps. 78:17, 22.

Israel's failure to trust God in simple belief is seen by the psalmist as rebellion. Their insistence on a king was an outright refusal to trust God's promises of deliverance from their enemies.

12. God foresaw that Israel would want a king. What guidelines did He give to Moses in the event that happened? Deut. 17:14-20.

"Though a monarchical form of government for Israel had been foretold in prophecy, God had reserved to Himself the right to choose their king."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 608.

13. In the chart below rate the first three kings of Israel on the specific guidelines given in Deuteronomy 17:14-20, with an (A)

for “according to God’s will,” (F) for “failure,” and (C) for “acceptable.” (Study the texts listed below the chart.)

God’s Requirements for a King	Saul	David	Solomon
King to be chosen by God, v. 15			
He must be an Israelite, v. 15			
He must not enrich himself at expense of subjects, nor enslave them, vs. 16, 17			
He must not multiply wives, v. 17			
He must rule by law of God, vs. 18-20			

Saul: 1 Sam. 9:15-17; 9:2; 15:9; 2 Sam. 3:7; 1 Sam. 14:24; 15:23.

David: 1 Sam. 16:1; 5:13; 8:15; 24:17; 7:25-27.

Solomon: 1 Chron. 28:5; 29:1; 1 Kings 10:14, 26-29; 11:1-4; 4:26, 27; 9:22; 11:9-11.

Although Israel wanted a king “that they might be like the other nations,” their true King wanted to spare them the tyranny, serfdom, and corruption that often came with this form of government. Through Moses, God had given restrictions and sound principles that, if followed, might avoid the pitfalls of an authoritarian state. Sadly, His counsel was more often ignored than followed by Israel’s future kings. The Israelites had chosen to reject God as their King. Instead of His divine assistance, they would now be subject to the hereditary succession of a line of kings that would often bring apostasy and disgrace to the nation.

THU

14. After hearing of the dangers of a monarchy, how did the people respond? 1 Sam. 8:19, 20. What lessons for the church today can we learn from Israel’s experience?

“The Israelites did not realize that to be in this respect unlike other nations was a special privilege and blessing. God had separated the Israelites from every other people, to make them His own peculiar treasure. But they, disregarding this high honor, eagerly desired to imitate the example of the heathen! And still the longing to conform to worldly practices and customs exists among the professed people of God. As they depart from the Lord, they become ambitious for the gains and honors of the world. . . . For the sake of earthly distinction they sacrifice the unspeakable honor to which God has called them.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 607.

15. Sometime later, when the people admitted to their sin in asking for a king, what appeal did they make to Samuel? 1 Sam. 12:19.
-

In many ways Samuel was a type of Christ. The people had despised his "humble authority," even as centuries later the Jewish nation would reject the humble Man of Galilee as their king, choosing Barabbas instead.

Perhaps the quality of Samuel's leadership that shines out the brightest is his intercession for his people. On several occasions the people came crying to him with the plea "Pray for us." Dedicated as he was to their spiritual welfare, he assured them in words that should burn into every leader's heart: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. 12:23; compare Heb. 7:25).

16. What precious assurance did Samuel give the people at this time? 1 Sam. 12:22. What lesson does this teach us about the kind of God we serve?
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THE MODERN PARALLEL. List some areas of our personal lives and our church life in which we tend to make choices similar to those of the Israelites in demanding a king to rule over them:

- Personal choices: _____

- Choices by the church: _____

- What should we do to correct the situation? _____

FRI FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter, "The Schools of the Prophets" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 592-602.

SUMMARY: Samuel's dedicated ministry to Israel, and to the schools of the prophets, provides models for our church today. The story of Israel's rejection of God's system of government, their insistence on having a king, and their unbelief stand as warnings to us today. (See 1 Cor. 10:11.)

Lesson 4

January 20-26

God Chooses the Leaders of His People

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 9:1-12:25.

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MEMORY TEXT: "For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake; because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people" (1 Samuel 12:22).

LEADERS CHOSEN AND TESTED. In every era of history, God has chosen faithful leaders for His people. Their success or failure has always depended upon their willingness to follow His leading.

OUTLINE:

- I. Saul Chosen to Be King (1 Sam. 9:1-27).
- II. Saul Anointed King (1 Sam. 10:1-16).
- III. The Coronation of Saul (1 Sam. 10:17-27).
- IV. Israel's New King (1 Sam. 11:1-13).
- V. The Kingdom Confirmed (1 Sam. 11:14-12:25).

GOD SELECTS A KING. God consented to let Israel have a king. But through the prophet Samuel He definitely controlled the choice. The narrative makes clear that Saul did not aspire to be king, nor had the people chosen him. God handpicked an unknown young man from the small tribe of Benjamin. Samuel surprised Saul by anointing him king, after which Saul won the respect of the people in his first battle encounter. Samuel reassured the Israelites that God always would teach and guide them if they would remain faithful to Him.

The pertinent message for us is that, even when His people diverge from His will, God is directly involved in their affairs. He appoints leaders to revive their spirits, refurbish their waning spiritual energies, and direct them to the divine Source of their wisdom and strength. Humanity may fail, but God never does. There is a divine hand guiding the affairs of His church, a merciful Providence hovering over faulty believers, a loving God tenderly implementing His infinite purpose for the salvation of lost humanity.

SUN **I. SAUL CHOSEN TO BE KING (1 Sam. 9:1-27).**

1. Read the story of Saul and his father's donkeys in 1 Samuel 9:1-14. Comment on the following:

Saul's background (v. 1) _____

Saul's appearance (v. 2) _____

Saul's occupation (v. 3) _____

Saul's servant (vs. 5-8) _____

“The personal qualities of the future monarch were such as to gratify that pride of heart which prompted the desire for a king. . . . Of noble and dignified bearing, in the prime of life, comely and tall, he appeared like one born to command.”— *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 608.

2. What significance does this detailed account (1 Sam. 9:1-14) have for the story about Israel's wanting a king?

Saul is introduced in the narrative as a man looking for his father's asses. These animals would become symbols of royalty in Israel. Instead of finding the animals Saul found the prophet. Or did the prophet find him? God had agreed to give His people a king, but He remained in control of the selection process. Saul had no political experience, no aspirations to be a leader, but God recognized that he fitted the description of what Israel wanted in a king—strong physical prowess and attractive appearance. Moreover, at this stage Saul was susceptible to divine conviction and leading.

The Philistines were a tall, strong people. Could that have influenced the Israelites' desire for a leader such as Saul? (See 1 Sam. 9:16, 17.)

3. Reconstruct in your own words the story of the meeting between Saul and Samuel. 1 Sam. 9:18-10:1. Note especially what God said to Samuel when he saw Saul for the first time. 1 Sam. 9:17.

- What would be your thoughts if you had been Samuel, knowing that you were handing over your leadership to an unknown, inexperienced man?

- How would you have felt had you been Saul, facing an uncharted course, and perhaps a dangerous task as military leader against the wily Philistines?

- What situations can you think of in the church today that may be similar to the situation in which Samuel and Saul found themselves?

II. SAUL ANOINTED KING (1 Sam. 10:1-16).

4. What was the significance of the secret anointing of Saul? 1 Sam. 10:1-8?

“At this stage it was a private and indeed secret action; Samuel took care to be unobserved by others (9:27), and Saul did not even tell his closest relatives what had happened [1 Sam. 10:16]. . . . In other words, it was a symbolic act, making him king in God’s sight but not yet in the nation’s. (It is possible that the word translated *prince* in verse 1 means ‘king-designate,’ ‘king to be.’).”—David F. Payne, *I & II Samuel* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), p. 50.

5. What evidence was seen at this time that God had called Saul to be the first king of Israel? 1 Sam. 10:9-13.

Imagine how this train of events must have affected Saul! The ruddy outdoor man, accustomed to farms and farm animals, now faced with the responsibility of leading a nation, joined the “sons of the prophets” in singing praises to God. (The Hebrew word translated “prophesy” may mean “to act as a spokesman for God.”)

The use of music for the praise and worship of God was considered part of the prophetic gift. David’s musicians are said to have prophesied with harps, psalteries, cymbals, and their voices. (See 1 Chron. 25:1-6.)

Saul spiritually transformed. No wonder the people marveled at the dramatic change that had come about in Saul. “God gave him another heart” (1 Sam. 10:9). When the Spirit of God comes upon His willing, believing people, their lives are transformed. They respond with thanksgiving and demonstrate an earnest desire to follow God’s leading. This experience of spiritual renewal must be fostered daily by prayer, Bible study, and submission to the Lord’s will.

How would you describe the change in your life when you first accepted Christ as your Saviour? What differences do you see in your spiritual experience now? Does Revelation 2:4 apply to you? If so, how can you regain the inspiration of your early relationship with Christ?

III. THE CORONATION OF SAUL (1 Sam. 10:17-27).

6. What mixed reactions surfaced among the people at Saul’s coronation at Mizpah? What was Saul’s reaction? 1 Sam. 10:21-24, 27.

“While the people in general were ready to acknowledge Saul as their king, there was a large party in opposition. For a monarch to be chosen from Benjamin, the smallest of the tribes of Israel—and that to the neglect of both Judah and Ephraim, the largest and most powerful—was a slight which they could not brook. . . . Those who had been most urgent in their demand for a king were the very ones that refused to accept with gratitude the man of God’s appointment. . . . In this condition of affairs Saul did not see fit to assume the royal dignity.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 611, 612.

7. What did Samuel do to ensure that the new monarchy would operate according to God's plan? 1 Sam. 10:25. Review some of the guidelines that might have been included in this document. Deut. 17:14-20.

“From the very start, as verse 25 shows, the monarchy was constitutional: the kings would have both *rights and duties*. We might see in the document mentioned here a sort of bill of rights for the people, held in the very safe keeping of a sanctuary (that is the meaning of the phrase *before the Lord*). Here was an important brake upon the development of absolute power. Strictly speaking, *rights and duties* is used to translate a single word (*mishpat*) in Hebrew, which in other contexts might mean ‘custom’ or ‘ways,’ as in 8:11. Such a document must however have been a legal one, not a mere description of the ways which kings are prone to act; so ‘regulations’ (NIV) is probably the nearest English equivalent to *mishpat*.”—David F. Payne, *I & II Samuel*, p. 53.

What is your reaction when someone is appointed to a position in the church that you think he or she is not qualified to fill? Is it possible that, in some circumstances, like Saul's opponents, you are opposing an appointment made by God?

IV. ISRAEL'S NEW KING (1 Sam. 11:1-13).

8. Following a time of apparent inactivity on the part of the new king, what crisis provided Saul an opportunity to assert his leadership role? 1 Sam. 11:1-11.

Jabesh-gilead, a small city in northern Transjordan, was suddenly besieged by the Ammonites, who felt confident of help from more powerful tribes. Not far away was the Philistine fortress city of Beth-shean.

Acting quickly, and exerting his new royal mandate, Saul mustered an army, descended on the Ammonites, and put them to flight.

9. After the stunning victory given by God at Jabesh-gilead, some of the people wanted revenge on Saul's detractors. What was Saul's response, and what does it tell us about his character at the beginning of his reign? 1 Sam. 11:12, 13.

“Here Saul gave evidence of the change that had taken place in his character. Instead of taking honor to himself, he gave the glory to God. Instead of showing a desire for revenge, he manifested a spirit of compassion and forgiveness. This is unmistakable evidence that the grace of God dwells in the heart.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 613.

10. To whom did Saul give credit for the victory in this battle?
1 Sam. 11:13.

If only Saul could have maintained the generous and forgiving spirit that was evident on this occasion! If only he could have continued to recognize that victory comes from the Lord! How differently the story of the first king of Israel might have ended! Indeed, how different the history of the nation might have been!

In our battles with spiritual enemies, why is it always important to give God the credit for victory? What happens when we take the glory to ourselves? (See Rom. 4:1-5; Eph. 2:8-10.)

V. THE KINGDOM CONFIRMED (1 Sam. 11:14-12:25).

11. Gilgal had been the scene of many special and sacred moments in Israel's history. Now Samuel called Israel once again to this place. Why was it necessary to renew the kingdom at this time?
1 Sam. 11:14, 15; 12:1, 2.

"To this place, so fragrant with memories of God's miraculous dealings, Samuel called the children of Israel to renew the kingdom. Here, without doubt, he rehearsed in their ears the loving watchcare and the long-suffering patience of a heavenly Father during the past centuries. It would have been far better had they been satisfied with God's original plan of government, but inasmuch as they desired a king, God promised to bestow His Spirit upon the new king as He had upon the judges. Though they had rejected Him they had abundant witness that God would still be with them. By establishing a line of succession on the basis of heredity, Israel was throwing the doors open for many problems and dangers they had not encountered under the judges. But through Samuel, God affirmed His everlasting love and devotion, and promised to surround them with the same solicitous protection that had been theirs in centuries past."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 501.

12. Summarize briefly the main points Samuel made in his farewell speech as Israel's leader. 1 Sam. 12:1-13.

Verses 1-5 _____

Verses 6-11 _____

Verses 12, 13 _____

13. Compare Samuel's appeal to Israel with that of another great leader of God's people in his final address: 1 Sam. 12:14, 15; Deut. 28:1, 15.

Again and again Moses had appealed to Israel to obey and live. Disobedience would result in tragic consequences. The history of God's people had demonstrated the truth of Moses' words. Yet they were slow to learn. Now they had sinned again in asking for a king. Samuel reminded them that their only safety would be in serving and obeying the Lord. Samuel was calling the people of Israel to covenant renewal as they began a new era in their national life.

THU

- 14. Describe the dramatic event that brought the people of Israel to realize their sin in asking for a king. 1 Sam. 12:16-19.**

Thunder and rain at the time of wheat harvest (late May and early June) would be almost unheard of in Palestine. Imagine then, the fear that gripped the people as they realized the truth of Samuel's words. Suddenly their sin loomed before them. They confessed their pride and rebellion against God's will in asking for a king. They begged the prophet for mercy. This action by Israel shows how deficient was their concept of God. They failed to recognize His loving goodwill toward them.

- 15. Study Samuel's words to Israel, noting the promises and comparing their New Testament counterparts. 1 Sam. 12:22, 23.**

"The Lord will not forsake his people." Compare Heb. 13:5, 6.

"The Lord . . . [has made] you His people." Compare 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

I will not cease "to pray for you." Compare Col. 1:9-11; Rom. 8:26.

"I will teach you the good and the right way." Compare Acts 20:20, 27; John 16:13.

Although Samuel forcefully convinced the people of their sin, he ended his address with a message of hope and courage. His promise not to cease to pray for the people was a reminder to them that whatever course their kings might take, they would still have prophets to give them spiritual guidance, and to pray for them. (Compare Daniel 9:3-19.)

He reminded them again that what God really wanted more than anything else was for them to serve Him with all their hearts. He sought for them the New Covenant promise: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb. 8:10). Finally, he asked the people to consider what "great things He has done for you" (1 Sam. 12:24, NKJV).

What hath God wrought! "In reviewing our past history, having traveled over every step of advance to our present standing, I can say, Praise God! As I see what God has wrought, I am filled with astonishment, and with confidence in Christ as leader. We have nothing to fear for the future except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us."—*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 31.

WHAT DOES THIS LESSON MEAN TO ME?

● Review some of the great things God has done in the history of His remnant church. How can these events of the past give us courage to meet the challenges we face today?

- Are there areas in my life where I find myself rebelling against God's expressed will?
- How do I respond to being replaced or rejected in favor of someone who seems less qualified than I am for a job or position?
- What can Samuel's example teach me?
- How would my life change if I were to spend some time each day recounting the blessings of God and the great things He has done for me?

FRI

FURTHER STUDY: Read the chapter entitled "The First King of Israel," in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 603-615.

Read Psalms 78, 105, 106. Inspiration suggests that these psalms, that depict God's great patience and love for His people in spite of their rebellion and failures, should be read and studied often by modern-day Israel. (See *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 98.)

SUMMARY: God loved His people Israel. Even when they rebelled against Him and chose their own way instead of His will for them, He continued to care for them and worked out His purposes of love toward them. Along with His warnings of danger and reprimands for wrong courses of action He sent messages of assurance and guidance through His prophet.



Have you decided how to save your dollars for the South Pacific Division Thirteenth Sabbath?

The Road to Rebellion

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 13:1–15:35.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).

REBELLION AND RUIN ARE PRECEDED BY EXCUSES. The road to rebellion is paved with excuses, rationalizations, and so-called "respectable" sins, but it ends in disaster and ruin. In this week's lesson we see Saul turn his feet down that tragic road.

OUTLINE:

- I. Saul's First Mistake (1 Sam. 13:1-14).
- II. When Pride Prevails (1 Sam. 13:15-14:46).
- III. False Piety Becomes Rebellion (1 Sam. 14:47-15:35).

A CRISIS IN LEADERSHIP. Ancient Israel was as much a church as it was a nation. The union of church and state worked well as long as the people acknowledged God as their ultimate ruler. The divine plan was that human judges and prophets in Israel should function as administrators under specific directions given by God. When the Israelites demanded a king, they were warned that such a ruler would tend to exercise absolute power, ignoring dependence upon God's control and direction.

This lesson demonstrates what happened when the king chose to act contrary to God's will. As you study ask yourself: Why was the concept of absolute kingship out of harmony with a theocratic form of government (rule by God)? Because God chose Saul to be king and removed him when he failed to follow divine directions, what kind of kingship did He obviously have in mind for Israel? From the perspective of the present-day church, what message for church leaders everywhere is contained in this week's lesson? What message does the lesson have for most church members?

SUN I. SAUL'S FIRST MISTAKE (1 Sam. 13:1-14).

Saul's victory at Jabesh-gilead raised the morale of Israel and gave him prestige to rally the people around him to meet the wily Philistines. It is a wonder that they had not attacked Israel sooner.

Saul divided his men into two companies and sent the rest home. "Here was a serious error. His army was filled with hope and courage by the re-

cent victory; and had he proceeded at once against other enemies of Israel, a telling blow might have been struck for the liberties of the nation."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 616.

1. What event precipitated the meeting at Gilgal? 1 Sam. 13:2-4.

This is our first introduction to Jonathan, the brave and daring son of Saul. In the second year of Saul's reign Jonathan attacked and defeated the garrison at Geba.

2. In view of these circumstances how did the following people react? 1 Sam. 13:5-9, 12.

The Philistines (v. 5) _____

The Israelites (vs. 6, 7) _____

Saul (vs. 8, 9, 12) _____

This was the "last straw" of rebellion by these impudent Israelites! The NEB reads: "The name of Israel stank" (1 Sam. 13:4). The Philistines mustered their forces and prepared for the attack.

3. What was the purpose of the meeting at Gilgal? What previous instructions had Samuel given? 1 Sam. 13:8, 9; 10:8.

Seeing the panic of his followers, Saul felt desperately in need of God's blessing and guidance. Earlier Samuel had instructed him to wait a week before acting. But because Saul had not prepared his forces, they now began to desert him.

Human plans substituted for God's. "Before the time appointed by the prophet had fully expired, he became impatient at the delay and allowed himself to be discouraged by the trying circumstances that surrounded him. Instead of faithfully seeking to prepare the people for the service that Samuel was coming to perform, he indulged in unbelief and foreboding. . . . God required that His people should search their hearts and repent of their sins, that the offering might be made with acceptance before Him, and that His blessing might attend their efforts to conquer the enemy. But Saul had grown restless; and the people, instead of trusting in God for help, were looking to the king whom they had chosen, to lead and direct them."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 617.

4. Samuel's delay in meeting Saul's army at Gilgal was a testing and proving time for Saul. What negative character traits are exhibited in the following actions or statements recorded in 1 Samuel 13?

Saul went out to meet and greet Samuel (v. 10) _____

“You did not come within the days appointed” (v. 11, NKJV) _____

“I have not made supplication to the Lord” (v. 12, NKJV) _____

“I forced myself” (v. 12) _____

I “offered a burnt offering” (v. 12) _____

One of the most serious of all sins is disobedience dressed in the garb of piety. “What he [Saul] lacked in real piety he would try to make up by his zeal in the forms of religion.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 622. To usurp the role of priest in order to impress his fainting followers, to ignore the plain requirements of God regarding the sacred services, was the height of presumption. Saul disqualified himself as Israel’s leader.

Obey God irrespective of circumstances. “There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 621, 622.

5. What solemn message did Samuel deliver to Saul at this time? 1 Sam. 13:13, 14.

Israel must be reminded that their monarchy was under the direct rule of their God. As long as they remained subordinate to His will they would prosper and God would be their defense. Had Saul shown a spirit of humility and a desire to be obedient, his kingdom might have been established forever.

Be strictly honest with yourself. Have you suffered disappointment and loss because you have disobeyed God’s commands? “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isa. 53:6). Complete forgiveness and acceptance are available when we confess and repent. (See Isa. 55:7.)

II. WHEN PRIDE PREVAILS (1 Sam. 13:15–14:46).

6. Note the description and explanation of Israel’s status in relationship to their enemies, the Philistines. 1 Sam. 13:19-21. (If possible, read these verses in some of the newer translations.)

The Philistines, or "Sea Peoples," came from Caphtor (Crete), according to Jeremiah 47:4 and Amos 9:7. Their unchallenged control of the coastal plains, their thorough acquaintance with military techniques, and their monopoly of iron weapons made them a formidable enemy to Israel.

This rather dismal picture makes Jonathan's victory described in 1 Samuel 14 shine all the brighter.

The obscure reading of 1 Samuel 13:21 in the King James Version has puzzled many. But excavations at Lachish and other places have revealed that the word *pim* (translated "file" in KJV) was actually the weight of 2/3 of a shekel. The RSV reads: "and the charge was a pim for the plowshares and for the mattocks, and a third of a shekel for sharpening the axes and for setting the goads."

- 7. Read the account of Jonathan's daring in 1 Samuel 14:1-14. (Consult one of the newer translations, if possible.) What does this story suggest about the following characters?**

Saul (v. 2) _____

Jonathan (vs. 6, 12, 13) _____

His armorbearer (vs. 7, 13) _____

"Josephus thinks that it was at break of day that Jonathan and his armor-bearer approached the Philistine outpost, and reached it when most of the men were yet asleep (*Antiquities* vi. 6. 2). The narrative of ch. 14 confirms the idea that it was early morning (see vs. 15, 16, 20, 23, 24-28, 30, 31, 45). Whether the two Israelites waited till night to make the ascent or whether it took them but a few minutes to climb the precipice is not stated. They evidently took the fortress completely by surprise, for the utmost confusion reigned in the Philistine garrison."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 515.

- 8. What rather extreme ultimatum did Saul issue and what were the results? 1 Sam. 14:24, 31-33.**

At best, Saul's motive for this rash command would be a kind of misplaced piety to ensure God's continued favor. Because he was the commander-in-chief of his army, it was his duty to see that his troops were supplied with food and supplies. Instead, the curse he pronounced led to weakness and confusion, and finally to his soldiers' desperate violation of one of God's plain commands. (See Lev. 3:17.)

- 9. Describe Jonathan's response to his father's course of action. 1 Sam. 14:29, 30.**
-

“The military achievement of Saul’s men would have been a great task for a well-fed army, and was much greater for an ill-fed throng of undisciplined country folk such as he led. What a lesson this experience could have been to Saul, still smarting under rebuke, and jealous only for his own reputation. But once he had set foot in the quicksand of pride, each feeble and indecisive attempt to extricate himself only caused him to sink deeper.”—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 517.

Obviously, God did not approve of Saul’s oath, for He refused to answer him (1 Sam. 14:37). Certainly God would not approve Saul’s intent to kill Jonathan after He had so miraculously worked through him to rout the enemy.

- 10. Review the conversation between Saul and Jonathan, and the people’s intervention to save Jonathan. 1 Sam. 14:43-45. What does this incident reveal about Jonathan’s character?**

What modern applications do you see? How do people today sometimes substitute oaths and strict demands for genuine commitment to Christ?

WED

III. FALSE PIETY BECOMES REBELLION (1 Sam. 14:47–15:35).

The last part of 1 Samuel 14 lists Saul’s achievements, the names of his family members, and his commander-in-chief. These facts usually are presented at the end of the account of a given king. It is as though the narrator is suggesting that this is the end of the reign of Israel’s first king before launching into the sad story of Saul’s last chance. Once more the prophet Samuel came to the king with instructions from the Lord. Once more Saul was given an opportunity to prove his ability to lead Israel according to God’s direction.

- 11. Who were the Amalekites? Why was the severe command given to destroy them? 1 Sam. 15:1-3 (compare Ex. 17:8-16; Deut. 25:17-19).**

The Hebrew word used in verse 3 for “utterly destroy” actually means “to put under ban,” that is, to consecrate to the Deity by destruction. This was a sacred command to exterminate a whole people and all their belongings. Israel was a tool in God’s hand to bring judgment on the wicked Amalekites just as later other nations were used by God to bring a less severe judgment on Israel.

Why God punishes. “The forbearance that God has exercised toward the wicked, emboldens men in transgression; but their punishment will be none the less certain and terrible for being long delayed. . . . While He does not delight in vengeance, He will execute judgment upon the transgressors of His law. He is forced to do this, to preserve the inhabitants of the earth

from utter depravity and ruin. In order to save some, He must cut off those who have become hardened in sin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 628.

12. What message did God give Samuel? How did he respond? 1 Sam. 15:11.

The NKJV reads "I greatly regret." The TEV says, "I am sorry." God does not repent in the sense that humans do, but "God's repentance implies a change of circumstances and relations."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 630.

The NEB says that "Samuel was angry," and the NASB, "Samuel was distressed." No doubt his "[crying] out to the Lord all night" involved a combination of anger, disappointment, frustration, and grief.

13. In the following verses find the actions or statements of Saul that demonstrate some of his sins and weaknesses. 1 Sam. 15:12, 13, 15, 20, 21.

-
14. Study prayerfully Samuel's oft-quoted message to Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22, 23. Compare:

Isa. 1:11-17 _____

Micah 6:6-8 _____

God is displeased when people piously go through forms and ceremonies, thinking that He will be appeased by their goodness, when all the while their hearts are far from Him and their lives demonstrate disobedience and presumption instead of faith. The ancient sacrifices were given to lead people to God, not to be a substitute for a relationship with Him. So today, mere profession, going through the motions of religion without a saving relationship with Christ, is unacceptable to God.

Andrew Blackwood once said: "The man whose religion comes by proxy finds in it no refuge from the storms of life."

15. Saul immediately confessed his sin. What indicates that his repentance was motivated by fear of consequences? 1 Sam. 15:24-30.

"Saul had manifested great zeal in suppressing idolatry and witchcraft; yet in his disobedience to the divine command he had been actuated by the same spirit of opposition to God and had been as really inspired by Satan as are those who practice sorcery; and when reproved, he had added stub-

bornness to rebellion. He could have offered no greater insult to the Spirit of God had he openly united with idolaters.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 635.

DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE?

● I am still acceptable to God when I commit little acts of disobedience. Agree _____ Disagree _____

● Because Christ saves me by grace alone, I do not have to be concerned about strict conformity to His law. Agree _____ Disagree _____

● Obedience to the commands of an earthly leader is always a sign of obedience to God's will. Agree _____ Disagree _____

● Spiritual enemies can be overcome only by total dependence on God's will and power. Agree _____ Disagree _____

FRI

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read “The Presumption of Saul” and “Saul Rejected,” chapters 60 and 61 in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 616-636.

SUMMARY: The road to rebellion begins with seemingly respectable sins—putting our ways above God's ways, rationalizing that our pet sins are not really so bad. But gradually and insidiously, presumption leads to disobedience, pride confirms willfulness, eventually leading to rebellion and ruin. These warnings are “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come” (1 Cor. 10:11).

How God Prepares a Leader

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 16:1-20:42; 23:16-18.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied" (1 Samuel 17:45).

THE SCHOOL OF CHALLENGE AND HARDSHIP. God trains the leaders of His people by subjecting them to trial and difficulty. The road from obscurity to usefulness for God is often paved with obstacles and challenges that fashion the character after the similitude of the divine.

OUTLINE:

- I. David Anointed as Israel's Future King (1 Sam. 16:1-23).
- II. David's Courage Based on Faith (1 Sam. 17:1-58).
- III. David's Humility and Saul's Jealousy (1 Sam. 18:5-19:24).
- IV. The Covenant Between David and Jonathan (1 Sam. 18:1-4; 20:1-42; 23:16-18).

OLD-COVENANT FAILURE; NEW-COVENANT VICTORY. In the same way that Israel under the old covenant could not obey by mere human will, Saul had shown the futility of human effort without divine power. In the same way that the new covenant provided divine power, David would illustrate what God can do through regenerated human nature filled with His Spirit.

In this week's lesson we get a first glimpse into the life of the beloved and charming young David. We see him in his relationship to his own family, to the family of King Saul, to his people Israel, and especially to the Lord. He was to be the regal forebear of the Son of God. We are awed as we see bravery in meeting the giant Goliath, and are touched by his humility and his love for Jonathan.

SUN **I. DAVID ANOINTED AS ISRAEL'S FUTURE KING (1 Sam. 16:1-23).**

1. Read the story of the instruction to Samuel to anoint a son of Jesse as Israel's new king. 1 Sam. 16:1-13. Comment on the following:

Samuel's fear (v. 2) _____

The people of Bethlehem (v. 4) _____

The secrecy of the occasion (vs. 3-5) _____

Samuel's impression of Jesse's sons (vs. 6-10) _____

God's method of choosing a king (v. 7) _____

David's anointing and the results (v. 13) _____

In choosing the first king of Israel, God had given the people what they wanted, a man whose physical bearing and appearance appealed to their expectations.

Now, in a rather dramatic scenario, God demonstrates to the prophet Samuel that "the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7, NKJV).

God looks for character. "No outward beauty can recommend the soul to God. The wisdom and excellence revealed in the character and deportment, express the true beauty of the man; and it is the inner worth, the excellency of the heart, that determines our acceptance with the Lord of hosts. How deeply should we feel this truth in the judgment of ourselves and others."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 638.

2. What chain of events led to David's training in the king's palace in preparation for his future work? 1 Sam. 16:14-23.

David's training was divided between the palace and the pasture. In Saul's presence he would learn the ways of royalty. He would be exposed to the responsibilities and the liabilities of leadership. But the most important aspect of David's education as Israel's future king was in nature's classroom amid the rocky cliffs of the Judean hills. (Compare 1 Sam. 17:15.) His preparation to be Israel's future shepherd would be earned caring for his father's flocks.

There with his harp (actually a lyre), under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, David composed music that would minister to the sick king, and wrote many of the immortal lyrics that would bless God's people for ages to come.

What more recent examples can you give of the special preparation God has provided for people whom He has chosen as leaders?

II. DAVID'S COURAGE BASED ON FAITH (1 Sam. 17:1-58).

3. Read the story recorded in 1 Samuel 17:1-11 of Israel's encounter with the Philistines. Indicate your answers to the following:

- Why did the Philistines challenge Israel with one man instead of a whole army?

- Why was this such a serious challenge? (v. 9) _____
-

4. Compare the reaction of Saul and his men with David's assessment of the situation. 1 Sam. 17:11, 24, 26.

"What a contrast—a humble shepherd lad encouraging an experienced and successful warrior of Israel! Saul, the only giant of Israel (ch. 10:23), realized that he should have been the one to accept Goliath's challenge. But a guilty conscience left him fearful and trembling. . . . David, on the other hand, radiated that spirit of genuine optimism and courage that is the badge of 'a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men' (Acts 24:16; cf. Ps. 51:10,11). David was as courageous as Saul was cowardly."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 538.

5. Why did David's brothers react with such intense jealousy to his offer to fight Goliath? 1 Sam. 17:28. What was Saul's reaction? verses 31-37.

The secret of David's strength was not so much that he had killed a lion and a bear as a shepherd lad, but that he had developed courage, fortitude, and a living faith in his God. Now, at his father's request, he had come to the battlefield, and under the direction of an angel of God he sought to fulfill a mission.

"His spirit was stirred within him. He was fired with zeal to preserve the honor of the living God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 645.

His brothers' jealousies and suspicions must have been aroused from the day that Samuel visited their home and chose David from among them. Now, condemned by his youthful courage and daring, and by their own cowardice, they responded in anger to his offer.

6. How does David's challenge to Goliath show that his purpose was not to demonstrate his own prowess and bravery? 1 Sam. 17:45-47. What great spiritual truth did David believe and illustrate by these words?

The dramatic story of David's victory over Goliath, loved by children everywhere, is more than a story of courage and daring. It is the story of faith; faith that has not been dimmed by doubt, discouragement, and despair; faith that has not been eroded by the tunnel vision of seeing things through mere human perspective; faith that relies on God to do the impossible.

This model for Christian living reminds us that the Goliath giants in our lives need not intimidate us into icy fear. It teaches us what David under-

stood so well—that the battle belongs to the Lord of hosts. It is not by sword or spear, but by God's power that we shall gain the victory. And it is not for our credit or glory, but "that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel" (1 Sam. 17:46).

By what means may we conquer the spiritual giants that threaten to destroy our relationship with Christ? (See 1 John 5:4, 5.)

TUE

III. DAVID'S HUMILITY AND SAUL'S JEALOUSY (1 Sam. 18:5–19:24).

7. What factors made Saul jealous of David? 1 Sam. 18:5-9, 14-16.

"The demon of jealousy entered the heart of the king. He was angry because David was exalted above himself in the song of the women of Israel. In place of subduing these envious feelings, he displayed the weakness of his character. . . .

"One great defect in the character of Saul was his love of approbation. This trait had a controlling influence over his actions and thoughts; everything was marked by his desire for praise and self-exaltation. His standard of right and wrong was the low standard of popular applause. No man is safe who lives that he may please men, and does not seek first for the approbation of God. It was the ambition of Saul to be first in the estimation of men. . . .

"Saul opened his heart to the spirit of jealousy by which his soul was poisoned."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 650.

8. Describe Saul's first two attempts against David's life. 1 Sam. 18:10, 11, 17. By what duplicity did Saul show his insincerity toward David? Verse 17-27.

When Saul was anointed as king the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he became a new man (1 Sam. 10:6, 9). When David was anointed "the Spirit of the Lord came upon . . . [him] from that day forward" (1 Sam. 16:13). But at the same time "the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him" (v. 14, NKJV). The Bible writers often ascribe to God what He permits. As Saul rejected the pleadings of the Spirit and the warnings of the prophet, he opened the door of his mind to the natural consequences—a disturbed mind, which Satan could now easily control.

Inner sin destroys. Saul could lead an army against his enemies, but he could not control his worst enemy—himself! With his passions out of control, and his judgment impaired, he would plunge from a frenzy of rage into the depths of despondency and depression.

9. Why was Saul afraid of David? 1 Sam. 18:28-30.

David's very presence condemned the guilty king. God's favor upon the blameless life and character of David reproached his own miserable and envious nature. "Envy is the offspring of pride, and if it is entertained in the heart, it will lead to hatred, and eventually to revenge and murder."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 651.

- 10. What factors account for David's friendship with Jonathan? Suggest several reasons why they might have been natural enemies. 1 Sam. 19:1-5 (compare 14:29; 17:57-18:1).**

Jonathan had already displayed an unusual spirit on several previous occasions. Perhaps he saw what was happening to his father and determined not to follow in his footsteps. But for whatever reasons, Jonathan, in a truly unselfish spirit, defended David, his rival for the throne. David, on the other hand, must have possessed a charm combined with a spirit of humility that endeared him to the crown prince.

- 11. Review the next two attempts by Saul to kill David, and the rescue by his wife. 1 Sam. 19:8-17. What does Psalm 59, which well may have been written on this occasion, indicate about David's attitude?**

Seeing Saul was intent on taking his life, David now fled to Naioth in Ramah, hoping for protection, or possibly counsel from the prophet Samuel. The rather strange events that followed (see 1 Sam. 19:20-24), have puzzled many. David Payne's comments on the incident are helpful:

"Experience must never be allowed to replace or displace a sincere desire to understand and to obey God's will, revealed to us in the Scriptures. . . .

"In Saul's case, it is easy to interpret his experience at Naioth as just part of his growing psychological disturbance. . . . He went to Naioth of his own free choice, in pursuit of an innocent man; if God there took away his self-control, it was not to harm Saul but to rescue David."—David F. Payne, *I & II Samuel*, pp. 102, 103.

What testimony could you give to God's intervention for you, providing protection from spiritual and physical enemies?

IV. THE COVENANT BETWEEN DAVID AND JONATHAN (1 Sam. 18:1-4; 20:1-42; 23:16-18).

- 12. Study the Bible ideals for true friendship indicated in the texts below. List some of the qualities that must have been present in David and Jonathan's friendship.**

John 15:13 _____

Job 2:11 _____

Prov. 17:17 _____

Prov. 27:10 _____

- 13. By what significant act did Jonathan pledge his loyalty to David? 1 Sam. 18:4.**

THU

- 14. After Saul's repeated attempts on his life, where did David next turn for help? What was Jonathan's response and proposal? How did Saul react? 1 Sam. 20:1-13, 27-34.**

David now left Samuel and returned to Jonathan for help. He was convinced that "there is but a step between me and death" (1 Sam. 20:3). Yet Jonathan was willing to risk all in order to help his friend. Indeed it almost cost him his life.

Though distressed by his father's bizarre behavior, he was always loyal to him. Now Saul in a fit of frenzy tried to kill his own son (1 Sam. 20:30-34). His narrow, selfish spirit could not comprehend his son's unselfishness in willingly conceding his right to the throne to another.

- 15. What were the terms of the covenant between the two friends? 1 Sam. 20:8, 14-17, 42.**

David's obligation: _____

Jonathan's vow: _____

The covenant between David and Jonathan was a covenant of friendship, based on love and loyalty. But it also had political implications, for it bound David's house for all time to be kind to Jonathan's posterity. (See 2 Sam. 9:1, 7.) Their parting words to one another sealed their vow. (See 1 Sam. 20:42.) David never forgot his obligation to his friend. And Jonathan's loyal friendship, by God's providence, preserved the life of Israel's future leader.

Such loyalty is rare in these days of self-serving. It reminds us of our "elder Brother" willingly giving up His position, His royalty, to save His brothers and sisters in the human family.

- 16. Describe the last meeting between Jonathan and David. By what assurance did Jonathan once more show his unselfish character? 1 Sam. 23:16-18.**

Jonathan encouraged David. Such faith surely must have been born of

more than mere human friendship. The ties of their friendship were deeply rooted in mutual trust in the God of Israel. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 660.)

Ellen White states that after the encouraging visit of Jonathan, David sang (or possibly composed) the eleventh psalm. (Read Psalm 11.)

NEEDS IN MY LIFE:

Do any of the following describe my personal needs at this time?

- I need to be more sensitive to seeing people the way God sees them, realizing that God measures others by inner qualities rather than by mere outward appearance.
- Sometimes I seem overly concerned with superficial qualities about myself while neglecting the inner spiritual qualities.
- I have allowed giants of discouragement, doubt, and despair (or other negative feelings), to keep me from living a victorious life in Christ. I often forget that Christ is the only one who can win my battles.
- There are certain circumstances in my life just now that have bred jealousy and envy of another person. These attitudes have robbed me of peace of mind and spiritual growth.
- I desperately need a close friendship in my life, but I am afraid of giving myself completely because it will make me too vulnerable. I am afraid of being hurt.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read "The Anointing of David" and "David a Fugitive" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 637-659. Read the following psalms of David and suggest which occasions or circumstances in today's lesson they might fit: Psalms 23, 27, 37.

SUMMARY: The rejection of the Spirit of God leaves a person vulnerable to the evils of pride, jealousy, and envy. But those who allow His Spirit to control their lives will manifest the beautiful fruits of love, loyalty, humility, and unselfishness. Trusting in God, not in themselves, will enable them to face life courageously, knowing that it is the Lord who fights their battles for them.

A Hunted Fugitive and a Mad King

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 21:1-23:28; 25:1-42.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me" (Psalm 56:3, 4).

DAVID'S PREPARATION FOR THE THRONE took place in a grueling school of adversity. Sometimes he rose above adversity; at other times he failed miserably. His years as a hunted fugitive reveal both his admirable strengths and his glaring inconsistencies. Yet he continued to trust God, while Saul plunged deeper into despair.

OUTLINE:

- I. David's Faith Wavers (1 Sam. 21:1-15).
- II. Tragic Consequences (1 Sam. 22:6-23).
- III. David a Fugitive (1 Sam. 22:1-5; 23:1-28).
- IV. The Death of Samuel (1 Sam. 25:1).
- V. The Influence of a Godly Woman (1 Sam. 25:2-42).

DAVID'S DILEMMA. Where to now? David had not found refuge with the prophet Samuel. His secret visit with Jonathan had confirmed his worst fears; Saul was determined to kill him. Nor was he safe in his own home. Security evaded him. He became a fugitive. Like a hunted deer, he fled from one place to another.

Under stress he made some serious mistakes, yet he never gave up his hold on God. Providence used a godly woman to save him from a tragic mistake that could have cost him the throne. Some of his most poignant psalms were written during this dark period of his life.

I. DAVID'S FAITH WAVERS (1 Sam. 21:1-15).

1. What was David's reason for fleeing to the sanctuary at Nob? To what strategy did David resort to convince the priest of his needs? 1 Sam. 21:1-5, 8; compare Matt. 12:3, 4.

According to Leviticus 24:8, 9 the shewbread removed from the sacred table every Sabbath was to be eaten by the priests. Up to this point David's record had been flawless. Faced with the violent fury of

Saul and the pain of separation from his family and beloved friend Jonathan, David resorted to deception and duplicity. He who had so gallantly taken the sword from Goliath, while trusting God to win the battle, now wanted that same sword to defend himself.

Jesus did not condone David's deception, but He defended the action of the priest in giving shewbread to hungry men. In doing this Ahimelech broke no moral law. God placed human need above the commands of the ceremonial law. In the same way, Jesus placed the physical needs of His disciples above the man-made laws that forbade them to pluck ears of grain on the Sabbath day.

- 2. Review the incident at Gath, David's second mistake. 1 Sam. 21:10-15. David wrote Psalm 34 as a result of this sad and embarrassing experience. What lessons that David might have learned are suggested in this Psalm?**

Verse 4 _____

Verses 9, 10 _____

Verses 13, 14 _____

Verses 17-19 _____

Verse 22 _____

"He believed in God, he went in His name. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight.

"Yet this experience was serving to teach David wisdom; for it led him to realize his weakness and the necessity of constant dependence upon God. Oh, how precious is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed or despairing souls, encouraging the fainthearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! Oh, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring and manifests His patience and tenderness in adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow!"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 657.

Why is it never necessary to resort to dishonesty as a means of protecting ourselves? If God was able to protect David from Goliath, could He not as easily have sheltered him from Saul?

II. TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES (1 Sam. 22:6-23).

- 3. How did Saul learn of David's visit to the priest at Nob? 1 Sam. 21:7; 22:6-10.**

- 4. What false accusations did Saul make to Ahimelech the priest?**

1 Sam. 22:11-13. How did Ahimelech defend himself? Verses 14, 15.

David's dishonest report to Ahimelech resulted in tragedy for the high priest and his assistant priests. "Had the facts been plainly stated, Ahimelech would have known what course to pursue to preserve his life. God requires that truthfulness shall mark His people, even in the greatest peril."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 656.

MON 5. Who was ordered to carry out the king's violent command, when the guards refused? What were the consequences? 1 Sam. 22:17-19. What was David's response when he learned of the tragedy? Verse 22. Read David's description of Doeg the Edomite in Psalm 52.

Not much is known concerning Nob. It was the place where the tabernacle was located after the destruction of Shiloh. The terrible massacre of the priests and the city's inhabitants probably ended the sacred services there, thus paving the way for Jerusalem to become the home of the ark and the tabernacle.

Are you willing to admit the dire consequences of your sin as David did? This was a major difference between David and Saul. God forgives and overrules our mistakes when we are willing to confess and repent. Like David, sometimes we must live repentantly with the consequences.

III. DAVID A FUGITIVE (1 Sam. 22:1-5; 23:1-28).

6. Following the incident at Gath, where did David go next? Whom did he take with him? What does this account tell us about David's family relationships? 1 Sam. 22:1-5.

In a sense David was now a desperado. Finding refuge in the Judean wilderness, he was joined by others who wanted to escape the oppressive ruler and form a small kingdom of their own.

The caring spirit of David for his parents says much about his character. Evidently the jealousy of his brothers in earlier days had given way to acceptance and support, as they realized that David was to be the next ruler in Israel. Perhaps the words of Psalm 133:1 were inspired during this time: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 658.)

In his distress at being a fugitive, David cried out, "How long, O Lord? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?" (Ps. 13:1, 2, NKJV).

He looked forward to the time when the Lord would say, " 'I will arise, . . . I will set him in the safety for which he yearns' " (Ps. 12:5, NKJV).

The Psalms of Lament. A substantial number of the psalms, known as laments, are prayers of complaint and supplication. Some of David's psalms identify the circumstances or occasion when they were composed. Many of them were no doubt written during this time of his life, when he was a fugitive fleeing from a mad king.

The structure of a lament usually follows a general pattern of (a) addressing God with a cry for help, (b) the complaint, (c) a confession of trust, (d) a petition, (e) a vow of praise.

7. Read Psalms 54 and 57, noting the superscriptions. Find the elements of a lament in each of these psalms. (Not necessarily in the order given below).

A cry for help _____

The complaint _____

A confession of trust _____

Petition _____

Praise to God _____

Martin Luther once said that persecuted saints can best understand the psalms. It is easy enough to shout glibly God's praises when all goes well and we have enjoyed His blessings and favors. But faith born in crisis and tested in the fiery crucible of adversity shines the brightest and sings His praises the loudest.

(Psalm 11 was sung and possibly even composed while David was hiding in the Wilderness of Ziph. See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 660, 661.)

As you look back can you understand better why the Lord led you as He did, even though at the time of your hardships you felt forsaken?

TUE IV. THE DEATH OF SAMUEL (1 Sam. 25:1).

For a short time there was a temporary reconciliation between David and Saul. (This will be considered in next week's lesson.) After the death of Samuel, David once more fled to the Wilderness of Paran. (1 Sam. 25:1.)

The effect of Samuel's death. The death of Samuel the prophet was a tragic loss to the nation. As founder and president of the schools of the prophets, he had wielded a more powerful influence than Saul. The people had come to see that their insistence on having a king had been a mistake, but Samuel's ministry and intercession among them had given them a feeling of security. Now their spiritual giant was gone. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 663, 664.)

David mourned deeply the death of his spiritual mentor. Another bond of restraint on the mad king had been broken, and for David there was no safety. Again he fled, this time to the Wilderness of Paran. Hiding in the desolate wilds, he composed Psalm 121.

- 8. Read Psalm 121 prayerfully and meditatively with David's circumstances in mind. What would be the focus of your thinking under such circumstances?**
-

"The season of distress and anguish before us will require a faith that can endure weariness, delay, and hunger—a faith that will not faint though severely tried. . . . When waves of despair which no language can express sweep over the suppliant, how few cling with unyielding faith to the promises of God."—*The Great Controversy*, p. 621.

V. THE INFLUENCE OF A GODLY WOMAN (1 Sam. 25:2-42).

- 9. How would you summarize briefly Nabal's occupation, status, and personality? 1 Sam. 25:2, 3.**
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- 10. By contrast, what qualities did Abigail possess? 1 Sam. 25:3.**
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Though living with a cantankerous man, Abigail revealed the inner beauty of a Spirit-filled life. She had not allowed her husband's behavior to tarnish her charm and courtesy. Her influence, like the fragrance of a flower, breathed out kindness, peace, and piety.

- 11. What circumstances led to David's planned attack on Nabal? 1 Sam. 25:4-13.**
-

Hospitality was and still is an obligation in the East. In addition, sheep-shearing time was a kind of harvest festival. Gift giving was in order. Nabal's refusal to provide supplies for David's men, by the culture of the time, was an insult, and a defiance of common courtesy.

Nabal's feigned ignorance of David (1 Sam. 25:10) evidenced his rude and hostile spirit. David and his men must have been well-known by now. They were appreciated by Nabal's servants (verses 14-16). Later Abigail revealed that she knew of David's circumstances (verse 28).

David could have lost the throne. This, of course, did not excuse David's rash response. "One violent attack by David on a well-known Judaeen citizen would almost certainly have cost him the throne, and might well have led to his instant betrayal to Saul. So prudence as well as

morality suggested that David should have swallowed the insults. Anger, however justifiable, nearly always leads to overreaction.”—David F. Payne, *I & II Samuel*, p. 130, 131.

12. What was Abigail’s immediate response? 1 Sam. 25:18-23.

Abigail was not only wise and beautiful; she was also a woman of action. Most women, living with a man like Nabal, might easily have been intimidated and fearful. But Abigail showed great courage and initiative, first in assuming the responsibility of speaking for her husband, and second by risking her safety in fearlessly going to meet David and his men.

13. What was Abigail’s request when she met David? 1 Sam. 25:24-31. (If possible, read verse 25 in some of the newer translations.)

Abigail’s character shines brightest in her willingness to bear her husband’s guilt. Abigail reflected the spirit of Jesus in being willing to become a substitute for the sins of her wicked husband. “Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant” (1 Sam. 25:28, NKJV).

Abigail’s plea tactfully and wisely gave David two reasons why it was not in his best interest to take vengeance on Nabal:

a. If David was fighting the battles of the Lord, God would take care of his enemies for him (1 Sam. 25:26, 28). Saul was making the mistake of spending his energies in personal vendettas. David must not fall into that same tragic trap.

b. David must not stain his record with the guilt of bloodshed (1 Sam. 25:31). The abuse of power had been Saul’s downfall; now David was about to make the same mistake.

14. What does David’s response to Abigail’s warning tell us about his character? 1 Sam. 25:32-35.

This is the first instance in the account of David’s life that reveals his truly great spirit; the spirit of humility when he was censured or corrected. When Saul was reproved he blamed, rationalized, and hid behind false piety. David humbly recognized that God had used a deeply sensitive woman to save him from making a tragic mistake.

15. What consequent events led to Abigail’s becoming David’s wife? 1 Sam. 25:36-42.

While not condoning polygamy, (but "the times of . . . ignorance God winked at" [Acts 17:30]), the Bible simply records what happened. David suffered the bitter results of marrying many wives (see *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 668). Even so, his marriage to Abigail probably showed more wisdom and foresight than any of his other alliances. (See 1 Sam. 25:43, 44; compare 2 Sam. 3:14-16.) The influence of this godly woman could not help but be a blessing to the future ruler of Israel. David's prestige among the southern tribes would be enhanced by his marriage to Nabal's wealthy widow.

AM I CAPABLE OF CRITICAL SELF-EXAMINATION?

- Do I use deception and half-truths under duress, or do I keep to the truth whatever the embarrassment to myself?
- Does stress tend to bring me closer to other members of my family, or does it drive us apart?
- When I am beset by foreboding, whether because of circumstances or because of deep inner fears, do I trust in the Lord for deliverance, or do I lose faith and give in to discouragement?
- Do I manifest a spirit of compassion toward hostile people, or do I react in kind?
- How do I accept censure or criticism? Do I tend to blame and rationalize, or do I humbly admit and confess my mistakes?

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read from the chapters entitled "David a Fugitive" and "The Magnanimity of David" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 656-659, 663-668. Using a concordance, look for references in Psalms for the words, *poor*, *needy*, and *oppressed*.

SUMMARY: David's life as a fugitive, running from an angry and unreasonable king, helps us to appreciate his cries for help as recorded in the psalms of lament. They are a source of comfort and encouragement for us in times of trouble.

Lesson 8

February 17-23

How One Is Lost

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 1 Samuel 24:1-22; 26:1-2 Samuel 1:27.



MEMORY TEXT: "And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?" (1 Samuel 26:9).

PROGRESSIVE DECLINE. The unpardonable sin results from progressive rejection of the Holy Spirit's conviction. The decline toward spiritual ruin can be reversed by a positive response to the Lord's call to repentance.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Magnanimous David (1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25).
- II. David's Deception (1 Sam. 27:1-28:2; 29:1-11).
- III. Tragedy at Ziklag (1 Sam. 30:1-31).
- IV. Saul Resorts to Witchcraft (1 Sam. 28:3-25).
- V. Death of Saul and Jonathan (1 Sam. 31:1-13; 2 Sam. 1:1-27).

SALVATION BY GRACE REQUIRES A HUMAN RESPONSE. This week's study looks at the final tragic scenes of King Saul's life and his last encounter with David. Although David was a man of war, his regard for human life, especially in his relationship with Saul, shines out in the darkness of the age in which he lived.

Why did Saul die a lost man? What leads to one being lost for eternity? There are two factors involved in salvation: (a) Christ's work in the heart of the sinner; (b) the sinner's choice of God's saving work—his determination to depend on divine grace for power to live according to God's law. The Lord was as much concerned to save Saul from sin as He is concerned to save every human being. (See 2 Peter 3:9.) Did the Lord bring sufficient conviction to the heart of Saul? The answer is obvious. Did Saul respond appropriately? This lesson presents the answer.

I. THE MAGNANIMOUS DAVID (1 Sam. 24:1-22; 26:1-25).

Because of the similarity of the two occasions on which David spared Saul, let us consider them together. In both instances Saul was given evidence beyond the shadow of doubt as to David's innocence of intent. In each case Saul's repentance was short-lived. So long had he catered to his depraved emotions that he seemed incapable of responding to reason.

1. Read the story of David's encounter with Saul in 1 Samuel 24, noting the location and circumstances. How did David prove to

Saul that he meant him no harm? Verse 4. What was David's reaction to his own action? Verses 5-7.

David and his six hundred men, hiding in the rugged rocks and caves near En-ge-di, were no match for Saul's force of three thousand men. Ironically, Saul chose the very cave where David was hiding. Coming alone to attend to his personal needs, his eyes accustomed to the bright sunshine, he would not be able to see David and his men. But David's followers saw him, and were sure this was the opportunity they had been waiting for.

If David's anger and bitterness over Saul's treatment tempted him to take advantage of the situation, his deep regard for the Lord's anointed restrained him. "His conscience smote him afterward, because he had even marred the garment of the king."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 661.

2. How did David address Saul? 1 Sam. 24:11. What was Saul's response? Verse 16.

Saul was David's father-in-law, though by the second time David spared his life, Michal had been given to another man (1 Sam. 25:44). Notice the record in 1 Samuel 26:17 that David addressed him as king instead of father.

3. With what figures from nature did David try to show Saul the absurdity of his continuing pursuit? 1 Sam. 24:14; 26:20.

David's implication was clear. Saul had been virtually wasting his time hunting David, as if picking for a flea, when the real enemy, the Philistines, were encroaching on Israel's borders at an alarming rate.

David's reference to the hunted partridge is poignant. Related to the quail, and about its size, the sand partridge found in the wilderness region west of the Dead Sea is a fast runner, and can jump from rock to rock. Sometimes it runs so fast that it becomes exhausted and can be easily overtaken.

David longed for the hunt to be over. He longed for reconciliation with Saul. He was tired of running. Fear overwhelmed him at times. (See Ps. 64:1; 142:3.)

The fear of the enemy who dogged his every move was perhaps more devastating than the enemy himself. David well knew that Saul's kind words addressed to him under the emotion of the moment would not survive the king's malicious intent. No wonder he prayed in Psalm 64:1 to be delivered from the "fear of the enemy."

4. After declaring that David was to be his successor, what promise did Saul ask David to make? 1 Sam. 24:20-22.

5. Compare the following points in the story recorded in 1 Samuel 26:

Place of encounter (vs. 5-7) _____

Who wanted to kill Saul (v. 8) _____

David's response (vs. 9, 11) _____

Method of disclosure (vs. 12-16) _____

Saul's response (vs. 21, 25) _____

David's tender conscience dictated to him "that no man has the right to attack a leader chosen and anointed by God, however wrong or ill-advised his actions."—David F. Payne, *1 & 2 Samuel*, p. 137.

MON

6. What final appeal did David make to Saul? 1 Sam. 26:24.

These may have been the last words ever spoken between the two men. David's regard for the sacredness of life was the result of his close relationship with God. (See Ps. 8:4-8.) When he temporarily lost that relationship, he lost his regard for human life. This fact is illustrated by the next episode in David's life.

How do you act when you have an opportunity to destroy an enemy's reputation? Are your words and actions at such a time directed by Jesus' counsel (Matt. 5:43-45), or by your own desire for revenge? How can a vengeful spirit be overcome?

II. DAVID'S DECEPTION (1 Sam. 27:1-28:2; 29:1-11).**7. Following his last encounter with Saul, what was David's next move? What motivated him to this strange decision, and with what results? 1 Sam. 27:1-7.**

David and his men must have grown weary of constant movement from place to place. The tension of his exile existence finally got the best of him. Without counsel from God, he once more headed for Gath, where he would be out of the jurisdiction of Saul. By fleeing to his people's worst enemies for protection David not only was making himself vulnerable but also was exposing the weakness of his own people, a decision he would live to regret.

8. How did David deceive Achish? 1 Sam. 27:8-12.

Achish probably gave David the city of Ziklag on the condition that David would act as a kind of mercenary for the Philistines, raiding the towns and cities of Israel and bringing the booty back to Achish. In truth, David was actually helping his own people by destroying their hated enemies, the Amalekites and other nomad peoples. He hoped that by destroying every person, he could keep word of his deception from getting back to Achish.

Meanwhile, the Philistines prepared for battle against David's people. So trusting was Achish of David that he never doubted his military support. The famous poet Sir Walter Scott wrote, "O, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive."

- 9. How did the Lord work to extricate David from his dilemma of having to fight against his own people? 1 Sam. 29:1-11. Try to imagine the range of emotions David must have experienced during this ordeal.**

David had made a serious blunder that almost cost him the throne. Had he gone to war against his own people he certainly could not have become their king. What would he do now?

God looks at the heart and sees what no human can see. He knew that, although David's faith had staggered, causing him to stumble away from God's purpose, yet in his heart he still wanted to be true to God. He could say: "O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger. . . . Have mercy on me, . . . for I am weak. . . . Return, O Lord, deliver me! Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!" (Ps. 6:1-4, NKJV).

What does the above story indicate about the mercy and forgiveness of God?

III. TRAGEDY AT ZIKLAG (1 Sam. 30:1-31).

David and his men had traveled north to join the Philistine forces at Aphek. On their return they found that the Amalekites had invaded Ziklag, burning it to the ground and taking the women and children captive.

- 10. What was David's reaction? What was the reaction of his men? Where did he turn for help? 1 Sam. 30:4-8.**

David's folly had caught up with him. One bad decision had led to another. Now he stood horrified to think that all he held dear in life was gone. His followers, in the heat of rage and grief, were ready to stone him. In his extremity "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God" (1 Sam. 30:6, NKJV).

- 11. Who gave David counsel as to the course he should pursue? 1 Sam. 30:7. With what results? Verses 9-20.**

12. What debate arose over the division of the spoil? 1 Sam. 30:21, 22. How did David settle the matter? Verses 23-31.
-

Here David's unselfish spirit is clearly seen. Not only would those who had stayed by the stuff ("guard the equipment," verse 24, TLB) receive their fair share, but David took this opportunity to send gifts to the elders in Judah and the many other people who had befriended him in his wanderings.

IV. SAUL RESORTS TO WITCHCRAFT (1 Sam. 28:3-25).

The scene changes. While Saul had hunted his "flea," David, the Philistines had been planning their strategy. Up to now most of their battles had been fought in hilly or mountainous areas where the Israelites would have the advantage. The Philistines' superior weapons, especially their chariots, could be used to best advantage on level ground. Thus their thrust now was farther north in the broad Valley of Jezreel, the only place in Palestine where it is possible to reach the River Jordan from the coastal plain without having to cross mountains.

Saul was in a panic. He prepared to meet the Philistine hosts, knowing that David himself might be among them. Frightened, like so many rejecters of God, he sought His aid when all else seemed to fail. But God did not answer him.

WED

13. What three methods of seeking God's will did Saul explore? 1 Sam. 28:6.
-

Saul had alienated himself from God. "The king had by his own act forfeited the benefits of all the methods of inquiring of God. He had rejected the counsel of Samuel the prophet; he had exiled David, the chosen of God; he had slain the priests of the Lord. Could he expect to be answered by God when he had cut off the channels of communication that Heaven had ordained? He had sinned away the Spirit of grace, and could he be answered by dreams and revelations from the Lord? Saul did not turn to God with humility and repentance. It was not pardon for sin, and reconciliation with God, that he sought, but deliverance from his foes. By his own stubbornness and rebellion he had cut himself off from God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 676.

14. What are your reactions to Saul's encounter with the witch at Endor? 1 Sam. 28:7-14. What were the results? Verses 15-20.
-

15. What law that Saul himself had enforced was he now breaking? Lev. 20:27 (compare Deut. 18:9-14; 1 Sam. 28:3, 9).

Those who suppose that God spoke through the real Samuel on this occasion overlook several important points. Would God refuse communication with Saul through His ordained channels, and use instead a channel that God Himself had condemned and for which He had ordered the death penalty for those using it?

Sorcery, witchcraft, and communication with the dead were the basis of most of the heathen religions in Israel's day. The deification and worship of the dead prompted God's severest judgments: "Because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you" (Deut. 18:12, NKJV).

In his desperation to know the outcome of the impending crisis, Saul now turned to a demon, parading in the form of the aged prophet. The message of denunciation and retribution goaded Saul on to his final ruin and death.

"By consulting that spirit of darkness, Saul had destroyed himself. Oppressed by the horror of despair, it would be impossible for him to inspire his army with courage. . . . Thus the prediction of evil would work its own accomplishment."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 681.

V. DEATH OF SAUL AND JONATHAN (1 Sam. 31:1-13; 2 Sam. 1:1-27).

16. Recount the tragic story of Saul's death. 1 Sam. 31:1-10.

Saul saw his three brave sons fall before him in battle. Now wounded by the archers and unable to fight or flee, and determined not to be taken alive by the enemy, Saul took his own life. "His life had been a failure, and he went down in dishonor and despair, because he had set up his own perverse will against the will of God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 682.

17. How did the men of Jabesh-gilead show their last respects to the king who had at one time saved them? 1 Sam. 31:11-13.

18. How did David learn about the death of Saul and Jonathan? 2 Sam. 1:1-10. What happened to the young man who claimed to have speared Saul? Verses 13-16.

Once more David showed his deep respect for the Lord's anointed. Although he had been hated and hunted by Saul, David never lost reverence for Saul's position as Israel's king.

19. How did David react to the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan? 2 Sam. 1:11, 12, 17. Read the "Song of the Bow," which David wrote in honor of their death (verses 19-27). What does this song reveal about David's spirit?

David's genuine grief at the death of Saul and Jonathan gives evidence of a truly generous and compassionate nature. Perhaps because he himself so often had been the recipient of God's forgiveness he had the capacity to forgive the one who had made his life miserable and sometimes almost unbearable. It was this dimension of David's life that at least in part made him a man after God's own heart, and a type of Christ, who a thousand years later would forgive those who put Him to death.

EVALUATE AND DISCUSS:

- Who are the Lord's anointed in our present day?
- What should be our attitude toward leaders in the church, even when we disagree with them?
- How should we relate to leaders in the church who obviously are not acting in harmony with God's will? Is there a difference between refusing to destroy the Lord's anointed and pointing out error and wrongdoing when it arises? (See 1 Sam. 24:6; compare 1 Tim. 5:19.)
- Is it possible for us to be preoccupied with hunting "personal partridges" while ignoring or neglecting to guard against the real enemy?

FRI

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 668-696, the chapters entitled, "The Magnanimity of David," "The Death of Saul," "Ancient and Modern Sorcery," "David at Ziklag." Read the account in 1 Chronicles 10 of Saul's death, noting especially verses 13 and 14.

SUMMARY: Although David made serious mistakes, he never lost his implicit trust in God's providential leadings. King Saul, on the other hand, having lost his faith and his desire to repent, took one wrong step after another. Even when he momentarily had better impulses, he failed to turn his heart to God. His tragic life stands as a warning against stubbornly setting our will against the will of God.



**Is Christ the center of your financial life?
Remember the South Pacific Division this quarter.**

God Prospers the Righteous

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 2:1-5:25; 6:16-23; 8; 9; 10.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "Shew me thy ways, O Lord; teach my thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

GOD'S PURPOSES WILL BE FULFILLED. There is nothing that Satan and wicked people can do to prevent the fulfillment of God's plans for those who put their trust in Him.

OUTLINE:

- I. David Anointed King (2 Sam. 2:1-7, 11).
- II. Conspiracy, Treachery, and Revenge (2 Sam. 2:8-4:12).
- III. From Hebron to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:1-10, 17-25).
- IV. David's Family (2 Sam. 3:2-5, 12-16; 5:13-16; 6:20-23).
- V. Victory Over Enemies (2 Sam. 8:1-14; 10:1-19).
- VI. David's Righteous Rule (2 Sam. 8:15-9:13).

A TIME OF TRANSITION. With the death of Saul, the way was now clear for David to return to his homeland. Although he believed that God had chosen him to be the next king of Israel, David exercised caution and deliberation. He had to overcome the influence of Saul's persistent hostility toward him before he could win the allegiance of all the tribes. He also had to overcome the prejudice against him created by his sixteen months in Gath, which could have alienated his own brethren in Judah. The challenge before him required great wisdom and understanding, and above all, divine guidance.

David chose to follow the principle God uses in resolving the great cosmic controversy—that of wooing His subjects' allegiance. He wins us by friendship and love.

I. DAVID ANOINTED KING (2 Sam. 2:1-7, 11).

1. After the days of mourning for Saul were over, where did David turn before making any moves? 2 Sam. 2:1.

One of the things that must have endeared David to his God was his eagerness to know and to do His will. This theme can be seen in David's

psalms: "Make me to know thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; for thee I wait all the day long" (Ps. 25:4, 5, RSV; compare 5:8; 27:11; 119:33.)

2. **What instructions did David receive? And with what results?** 2 Sam. 2:1-4.
-

David showed great skill and diplomacy by going to the men of Judah, his own people, who readily made him their king. Had he tried initially to win all Israel he well might have ruined his chances for reigning over a united Israel.

SUN

3. **What was David's first official act as Judah's new king?** 2 Sam. 2:5-7.
-

In spite of Saul's hatred and conduct toward him, David manifested a genuine love for the king. Possibly his earliest experiences in playing his harp for Saul had left an indelible tenderness and respect that he never lost. Perhaps his respect was born of insight into God's love, which gave him the ability to love his enemy. Showing his last respects for the house of Saul by honoring the men of Jabesh-gilead, David won the confidence of his countrymen.

Ask yourself: Do I manifest big-hearted forgiveness for my enemies before and after they have fallen? Do I make attempts to draw people to myself and to the Lord by a spirit of love and conciliation?

II. CONSPIRACY, TREACHERY, AND REVENGE (2 Sam. 2:8-4:12).

While David was taking the reins at Hebron, Abner, Saul's army general, determined to take control of the nation. Three of Saul's sons had been slain in battle; only his youngest son, Ishbosheth, survived.

No doubt Abner was harboring bitterness over David's rebuke when he found Saul sleeping and took his water cruse and spear. (See 1 Sam. 26:13-16.) No doubt also Abner's personal ambition led him to support the weak Ishbosheth.

4. **What events took place as a result of Ishbosheth's becoming king over the northern tribes?** 2 Sam. 2:12-32.
-

5. **Why did Abner desert to David? What were the consequences?** 2 Sam. 3:6-27. **How did David's response to this treachery affect the people?** Verses 31-39.

Distressed by the conduct of the abrasive Joab, David confided, "I am weak today, though anointed king" (2 Sam. 3:39, NKJV). Because of Joab's power and influence, and because David's own position was barely established, David had few options for dealing with this delicate situation. He left revenge for the crime to the Lord. (See also Ps. 94:1.)

- 6. How did David show his disdain for the bloody crime that paved the way for him to become king over all of Israel? 2 Sam. 4:9-12.**

The events of the early days of David's reign demonstrate the depravity of the human heart when it separates from God. David had clearly shown that he did not approve or desire treachery to establish his kingdom. His tact and diplomacy in handling crises had won the hearts of the people. The leaders of Israel now agreed that they needed a strong spiritual monarch. And David was their man!

III. FROM HEBRON TO JERUSALEM (2 Sam. 5:1-10, 17-25).

- 7. What three reasons did the elders of Israel give for choosing David as their new king? 2 Sam. 5:1-3.**

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____

The coronation at Hebron was the third anointing for David. Samuel the prophet had anointed him at Bethlehem when he unfolded God's plan to him. The people of Judah had anointed him several years earlier. Now, without force or coercion, David became king of a united Israel. "The revolution was quiet and dignified, befitting the great work they were doing."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 701.

David a type of Christ. God had appointed David as the shepherd of His people. (See 2 Sam. 5:2.) David's reign was to foreshadow the coming Messiah. David the shepherd, now shepherd of God's flock, was a type of the "Good Shepherd" to come. (See John 10:11; Isa. 40:11). David had won the throne through suffering, sorrow, exile, and rejection. The Messiah would win His throne by coming to earth to take on Him the sufferings and sins of His people. (See Isa. 53:3-7.)

- 8. What incentive did David hold out to anyone who would defeat the Jebusites? Who accepted his challenge, and how did he do it? 1 Chron. 11:6 (compare 2 Sam. 5:6-9).**

A new capital. One of the first acts of David as the king of the united

realm was to seek a more appropriate location for his throne. Hebron, in the far south of Israel was an important center in Judah. David, wise statesman that he was, felt that the capital should be located nearer the other ten tribes. Situated between the borders of Judah and Benjamin, Jerusalem would be a strategic location and a political asset to the new united kingdom. The city of Jerusalem had a long history, dating back as far as the third millennium B.C. (See Heb. 7:1, 2; Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21.) It became the type or analogy of the great heavenly Jerusalem in which Christ will reign with His redeemed people. (See Rev. 21:2.)

How David captured Jerusalem. "To bring water into the city from the spring Gihon, which was without the city gates, the Jebusites had cut a conduit some 60 ft. through the rock to a place where the water was collected in a reservoir. This, in turn, was connected by a 40 ft. vertical shaft with the foot of a stairway or ramp that led into the city. Women in the city would descend to the top of the shaft, drop their buckets into the cistern, and thus secure water without the necessity of venturing outside the city. By making one's way through the watercourse and up the shaft, it might be possible to enter the Jebusite capital. . . .

After an entrance into the city had been gained, it would probably be a comparatively easy task to open the gates to the main body of David's forces, since, perhaps, only a small force of defenders would be on the city walls."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 620.

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9. According to 2 Samuel 5:10, what was the secret of David's success as Israel's shepherd? Compare 1 Chron. 11:9. Read Psalm 20 in this setting, noting particularly verses 5, 7.

10. What did David do before going to battle with the Philistines? 2 Sam. 5:19, 22, 23. With what results? Verses 20, 25.

The spiritual message. Jesus emphasized the spiritual lesson that David's success illustrated. "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you" (John 15:7, RSV).

IV. DAVID'S FAMILY (2 Sam. 3:2-5, 12-16; 5:13-16; 6:20-23).

One of the evidences of the authenticity of Scripture is its frank honesty even when describing its heroes. For all of David's greatness and admirable virtues, he also had weaknesses. Nowhere is this more evident than in his family life.

11. What is recorded regarding David's marriages and offspring? 2 Sam. 3:2-5.

God had declared that kings were not to multiply wives, as was the custom among the surrounding nations. (See Deut. 17:17.) In those days a king's prestige and power was often measured by the size of his harem. So it is understandable, though certainly not defensible, why David (2 Sam. 5:13), and later Solomon (1 Kings 11:1), succumbed to the pressures of their culture.

Polygamy inevitably brought confusion, jealousy, conflict, and heartache. "The bitter result of marrying many wives was sorely felt throughout all the life of David."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 668.

12. Note David's attempt to recover his first wife, Michal, the daughter of Saul. 2 Sam. 3:12-16. What was the unhappy ending to David's relationship with her? 2 Sam. 6:20-23.

David's sense of awe and reverence before the sacred ark caused him to lay aside his royal robes and attire himself in a plain linen ephod, such as the priests wore. By this act he signified that he was taking his place among his subjects as an equal. "Upon that day Jehovah was to be adored. He was to be the sole object of reverence."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 707. This was too much for the proud and cynical daughter of Saul. She despised David's piety and humility that condemned not only herself, but her father.

V. VICTORY OVER ENEMIES (2 Sam. 8:1-14; 10:1-19).

13. Read the account of David's victories over his enemies in 2 Samuel 8:1-12. List the nations he subdued.

"During Saul's reign, David had been on good terms with the king of Moab, for he had sent his parents there (1 Samuel 22:3f). David's own great-grandmother, Ruth, had been a Moabitess (Ruth 4:13f). So his conquest of Moab and his subsequent savage treatment of the Moabites (2 Samuel 8:2) suggest that they must have broken faith with him in some particularly treacherous fashion. We can only guess, but it is at least conceivable that they took the opportunity to attack him when he was engaged in the life-and-death struggle with the major foe, the Philistines."—David F. Payne, *Kingdoms of the Lord* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1981), pp. 46, 47.

14. What occasioned the insult to David's men by a former ally? 2 Sam. 10:1-5. What were the results? Verses 6-19.

This story gives us insight into the political condition of the times. The various states in Syria-Palestine, engaging in a constant power struggle, formed military alliances that often threatened Israel's existence as a na-

tion. They relied on their military prowess. David and his army relied on the Lord of hosts.

“Through You we will push down our enemies; through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us” (Ps. 44:5, NKJV; read also verses 4-8).

VI. DAVID'S RIGHTEOUS RULE (2 Sam. 8:15-9:13).

Above his exploits and military victories stands this tribute to David's reign: “David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people” (2 Sam. 8:15, NIV). What better tribute could be given to any ruler? What better fortune could come to a nation than that its leader exercise equity and justice?

15. Comment on David's dealings with Mephibosheth. 2 Samuel 9.

The king's request (vs. 1-3) _____

The circumstances of Mephibosheth's lameness (2 Sam. 4:4) _____

David and Mephibosheth's meeting (2 Sam. 9:6-8) _____

A promise fulfilled (vs. 9-13; compare 1 Sam. 20:14-17) _____

A royal resolve. Read Psalm 101, which well might have been King David's charter for a successful reign. If possible, read this psalm in some of the newer translations, noting the ten summary points below:

- a. My conduct will be faultless, v. 2.
- b. I will live a pure life, v. 2.
- c. I will not tolerate evil, v. 3.
- d. I will have no dealings with evil, v. 4.
- e. I will get rid of anyone who whispers evil about another, v. 5.
- f. I will not tolerate a proud or arrogant person, v. 5.
- g. I will approve the faithful and let them live in my palace, v. 6.
- h. No liar will live in my palace, v. 7.
- i. No hypocrite will remain in my presence, v. 7.
- j. I will expel evil from the city of the Lord, v. 8.

16. Evaluate how well David lived up to his own charter.

APPLYING THE LESSON TO OUR DAY. Using the "Royal Resolve" above, make applications of each of these points in your own life:

Family relationships: _____

Reading habits: _____

Leisure-time habits: _____

Business contacts and dealings: _____

Friends: _____

Make two lists of qualities in leaders, as illustrated in this week's lesson:

Desirable:

Undesirable:

FRI

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read in *Patriarchs and Prophets* the chapter entitled "David Called to the Throne," pp. 697-702. Study Psalm 37 in relation to the incidents in Part II of this week's study. Read Psalms 18 and 60 in relation to Part V of the lesson. If you have a copy, read the article entitled "David, City of" in *SDA Bible Dictionary*, vol. 8 pp. 259, 260 (p. 275, rev. ed.), for background information on the "City of David."

SUMMARY: David's life and experience provide us with a beautiful example of humble trust in God. God is waiting for men and women who will seek His will first in every decision they make, and who are willing to admit their mistakes and make the necessary changes. Even though he made serious mistakes and fell into grievous sins, David always turned to the Lord in true penitence and submission.

Lesson 10

March 3-9

The Eternal Throne of David

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 6:1-15; 7:1-29.

SAB PM **MEMORY TEXT:** "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations" (Psalm 89:3, 4).

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST is presented in Scripture as the perpetuation of David's throne. God's promises to David are fulfilled in the eternal reign of the Son of God.

OUTLINE:

- I. David Attempts to Move the Ark (2 Sam. 6:1-9).
- II. A New Home for the Ark (2 Sam. 6:10-15).
- III. David Desires to Build a House for God (2 Sam. 7:1-7).
- IV. God Makes a Covenant with David (2 Sam. 7:8-17).
- V. David Praises the Lord (2 Sam. 7:18-29).

A KINGDOM UNDER GOD. Although God had been reluctant to give Israel a king, He responded to their demand on condition that they still recognize Him as their supreme Monarch. Saul had miserably failed to learn this lesson, taking upon himself prerogatives that God never intended.

No doubt it was Samuel's tutorship, as well as the Holy Spirit's influence, that taught David the proper concept of the Divine Kingship. Many of the psalms reveal this: "Give heed to the voice of my cry, *my King and my God*" (Ps. 5:2, NKJV); "The *Lord reigns*. . . . Your throne is established from of old" (Ps. 93:1, 2, NKJV); "For the Lord is the great God, and the *great King* above all gods" (Ps. 95:3, NKJV); "The *Lord reigns*. . . . Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His *throne*" (Ps. 97:1, 2, NKJV).

Jesus Christ was hailed as the "Son of David" (Matt. 15:22; 21:9). This was a title indicating His Messiahship and His inheritance of David's throne. The angel's promise to Mary prior to the conception of Jesus assured her that He would receive "the throne of his father David" (Luke 1:32). The resurrected Christ possesses the "key of David" (Rev. 3:7), the means of admitting believers to sit with Him on His throne (Rev. 3:21). Therefore, God's faithful people of all ages will belong to the eternal kingdom of David, the "kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ" who shall "reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15, RSV). God will fulfill the promises to David much more magnificently than they could have been through an unending earthly dynasty.

I. DAVID ATTEMPTS TO MOVE THE ARK (2 Sam. 6:1-9).

- 1. Review the Mosaic instructions regarding the origin of the ark and its contents. Ex. 25:8-16, 21, 22; Deut. 10:1-5.**

The ark contained the two tables of stone upon which God Himself had written the Ten Commandments. "The law of God, enshrined within the ark, was the great rule of righteousness and judgment. That law pronounced death upon the transgressor; but above the law was the mercy seat, upon which the presence of God was revealed, and from which, by virtue of the atonement, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 349.

The ark was sometimes called the ark of the testimony (Ex. 30:6) or the ark of the covenant (Num. 10:33; 14:44). The Ten Commandments were the basis of the covenant made between God and man (Ex. 19:5, 6).

- SUN**
- 2. What specific instructions had God given regarding the transport of the sacred chest? Ex. 25:14; Num. 4:5, 6, 15, 19, 20; 7:9.**

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- 3. What preparations did David make to bring the ark to his new capital? 2 Sam. 6:1, 2; compare 1 Chron. 13:1-5.**

For twenty long years, since the return of the ark by the Philistines, it had remained in Kirjath-jearim in the house of Abinadab.

Now that David had established himself upon the throne of Israel, he turned his energies to bringing the ark of the covenant to his new capital. For many years the Jews had neglected this sacred symbol. David's expressed desire to make Jerusalem the home of the ark is recorded in Psalm 132:4, 5: "I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob."

- 4. How was the return of the ark celebrated? 2 Sam. 6:3-5 (compare 1 Chron. 13:7, 8).**

Picture the triumphant scene. Aglow with holy zeal, David leads the people of Israel in songs of rejoicing. Shouts of joy fill the air and echo back through the valleys. That vast throng is filled with awe and gladness as the grand procession winds its way toward the holy city.

- 5. What tragedy put a sudden end to the joyous celebration? 2 Sam. 6:6-8.**

The ark had been in the home of Abinadab for many years, and Uzzah, as a member of the family, should have known how it should be handled. Perhaps Uzzah had become so accustomed to the presence of the ark that it no longer seemed sacred to him.

Severe though it may seem, Uzzah's death was necessary in order to teach Israel that they must recognize God's holiness and the importance of faithful obedience to His revealed will.

6. How did David respond to Uzzah's death? 2 Sam. 6:8, 9.

Afraid and disappointed though he was, David wanted to do God's will. It may have been his meditation on this event that led him to write: "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. 24:3, 4, NKJV; compare Psalm 15, also written for the occasion.)

How should we react when God sternly rebukes our sins and mistakes? Do we blame Him for defending the honor of His holy name? Or do we admit our sin, ask for forgiveness, and seek His grace for reformation of life?

II. A NEW HOME FOR THE ARK (2 Sam. 6:10-15).

7. What prompted David to try once more to move the ark to Jerusalem? 2 Sam. 6:10, 11. What preparations did he now make for housing and moving the ark? 1 Chron. 15:1, 2.

"Upon David the divine rebuke accomplished its work. He was led to realize as he had never realized before the sacredness of the law of God and the necessity of strict obedience. The favor shown to the house of Obed-edom led David again to hope that the ark might bring a blessing to him and to his people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 706.

Why is there need for strict obedience to God's law? What motivates us to assent to His way?

8. Contrast the second occasion of transporting the ark with the first. 2 Sam. 6:12-15; compare 1 Chron. 15:25-28.

Picture the triumphal procession. A choir on the city wall sings the words written for this occasion in Psalm 24:7-10:

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in."

Back comes the question:

“Who is this King of glory?”

The antiphonal choir responds:

“The Lord strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.”

Finally hundreds of voices unite to swell the triumphant chorus:

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors;
And the King of glory shall come in.”

“Then the gates were opened wide, the procession entered, and with reverent awe the ark was deposited in the tent that had been prepared for its reception.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 708.

An infinitely more awe-inspiring scene occasioned the singing of Psalm 24; a scene that gladdened the heart of every angel in glory, when Christ the eternal Son of David was ushered into the heavenly Holy City after His resurrection. (See *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 833-835.)

- 9. How would the presence of the ark in Zion (Jerusalem) affect Israel's neighbors? Ps. 46:4-11; 48:4-8. What influence would it have on God's people? Ps. 48:1-3, 9-14.**

Zion became symbolic of the sanctuary as the dwelling place of God. The ark was the very heart and center of the tabernacle services. The Shekinah glory resided above it. When the Philistines captured the ark Eli's daughter-in-law in her dying moments had named her child Ichabod, “the glory has departed” (1 Sam. 4:21, 22). Now David succeeded in restoring this important aspect of Israel's worship to its rightful place in the heart of the nation, at the center of its existence.

Is the Lord enthroned in our hearts and homes as the center of our lives and our worship? As individuals and as families do we daily worship, adore, and praise Him?

III. DAVID DESIRES TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR GOD (2 Sam. 7:1-7).

- 10. What two situations prompted David to want to build a permanent house for the ark? 2 Sam. 7:1, 2. Who encouraged him to proceed? 2 Sam. 7:3.**

Since the destruction of Shiloh, twenty years earlier, the sanctuary built by Moses had not had a home. David purposed to make Jerusalem the religious center of the nation by building a magnificent temple that would glorify God. He wished to express Israel's appreciation for the honor of having the sacred ark in their midst and for the supreme honor of having the abiding presence of Yahweh their King.

- 11. What disappointing message came to David through the prophet?**

2 Sam. 7:4-13 (compare 1 Chron. 17:4, 5; 22:8-10).

David was instructed that because he was a man of war it was not appropriate for him to build the temple (1 Chron. 22:8-10). Through Nathan God gave an emphatic No to David's sincere purpose. It had been about 450 years since the Exodus. During those years there had been no permanent building for carrying on the tabernacle services. A temple such as David wanted to build would have to wait a little longer!

12. Although David was not allowed to build the temple, what preparations did he make for his son to do so? 2 Sam. 8:11 (compare 1 Kings 7:51).

Responsibilities not given. "Instead of gratefully submitting to the divine direction, many fall back as if slighted and rejected, feeling that if they cannot do the one thing which they desire to do, they will do nothing. Many cling with desperate energy to responsibilities which they are incapable of bearing, and vainly endeavor to accomplish a work for which they are insufficient, while that which they might do, lies neglected. And because of this lack of co-operation on their part the greater work is hindered or frustrated."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 712, 713.

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IV. GOD MAKES A COVENANT WITH DAVID (2 Sam. 7:8-17).

13. Enumerate the things God had done for David in the past, of which the prophet now reminded him. 2 Sam. 7:8, 9.

14. What promise regarding Israel did God renew to David? 2 Sam. 7:10 (compare Deut. 11:22-28; 30:16).

"The kingdom of Israel had now reached in extent the fulfillment of the promise given to Abraham, and afterward repeated to Moses: . . . [Gen. 15:18 quoted]. Israel had become a mighty nation, . . . [David] commanded, as few sovereigns in any age have been able to command, the affections and allegiance of his people. He had honored God, and God was now honoring him."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 716.

15. Though denying him the privilege of building a house for God, what promise did God give David? 2 Sam. 7:11-13, 16 (compare 1 Chron. 17:11, 12).

The Hebrew word for house, means a house used as a dwelling. It also may be used in reference to the house of God, and it frequently is used in

the Bible to designate a family or tribe. So God's response to David was, "I will not let you build a house for me, instead I will build a house for you" (2 Sam. 7:11).

Saul had sought for himself a dynasty, but God had refused and removed him from the throne (2 Sam. 7:15). David received the assurance that his son would inherit his throne and that his kingdom would be established forever.

Although Israel's failure to fulfill the terms of the everlasting covenant made it impossible for David's dynasty to continue in this world of sin, it will continue for eternity as Jesus Christ, the Son of David, shares His throne with His redeemed people. (See the introduction to this lesson.)

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16. What else did God promise regarding David's son? 2 Sam. 7:13, 14. How was this promise later fulfilled? 1 Kings 5:1-5; 11:31-39.

Solomon had the privilege denied to David of building a house for his God. Probably one of the most beautiful buildings ever built by human hands, Solomon's Temple stood until 586 B.C. as a monument of God's promise to David.

The Davidic Covenant. This solemn agreement with David equaled the covenant made with Abraham some seven hundred years before. As the patriarch glimpsed into the future and saw the coming Messiah through the offering of his son on Mt. Moriah, so now the king was given prophetic insight. His was the privilege of being the forebear of the Messiah King.

Psalms 110 refers to the Messiah. Most of the Messianic psalms have a historic application. Psalm 110 (and possibly 22) are unique in that they apply solely to the Messiah. The New Testament writers recognized David as a prophet, and referred to these Messianic prophecies frequently. Note how Jesus used Psalm 110 to prove His divinity (Matt. 22:41-46). Note Peter's use of this psalm in his sermon on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:29-35).

Jesus was often called "The Son of David" (Matt. 15:22; 21:9). Yet the very people who should have known and recognized Him as a fulfillment of David's prophecies demanded that He be put to death.

Have you accepted Christ as your King whose reign you may share eternally?

V. DAVID PRAISES THE LORD (2 Sam. 7:18-29).

17. What does David's reaction to the message from God and the covenant made with him reveal about His character? 2 Sam. 7:18-29.

Overwhelmed with what he had just heard, David bowed low before the

King of kings in humble adoration and prayer. The safest place in the universe for any human being is on his knees before the King.

SELF-EVALUATION:

● How do I handle disappointments? Am I willing to submit to God's will even when it means giving up long-cherished goals or ambitions? How do I relate to those chosen to succeed me? Can I support and encourage those who accomplish what I had hoped to do?

● Do I have a sense of awe and reverence for God's holiness and greatness, or have I allowed sacred things to become commonplace? Do I have a sense of the reality of God's presence? Have I learned to balance the following two concepts of God: His transcendence (His holiness and greatness) with His imminence (the reality of His presence)?

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FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read in *Patriarchs and Prophets* the chapter entitled "The Reign of David," pp. 703-716. In regard to the ark, read: Joshua 3:7-17; 6:6-16, 20; Psalm 132; 68:24-26.

SUMMARY: The ark of the covenant is a symbol of God's presence. David and his people learned not to take lightly the holiness of God or His express commands. God chose David, a man of like passions with us, to become a type of the Messiah King. The promises God made in His covenant with David were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Through Him, those promises become ours.

Sin and Its Consequences

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 11:1-14:33.

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MEMORY TEXT: "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" (Psalm 130:3, 4).

OUR WRETCHEDNESS MATCHED BY GOD'S MERCY. Although sin always carries terrible consequences, human wretchedness is much more than matched by God's mercy and power to forgive and heal.

OUTLINE:

- I. David's Fall (2 Sam. 11:1-25).
- II. "You Are the Man!" (2 Sam. 11:26-12:12).
- III. David's Repentance (2 Sam. 12:13, 14).
- IV. The High Cost of Sin (2 Sam. 12:15-25; 13:1-39).
- V. Joab, David, and Absalom (2 Sam. 12:26-31; 14:1-33).

PRIDE GOES BEFORE A FALL. The events of our study this week probably took place about midterm in David's forty-year reign. His sons had grown to young manhood. He was by now a man of maturity who had distinguished himself as a wise and admirable statesman. His kingdom had been established among the surrounding nations as a power to be respected, if not honored. David had met and conquered many enemies. Now he was to meet the greatest enemy of all—his own carnal nature. The peril of pride, aroused by too much praise and exaltation, would prove to be his undoing.

We might wish that the sacred record had omitted this part of the story. But characteristically the Bible "tells it like it is," avoiding the human tendency to idealize a person above measure. We may learn from the mistakes of others, if we will! The Bible includes the record of sin so that the cure can be fully demonstrated.

The downhill path is usually a gradual, imperceptible decline. According to *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 717, five evil influences led to David's fall: (1) A spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation. (2) Flattery and praise. (3) The subtle allurements of power and luxury. (4) The pervading influence of surrounding nations which held that the law applied to subjects, but exempted monarchs. (5) Trust in his own wisdom and might instead of leaning on God.

"The work of the enemy is not abrupt; it is not, at the outset, sudden and startling; it is a secret undermining of the strongholds of principle. It

begins in apparently small things—the neglect to be true to God and to rely upon Him wholly, the disposition to follow the customs and practices of the world.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 718.

SUN

1. DAVID'S FALL (2 Sam. 11:1-25).

1. Review briefly the events that led to David's sin of adultery. 2 Samuel 11:1-5. Note the following:

The fruits of victory (v. 1) _____

Who was Bathsheba? (v. 3) _____

The results (v. 5) _____

Earlier in life the influence of a wise and discreet woman had saved David from bloodshed and tragedy. Now he plunged himself into the snare of sin and guilt for the momentary pleasure of a woman's physical beauty. Did Bathsheba know that David could see her from his balcony? Was she aware that he was attracted to her? Was she flattered by his attentions? Did she resist his advances or willingly comply? Did she remonstrate with him or did she demurely concede to his desires? The record is silent. In any case, David's sin was his own responsibility. How different the future might have been had Bathsheba been an Abigail! Who can measure the influence of a virtuous woman? "Her worth is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10, NKJV).

2. How did David try to cover his tracks so that no one would discover his sin? 2 Sam. 11:6-13. What indicates that Uriah the Hittite was a believer? Verse 11.

3. In desperation, what shameful plan did David conceive to extricate himself from the web of his own making? 2 Sam. 11:14, 15. With what results? Verses 16-21. What was David's response? Verses 22-25.

David was a man of great passion. Channeled into noble purposes and controlled by the Holy Spirit, he used this passion to bless the world with some of the greatest music and poetry of all time. But when he became self-indulgent, holy passion turned to lust, and lust quickly became adultery (see James 1:14, 15). Now with a guilt-laden conscience, he plunged into the dark pit of duplicity, deception, and finally murder.

Can you remember how, when you were living outside of Christ, you attempted to conceal one sin by committing another?

II. "YOU ARE THE MAN!" (2 Sam. 11:26-12:12).

4. What indicates that David remained in an unrepentant state for a period of time? 2 Sam. 11:26, 27.

Perhaps David thought he had succeeded in hiding his sin. But there was One from whom he could not hide. (See Ps. 139:1-12.) "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (2 Sam. 11:27.) Just as God had sent Samuel to confront Saul, God was about to confront David through the prophet Nathan. Would he resist and rebel as Saul had? Or would he repent?

God sees all. "The guilty may attempt, as David had done, to conceal their crime from men; they may seek to bury the evil deed forever from human sight or knowledge; but 'all things are . . . opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' Hebrews 4:13."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 721.

5. How did Nathan describe David's sin? 2 Sam. 12:1-4. After David had pronounced his own sentence, what pointed message did Nathan deliver to him? 2 Sam. 12:5-12.

David's heart was not so hard that he had lost his sense of justice and equity. The simple parable used by the prophet once again stirred his passion, but this time against injustice and wrong.

Sin bears its own consequences. Even God's great mercy and forgiveness could not alter the awful law of cause and effect. He reaped what he had sown. David had tried to hide his sin by the sword. Now the sword would never depart from his house as long as he lived.

The sentence pronounced was not an arbitrary punishment on God's part, but the natural harvest of David's own doing. He himself had changed on several levels:

- His relationship to God had changed from trust to guilt.
- His spirit was broken, thus weakening his influence over his subjects and short-circuiting his administrative initiative.
- His authority over his own household was weakened, resulting in permissiveness because of his own evil example.

Can you recall your miserable condition when you became convicted that you were a sinner in need of a Saviour? What led you to turn to Christ for merciful forgiveness and healing?

III. DAVID'S REPENTANCE (2 Sam. 12:13, 14).

6. How did David respond to Nathan's confrontation? 2 Sam. 12:13, 14.

Notice how Nathan approached the matter. A direct rebuke would probably have resulted in a hostile defense, but having David condemn himself brought the desired result.

"The prophet's rebuke touched the heart of David; conscience was aroused; his guilt appeared in all of its enormity. . . . All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. David had committed a grievous sin, toward both Uriah and Bathsheba, and he keenly felt this. But infinitely greater was his sin against God."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 722.

Confrontation. The only way to deal with sin is through confrontation. Nathan the prophet had confronted David with his sin. Now David willingly confronted his own guilt by confession, not only of his sin but of his sinful nature. Finally, through repentance, he was once again able to confront God in petition for acceptance and blessing. Gratitude and praise filled his heart as he realized that the Lord had forgiven him.

TUE

7. Read David's description of his own sinful nature and his acknowledgment of his sin. Ps. 6:6; 38:1-10; 51:1-5. What does this say about the genuineness of David's repentance?

"Thus in a sacred song to be sung in the public assemblies of his people, in the presence of the court—priests and judges, princes and men of war—and which would preserve to the latest generation the knowledge of his fall, the king of Israel recounted his sin, his repentance, and his hope of pardon through the mercy of God. Instead of endeavoring to conceal his guilt he desired that others might be instructed by the sad history of his fall."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 725.

8. What was David's understanding of the basis of God's forgiveness? Ps. 25:6, 7; 103:10-14, 17; 130:4, 7, 8.

Through the tragedy and guilt of his own sin, and facing the judgment and awful retribution that sin brings, David understood more fully the good news of the gospel: "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins" but "as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" (Ps. 103:10, 12, NKJV). David learned to appreciate as never before that if the Lord should remember our sins against us none of us would stand a chance: "But there is forgiveness with thee" (Ps. 130:4).

9. What spiritual experiences were involved in the forgiveness that David sought?

Ps. 51:7; 32:2 _____

Ps. 51:10; 103:3-5 _____

Ps. 51:11, 12 _____

Ps. 25:4, 5 _____

- 10. Along with other Bible writers, David defines the kind of sacrifices for sin God desires. Discuss Psalm 51:16, 17.**
-

The sacrifices that please God are the humble and contrite heart (Ps. 51:17), loving obedience to His will (Ps. 40:6-8), and the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving (Ps. 50:23).

David knew that he deserved nothing and owed everything to the wonderful mercy and lovingkindness of God. In a contrite spirit he brought his offerings once more into the presence of his God, saying: "Come and listen, all you who fear God: let me tell you what he has done for me" (Ps. 66:16, NIV).

Can you recall your joy when you discovered that you are pure when Christ purifies you (1 Cor. 6:11)? You may be willing to tell a friend, or relative, or even your Sabbath School class how different your life is when you know you are in a right relationship with God.

IV. THE HIGH COST OF SIN (2 Sam. 12:15-25; 13:1-39).

- 11. How soon after Nathan's message did the first part of David's fourfold punishment strike? Can you explain David's reaction? 2 Sam. 12:15-23.**
-

We can never fully prepare for the death of a loved one, but when there is opportunity, remorse and guilt should be dealt with before the loss occurs. Grief alone is difficult enough for us to bear without the added burden of self-accusation. Guilt and unrelieved grief can block the channels of positive living and cause all kinds of problems, including illness. (See Ps. 103:3.)

- 12. Why did Nathan the prophet give another name to the second son of Bathsheba, whom David named Solomon? 2 Sam. 12:24, 25.**
-

Jedidiah means "beloved of Jehovah." One of the mysteries of God's grace is His choice of Solomon. The Lord chose Solomon as He had chosen David his father. God gave the repentant king the assurance of His acceptance by naming and loving his son.

- 13. What circumstances led to the second part of David's punishment by the sword? 2 Sam. 13:1-33.**

Why does Scripture devote a whole chapter to such a sordid story? David F. Payne suggests in his commentary four reasons: (1) The story describes part of David's fourfold punishment. (2) The details are necessary to set the stage for subsequent events. (3) The story serves as a warning against the dangers of moral lapses by those in high positions. (4) God's overruling providence can use even our sins to bring about His own purposes.

God removes His restraining hand. "David had neglected the duty of punishing the crime of Amnon, and because of the unfaithfulness of the king and father and the impenitence of the son, the Lord permitted events to take their natural course, and did not restrain Absalom. When parents or rulers neglect the duty of punishing iniquity, God Himself will take the case in hand. His restraining power will be in a measure removed from the agencies of evil, so that a train of circumstances will arise which will punish sin with sin."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 728.

What modern examples can you think of in which sin has been punished with sin?

V. JOAB, DAVID, AND ABSALOM (2 Sam. 12:26-31; 14:1-33).

- THU** 14. How did Joab show his loyalty to David in his capture of Rabbah? 2 Sam. 12:26-29.

"Rabbah [modern day Amman, Jordan] was situated in the narrow valley of the upper Jabbok River. The citadel was on a cliff, evidently a walled city apart from the lower town. This lower town was called 'the city of waters,' probably because of the spring that there flowed into the river. When this lower city was taken by Joab, the loss of the water supply made it impossible for the defenders to hold the upper city long."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, pp. 653, 654.

15. Alienated from his father, where did Absalom, the murderer, seek refuge? 2 Sam. 13:37, 38. How did David relate to these events? Verse 39.

David's heart longed for his son's return, but his better judgment told him that he must strictly apply the law.

16. How did Joab try to negotiate a reconciliation between David and Absalom? 2 Sam. 14:1-20. What was David's response to the request? What were the results? Verses 21-24.

"This tender and touching portrayal of the love of God toward the sin-

ner—coming as it did from Joab, the rude soldier—is a striking evidence of the familiarity of the Israelites with the great truths of redemption.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 728.

David seemed paralyzed in handling the affairs of state. Weakness and indecision had replaced his courage and purpose. The judgment he had pronounced upon himself was falling heavy and hard.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

● A sermon or something you have read in the Bible has convicted you of a sin in your personal life. Will you: (a) try to hide it; (b) rationalize that it is not so bad; (c) confess and forsake it?

● You have learned that a church leader has fallen morally. Will you: (a) tell a friend; (b) condemn and decry how terrible it is; (c) pray for the spiritual restoration of all concerned?

● Your doctor has just informed you that you have a very serious illness, which may be due to your lifestyle before you became a Christian. Will you: (a) blame God; (b) be angry at yourself; (c) humbly resign yourself to the law of cause and effect; (d) trust fully in Christ's gift of eternal life, despite the suffering and its possible results?

FRI

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled “David's Sin and Repentance” in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 717-726. Read the following penitential psalms noting the elements of confession, petition, and praise in each: Psalms 32, 38, 51.

SUMMARY: No one, not even a monarch, is exempt from the awful consequences of sin. By His great mercy and tender lovingkindness, God changes our despair and tragedy to acceptance of His infinite grace and forgiveness.

Crisis Reveals Character

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 14:25-19:40.

SAB
PM

MEMORY TEXT: "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head" (Psalm 3:1-3).

LEAN ON THE ARM OF POWER. In times of stress, rejection, or personal tragedy, the individual who leans wholly on the sustaining arm of the Lord, and who harbors love and forgiveness in his or her heart grows stronger in character and reveals to the universe the transforming power of divine grace.

OUTLINE:

- I. Conspiracy and Revolt (2 Sam. 14:25-15:12).
- II. David's Exile (2 Sam. 15:13-16:14).
- III. David's Friends (2 Sam. 15:19-29; 18:19-32; 19:24-40).
- IV. Absalom's Reign and Death (2 Sam. 16:15-18:18; 18:33-19:7).
- V. David's Kingdom Restored (2 Sam. 19:8-39).

JUDGMENT CONTINUES TO FALL. Two qualities in David's character shine through the dark events that constitute this week's study: his spirit of humility and forgiveness in the midst of revenge and treachery; and his unwavering trust and confidence in the One in whom he found shelter in times of crisis.

David's sin brought a chain of events that occurred in rapid succession. The sordid details of each new development are recorded to give the reader a background for the next.

The background to this week's lesson. Absalom had killed his half-brother, Amnon, David's oldest son. David's second son (Chileab by Abigail) had evidently died in infancy or early childhood. Now Absalom, as the eldest living son, was the heir apparent to the throne, although no precedent had been set in Israel as to the manner of choosing the next king. David had not given any indication of his choice of a crown prince. But there was no question that his third son, Absalom, had his eye on the throne. David's refusal to see Absalom after his return to Jerusalem fueled an already restless and ambitious spirit. The third part of David's fourfold judgment was about to fall.

I. CONSPIRACY AND REVOLT (2 Sam. 14:25–15:12).

1. According to the following verses in 2 Samuel, what factors contributed to Absalom's popularity with the people?

14:25, 26 _____

15:1 _____

15:2-4 _____

15:5, 6 _____

David loved his gifted son, yet felt he must show disapproval of his crime. Now that Absalom was in Jerusalem his influence would be a threat to David's security. Absalom's handsome appearance, his sister Tamar's presence as a constant reminder of his brother's crime, and his own cunning strategy to win the hearts of the people, combined to set the stage for a revolt against his father's rule.

"In the popular estimation, the prince was a hero rather than an offender."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 729.

2. How did Absalom make his demand to see the king's face? 2 Sam. 14:28-33.

Absalom assumed that he could command Joab. The personal assault on his property, when Joab did not immediately respond, was a serious matter. The amazing thing is that the wily Joab tolerated such behavior, at least for the time being. Absalom's challenge for the king to judge him showed his impudence and lack of conscience regarding the crime he had committed. The fact that David and Joab both meekly yielded to his wishes gives a hint of his arrogance and highhandedness.

As it turned out, the partial reconciliation between David and Absalom was worse than no reconciliation at all, for it simply gave more credibility to the scheming prince, who took advantage of David's negligence in the administration of justice.

"While the king was more and more inclined to desire retirement and solitude, Absalom sedulously courted the popular favor."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 729.

3. What steps did Absalom now take in his conspiracy to seize the throne? 2 Sam. 15:7-12. What shows that David did not suspect his scheme? Verse 9.

Absalom was a skillful manipulator and deceiver. It took him four years to win the hearts of the people and carefully lay his plans. (See 2 Sam. 15:7; the KJV says forty, but some ancient manuscripts read four. This is

more accurate seeing that David reigned only 33 years in Jerusalem—1 Kings 2:11.) He gained the confidence of one of David's chief counselors, Ahithophel. The evidence indicates that he played on the discontent and bitterness that had resulted from David's fall. "The defection of Ahithophel, the ablest and most wily of political leaders, was prompted by revenge for the family disgrace involved in the wrong to Bathsheba, who was his granddaughter"—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 735.

Do you agree that Absalom was a spoiled boy? How does parental permissiveness affect youth in the modern world? What kind of discipline would have contributed to the character development of Amnon and Absalom?

II. DAVID'S EXILE (2 Sam. 15:13–16:14).

4. Describe David's flight from Absalom. 2 Sam. 15:13-18.

The revolt took David completely by surprise. There was nothing to do but flee, and there was only one way to go. To the north was the powerful tribe of Ephraim, and David did not know where their loyalties rested. He could not turn west to the Philistines. The strengthening forces of Absalom were coming from Hebron, to the south. David's only recourse was to head east for the wild and difficult terrain of the Transjordan. This territory would slow the progress of the untried men with Absalom.

5. Contrast the picture of David in 2 Samuel 7:1 with that in 2 Samuel 15:30 and 16:14. What brought about the change?

Barefoot and humiliated, his royal robes replaced by sackcloth, David wrote Psalm 3 from the depths of his agony and sorrow. Yet in spite of the large numbers pursuing him, David could say with confidence, "I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around" (Ps. 3:5, 6, NKJV).

6. What was David's response to the priests' carrying the ark of the covenant with them into exile? 2 Sam. 15:24-26.

"As the priests turned back toward Jerusalem a deeper shadow fell upon the departing throng. Their king a fugitive, themselves outcasts, forsaken even by the ark of God—the future was dark with terror and foreboding."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 735.

7. What two incidents show how self-serving people took advantage of a crisis to vent their anger against David?

2 Sam. 16:1-4 _____

2 Sam. 16:5-13 _____

Shimei, a Benjamite and relative of Saul, displayed his anger against the king. The rash Abishai, David's nephew and one of his officers, was ready to execute Shimei on the spot, but David's spirit was one of humility and forgiveness toward his enemy. David may have written Psalm 7 on this occasion or in memory of it.

Compare David's attitude toward his enemies with Christ's attitude. (See Isa. 53:7; Matt. 26:62, 63.) We tend to defend ourselves when we are falsely accused. By what means can we control our defensive feelings and angry words of retaliation?

TUE

III. DAVID'S FRIENDS (2 Sam. 15:19-29; 18:19-32; 19:24-40).

8. How did one of David's friends show his support for the exiled king? 2 Sam. 15:19-23.

The loyalty and fidelity of faithful friends at this time must have been a bright spot in David's otherwise bleak situation. (See Prov. 17:17.) Ittai and his 600 men, from the Philistine city of Gath, had converted to the Hebrew religion, and served as David's bodyguard. Ittai was one of the three commanders who fought against Absalom. (See 2 Sam. 18:2.)

9. Upon hearing that Ahithophel had defected to Absalom, David prayed for God to defeat his counsel. How did God answer his prayer? 2 Sam. 15:31-37; 16:15-19; 17:1-14, 23.

- _____
10. Who served as David's informers? 2 Sam. 15:27, 28; 17:15-22.

- _____
11. How did some of David's friends in Gilead minister to him? 2 Sam. 17:24, 27-29. (If possible, read this in a modern translation.)

Name the friends: _____

Note the items they brought to David: _____

Gilead was vulnerable to enemy attack. Because the rich land owners of Gilead welcomed the protection of David and his men, they ministered generously to their needs.

David mustered his men at Mahanaim, former capital of Saul, and also of Ishbosheth during his short reign. Here, many years before, Jacob, fleeing from his father-in-law, Laban, and about to meet his brother, Esau, met two groups of heavenly angels and called the place "two camps," Mahanaim. (See Gen. 32:1, 2.) Now the Lord inspired faithful people to minister to the exiled king.

- 12. How did David later show his gratitude to Barzillai for his loyal support? 2 Sam. 19:31-39.**

How good it is to have loyal friends who give encouragement and support in difficult times. Can you share the blessings you have received from loving friends when you were suffering hardship?

IV. ABSALOM'S REIGN AND DEATH (2 Sam. 16:15-18:18; 18:33-19:7).

Part of Nathan's prophecy against David was that, although he had sinned secretly, he would be publicly disgraced. Ahithophel now became the instigator for the fulfillment of that prophecy. Concern for his own safety, should there be a reconciliation between David and Absalom at some future time, must have prompted him to advise Absalom to pursue such a heinous course of action. (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 739.) Absalom now burned his bridges behind him by taking over the royal harem. (See 2 Sam. 16:20-23.)

- 13. Note David's preparations for the battle against Absalom. 2 Sam. 18:1-5. What indicates the people's love and concern for their king? Verse 3. What instructions did David give concerning the treatment of Absalom? Verse 5.**

As any parent might well understand, David's natural feelings of love and pity for his rebellious son outweighed his good judgment as king. Should Absalom escape and live, the throne would never be safe. Joab recognized that there was not room for two kings.

- 14. How did the rugged, wooded terrain of the countryside aid David's cause? 2 Sam. 18:6-8. How was Absalom's death brought about? Verses 9-15.**

Twice Joab had been instrumental in bringing about a reconciliation between David and Absalom. But his trust had been breached and shamelessly betrayed. Now despite David's parting counsel, Joab had no scruples. There was only one way to deal with the instigator of all this evil. With one blow the rebellion was over. Joab blew the trumpet to announce the news.

15. Whom did Joab send to David to deliver the news of Absalom's death? How can we explain the subsequent incident. 2 Sam. 18:19-32.
-

This intriguing incident suggests the dilemma of the situation. The battle was over. David's forces had been victorious and His throne had been saved. But Joab knew that the good news of victory would be bad news for David. Just why Joab preferred the Cushite to Ahimaaz to take the report to David, and why the latter was so eager to do so, is not clear. Upon arriving, Ahimaaz was not sure how to break the news.

- THU** 16. What was David's reaction to the news of Absalom's death? 2 Sam. 18:33; 19:1-4. What does Joab's reprimand (verses 5-7) and David's response (verse 8) reveal about the following?

David _____

Joab _____

The people _____

David's sorrow was intense. He had lost another son as a result of his own sin. Yet as king he was responsible to his people. For David to nurse his own grief when his people had risked so much to save his throne angered the rude, blunt Joab. David seemed not to resent his harsh reproof and promptly went to the city gate to welcome and encourage his subjects.

How would you comfort a parent whose child had died because of the child's own foolishness? Would you rebuke the parent for failing to train the child correctly? Would you excuse the sin of the child? What would you say?

V. DAVID'S KINGDOM RESTORED (2 Sam. 19:8-39).

17. What was one of the first actions David took after resuming the kingship? 2 Sam. 19:13.
-

Amasa, David's nephew, had been Absalom's military leader. His appointment as David's new commander-in-chief would assure the loyalty of Absalom's followers. David acted decisively, regardless of whether he was motivated politically or by his desire to be rid of Joab's overbearing personality.

18. After David's restoration to the kingship (2 Sam. 19:15-18), what were his dealings with the following people? What do his decisions reveal about his character?

Shimei (v. 23) _____

Ziba (v. 29) _____

Mephibosheth (vs. 26-30) _____

David had learned well the lesson that one cannot enjoy the mercy and forgiveness of God without extending it to others.

ASK YOURSELF:

● If I had been in David's place how would I have dealt with Shimei, Joab, and Amasa?

● Do I rally to my friends when they are in trouble, or do I tend to avoid them because I do not want to get involved?

● How do I react when I am unjustly treated? Do I humbly forgive or do I seek revenge?

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled "The Rebellion of Absalom" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 727-745. Read Psalms 42 and 84, keeping in mind David's experiences.

SUMMARY: God never forsakes us, even when the dark chapters in our experience result from our own mistakes. We need the same tenacious faith and trust in God that carried David through his crises. The sure mercies of David may be ours as we pass through our dark valleys.



**Have you decided how to save your dollars
for the South Pacific Division Thirteenth Sabbath?**

Overshadowing Providence

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 2 Samuel 20-24.

SAB
PM

MEMORY TEXT: "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God" (2 Samuel 23:2, 3).

GOD'S LOVE MORE THAN ADEQUATE. The record of David's life serves to remind us that no matter how tangled our lives, or how far we have fallen from God's plan for us, or how bitter our circumstances, God's love and mercy are greater than our sin. His salvation is broader than our need.

OUTLINE:

- I. The Troubled Closing Years of David (2 Sam. 20:1-21:14).
- II. David's Accomplishments (2 Sam. 21:15-22; 23:8-24:25).
- III. David the Psalmist (2 Samuel 22).
- IV. David the Prophet (2 Sam. 23:1-7).
- V. Lessons From David.

THE CLOSING DAYS OF DAVID'S REIGN. In this last lesson dealing with the books of Samuel, we catch several glimpses into some of the closing events of David's reign. The last few chapters of 2 Samuel appear to be miscellaneous accounts that did not fit chronologically into the main story, but were added as part of the record. It is probable, however, that most of them took place in David's latter years.

It is important to emphasize that the brutal and bloodthirsty nature of some Bible accounts is no reflection on the character of God. The actions of the supposed children of God were not an accurate reflection of God's will and intentions. We must be careful not to blame God for the faulty behavior of His professed children.

We will note some of David's accomplishments, his last words, and more important, we will look into the very heart of David, the prophet, as we read and study some of his inspired songs and prayers. In addition to being the most esteemed king in Israel's history and the forerunner of the Messiah, David's gift of prophecy has blessed the world with some of the greatest poetry and music of all time.

Finally, in retrospect, we will review some of the main lessons we have observed in our study of this great man of God.

- I. THE TROUBLED CLOSING YEARS OF DAVID (2 Sam. 20:1-21:14).**
- 1. Who was Amasa? 2 Sam. 17:25. What may have prompted David to promote him to commander-in-chief of his army? 2 Sam. 19:11-13 (see also verses 5-7).**
-

David's anger at Joab for killing Absalom was surpassed only by his grief for his dead son. Joab's sharp reproof of the grieving king must have rankled in his heart, although at the time David humbly yielded to his commander's advice. Now he had taken enough from the wily Joab. In a daring move, the king made his nephew and former enemy the commander of his forces in Joab's place.

- 2. What circumstances necessitated David's mustering his military forces again? 2 Sam. 20:1, 2. To whom did he give orders? How did Joab react to these changes? Verses 4-10.**
-

Joab was a murderer, despite his great capacity as a military leader. David owed much to Joab's ability to organize and lead an army. This probably explains why David tolerated his sometimes violent behavior. But such behavior is totally contrary to principles of God's government. Mercy, love, forgiveness, and gentleness characterize the Lord's rule. Joab was a man of action, a man of insight and wisdom (see 2 Sam. 20:16-22) but he failed to take on the character of God. There are times when the exercise of might is anything but right.

- 3. To what did David attribute the three-year famine in Israel? 2 Sam. 21:1-3.**
-

In the days of Joshua and the conquest of Canaan, the Gibeonites had practiced deception to save themselves from destruction. Joshua and the people of Israel had entered into a solemn agreement with them, and were bound to honor their promise to allow the Gibeonites to live among them peaceably. (See Joshua 9:3-27.) Evidently Saul, with the support of his people, had put many of them to death, for what might be described as racist reasons. This is why the whole nation was now suffering a famine (2 Sam. 21:1).

"The whole nation was involved in the violation of the solemn oath given by Joshua and the princes of the congregation more than 400 years before. . . .

"**Wherewith shall I make the atonement?** David should have addressed this question to God, even as he had addressed the previous inquiry concerning the cause of the famine. The record does not state that

David took this matter to the Lord, nor does it affirm that what the Gibeonites demanded and what David carried out in response was in harmony with what God would have required in order to rectify the situation."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 695.

**4. How did David once more show respect for the memory of Saul?
2 Sam. 21:10-14.**

"Because the text states that 'God was intreated' we need not therefore conclude that David had followed God's plan for atoning for Saul's evil deed. The Lord might measure an act by the sincerity of heart that prompted it, even though he condemned the act itself."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 697.

II. DAVID'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS (2 Sam. 21:15-22; 23:8-24:25).

David's Hall of Fame lists an impressive number of great men, warriors, and statesmen, who made their contributions to Israel's military victories and political strength in this the most glorious period of their history. (See 2 Sam. 20:23-26; 23:8-39.) David and his men manifested mutual love and loyalty. (See 2 Sam. 23:13-17.)

5. How did David's military accomplishments become a snare to him and his people? 2 Sam. 24:1-9.

Pride provoked a display of power. "With a view to extending his conquests among foreign nations, David determined to increase his army by requiring military service from all who were of proper age. To effect this, it became necessary to take a census of the population. It was pride and ambition that prompted this action of the king. The numbering of the people would show the contrast between the weakness of the kingdom when David ascended the throne and its strength and prosperity under his rule. This would tend still further to foster the already too great self-confidence of both king and people."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 747.

Two descriptions of the same event. The record in 2 Samuel 24:1 suggests that God's anger against Israel moved David to number them, while the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21:1 says that Satan provoked David to do it. "These statements are not necessarily contradictory but may simply represent two aspects of the same incident. In the verse under consideration we have another instance where God is said to do that which He does not prevent."—*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 710.

Israel's pride resulted in withdrawal of God's protecting hand and the evil one tempted David to an act that was contrary to God's will.

6. What was David's reaction to the prophet Gad's censure and the consequent punishment? 2 Sam. 24:10-25.

On Mt. Moriah, the very spot where Abraham had built an altar upon which to sacrifice his son, David now erected another altar to commemorate the great deliverance and staying of the destroying angel. There his son Solomon would build the glorious Temple that he himself had desired to build.

7. Though not mentioned in the Samuel account, what were some of David's other accomplishments?

- a. He made "abundant preparations" for the building of the Temple. 1 Chron. 22:1-5.
- b. He organized the Temple service. 1 Chron. 23:2-6.
- c. He developed Israel's music. In addition to organizing musicians (see 1 Chron. 25:1-6) and creating musical instruments (1 Chron. 23:5), he composed many songs and edited the Hebrew hymn book, the Psalter.

David's experience illustrates the principle that when we obey the Lord we are blessed, but when we disobey He withdraws His protection and we suffer. What experiences in your life illustrate the same principle?

TUE III. DAVID THE PSALMIST (2 Samuel 22).

Although a study of Psalms is beyond the scope of this lesson, our review of David's life would not be complete without a look at a sampling of his great hymns, which have blessed the world through the centuries.

The Psalm of Thanksgiving, recorded in 2 Samuel 22, also occurs as Psalm 18. Examining some of the aspects of this hymn of praise may give us a greater appreciation and understanding of David's other psalms.

8. Make a list of the names or figures used in 2 Samuel 22 that David used to refer to God, noting how many have gospel significance.

9. Review the events of Lesson 7 as a means of understanding the psalmist's distress over his enemies. How would you evaluate his description in 2 Samuel 22:5-7, 17-20?

In the middle of his prayer of distress over his enemies, David portrays in vivid and powerful detail an encounter with the living God. (See 2 Sam. 22:8-16.) It is as though the psalmist is quieting his own fears by reminding himself of the awful majesty and greatness of his God, who is his defense.

10. Read 2 Samuel 22:35-43 in light of the principles of the great controversy between Christ and Satan. (See Rev. 12:1-17.) How would you explain the following?

“He teaches my hands to make war” (2 Sam. 22:35, NKJV; see Eph. 6:10-17).

“You have subdued . . . those who rose against me” (2 Sam. 22:40, NKJV; see Rev. 12:9-11).

“I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth” (2 Sam. 22:43, NKJV; see Ps. 2:8, 9; Rev. 19:15).

WED

11. Summarize in your own words some of the reasons David had for being grateful:

2 Sam. 22:20, 44 _____

Verses 26-28 _____

Verses 29-31 _____

Verses 36, 37 _____

Verses 50, 51 _____

Deitrich Bonhoeffer, who spent the last years of his life in a Nazi prison camp and eventually became a martyr, loved and read the psalms daily. A friend who was with him in his last days said that he seemed to diffuse happiness and joy to those about him, and manifested a deep sense of gratitude over just being alive. He had learned well the lesson of the psalmist: gratitude born of adversity sings God's praises from the heart, not just with the lips.

IV. DAVID THE PROPHET (2 Sam. 23:1-7).

12. What New Testament criteria confirms David's prophetic gift? Who was the “Rock of Israel” who spoke to him (2 Sam. 23:1-3)? 2 Peter 1:21; 1 Cor. 10:4.
-

13. Study the following sampling of the prophecies made by David about the Messiah to come. Compare their New Testament fulfillment.

Prophecy

Ps. 89:3, 4
 Ps. 118:25, 26
 Ps. 22:1
 Ps. 22:7, 8

Fulfillment

Luke 1:31-33
 Matt. 21:9
 Matt. 27:46
 Matt. 27:39-43

14. How does David describe the second advent of Christ to this earth? Ps. 50:1-3 (compare Ps. 97:3-6; 2 Thess. 2:8).

With what awe and holy anticipation the prophet must have looked down the corridor of the centuries to the glorious appearing of his God in majesty and splendor. The sublime presence of the living Lord, Yahweh, Israel's King (Ps. 97:1; 99:1), deserves worship from "all his saints" (Ps. 148:14), from all nations (Ps. 102:15), and from all creatures (Ps. 150:6).

THU

15. What two aspects of judgment does the psalmist emphasize? Ps. 94:1-3; 98:2, 3.

A persistent theme in the Psalms is that the "Judge of the earth" to whom vengeance belongs, will "render punishment" to the proud and to those who do evil. But with equal fervor the psalmist reminds us that justice has another side—mercy and equity to the poor and oppressed, along with salvation and faithfulness to the "house of Israel" (Ps. 98:3).

V. LESSONS FROM DAVID.

We have abhorred David's inconsistencies and admired his virtues. What made David the truly great man that he was? What earned him the title, "A man after God's own heart"?

Consider the following glimpses into the qualities of David's relationship with God as seen in the psalms:

- a. Singleness of purpose, Ps. 27:4, 8
- b. Repentant spirit, Ps. 32:5
- c. Trust in God's mercy and salvation, Ps. 13:5
- d. Trust in God's power, Ps. 56:3, 4; 60:11
- e. Trust in God's plan, Ps. 37:23-29
- f. Patiently waiting on the Lord, Ps. 27:14; 37:7
- g. Teachability, Ps. 25:4, 5
- h. Awareness of God's presence, Ps. 16:8
- i. Thirst for God, Ps. 42:1, 2
- j. Enjoyment of God, Ps. 16:11; 17:15; 34:8

Meditate on the contrasts between the life of Saul, the first king of Israel, and David. Compare their failures and mistakes. What made the

difference in the way God dealt with these two men?

Picture the judgment scene in the heavenly sanctuary. Angels surround the Father's throne. Christ is at His right hand. The book of life is open, and on one of its pages appears the name of David. An angel near the throne holds his personal record book. Suddenly a voice in the distance cries out, "Unfair, Unfair! How can you justify saving David? Look at his sins!" The angry accuser (Rev. 12:10) demands an accounting.

Slowly the angel leafs through David's personal record book. Across every sin is written in large bold letters, "Confessed, forgiven!" Jesus, the son of David, the Messiah King, steps forward. Holding out His nail-pierced hands, and in a voice melodious with deep emotion, He says, "My blood was shed for David's sins. I have paid the ransom price for his salvation. He accepted My transforming grace. I will not blot out his name from the book of life, but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels. (See Rev. 3:5.) There is a long hushed silence. The accuser leaves, speechless. Suddenly a choir of angels bursts into song:

" 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honor and glory and blessing' " (Rev. 5:12, NKJV).

Now reread this scene, substituting your name for David's.

FURTHER STUDY AND MEDITATION: Read the chapter entitled "The Last Years of David" in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 746-755. Leaf through the previous twelve studies of this quarter, noting the examples or warnings that stand out in your mind as especially helpful. Make a list of the principles you hope to remember and apply in your own life, and those that may benefit the church as a whole.

SUMMARY: Whatever difficulties we may face in the future, no matter what afflictions we may be called on to endure, the God of David is still our God today. Through Him we may do valiantly. (See Ps. 60:12.)

Lessons for Second Quarter, 1991

Sabbath School members who have not received a copy of the Adult Lessons for the second quarter of 1991 will be helped by the following outline in studying the first two lessons. The title of the series is *Rainbow in the Rain*. This quarter's lessons cover the book of Ezekiel.

First Lesson: "When Tragedy Strikes"

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Ezekiel 1:1-3; 2:1-5; 3:15; 24:1, 16.

MEMORY TEXT: James 5:10.

TRAGEDY IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. Is it more important to know *why* adversity comes, or to know *how* to relate to it in a positive manner? Can God's grace overrule grief for our good and the salvation of others?

OUTLINE:

- I. Ezekiel and His Times (2 Kings 21-25).
- II. Ezekiel's Triple Tragedies (Eze. 1:1-3; 3:15; 24:1, 16).
- III. Ezekiel's Important Ministry (Eze. 2:1-5).

Second Lesson: "I Am With You"

THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Ezekiel 1-3.

MEMORY TEXT: Ezekiel 11:16.

DOES GOD EVER ABANDON HIS PEOPLE WHO TRUST IN HIM? Are they safe and secure in His hands because He has promised to be with them? Why then do good people seem to have so many "afflictions" (Ps. 34:19).

OUTLINE:

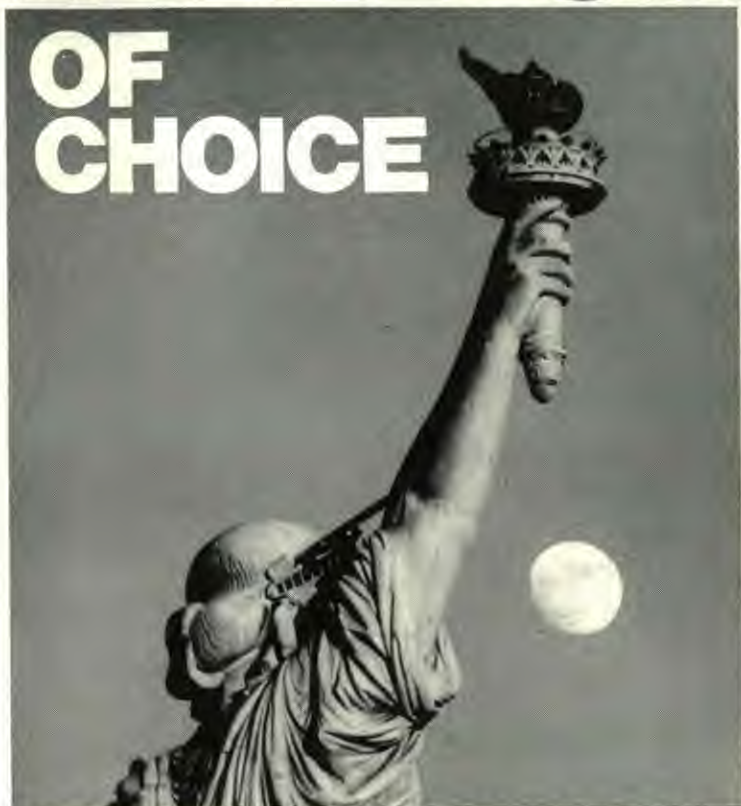
- I. God's Presence in the Storm (Eze. 1:4, 26-28).
- II. God's Hand Directs the Wheels (Eze. 1:5-28; 10:8).
- III. God's Hand on Ezekiel (Eze. 1:3; 3:14, 22).
- IV. God's Preparation of Ezekiel (Eze. 2:8-10; 3:1-11).
- V. God's Presence With His People in Captivity (Eze. 11:16).

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The regular Adult Sabbath School Lessons are available free each month in Braille and 16 2/3 rpm records to blind and physically handicapped persons who cannot read normal ink print. This includes individuals who because of arthritis, multiple sclerosis, paralysis, accident, old age, and so forth, cannot hold or focus on normal ink-print publications. Contact the Christian Record Braille Foundation, Box 6097, Lincoln NE 68506.

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Trans-Tasman	10,731,868	281	34,877
Western Pacific	661,611	179	23,019
Totals June 30, 1988	25,393,857	1,316	204,820



1. Day High School, Fiji
2. Evangelistic Center for Hindus, Fiji

FIRST QUARTER, 1991