

## David's Lament Over Saul and Jonathan 2 Samuel 1

### Background

### Doctrinal Points

1. The Bible is inerrant, but it contains some untrue human statements.
2. The Bible is inspired, but it mentions some non-inspired human sources.

### Practical Application

1. Be positive about people!

### Questions

1. How many books are in the Hebrew Scriptures? How many in the English Old Testament?
2. Briefly explain the two versions of the account of King Saul's death.
3. What are some possible ways to harmonize this apparent contradiction?
4. Why did David have the Amalekite put to death?
5. What is the Book of Jasher?

## Answers

1. There are 36 books in the Hebrew Scriptures, compared to 39 in our Old Testament. The difference comes from some of our books being split (1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles).
2. First Samuel 31 records King Saul's death as a suicide. Here in 2 Samuel 1, an Amalekite claims to have killed Saul, at the king's request.
3. One option is that King Saul tried to commit suicide, but was not completely successful in his attempt. While life still lingered in him he asked the Amalekite to finish him off. Another option is that the Amalekite came upon Saul's dead body, took his crown, and lied to try to impress David. Because by his own testimony, he killed King Saul, the Lord's anointed.
4. Because by his own testimony, he killed King Saul, the Lord's anointed.
5. It is a record of the wars of Israel, which is not a part of our biblical canon.

## Discuss / Consider

1. The Bible does not lie, but it does contain the record of some lies. Discuss some examples of obvious lies in the Bible (things said by the Pharisees, claims of Job's friends). If we clearly recognize those as lies without questioning the inerrancy of Scripture, why do you think we get so hung up on other lies (this chapter, or Rahab's lie, for example)?

2. Are you surprised by David's reaction to the death of Saul? Would you have been rejoicing at that point? What does this tell us about David's character?

## Challenge

1. David emphasized the positive when he remembered Saul. This is a living example of Philippians 4:8. Will you put this into practice this week?

**David is Anointed King over Judah**  
**2 Samuel 2**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. David's patience is a spiritual picture of Christ.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Abner's challenge is a spiritual lesson concerning conflict.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Let's ask the Lord first about our next move.**

**Questions**

1. What did David do after the death of King Saul and Jonathan?
2. Why was Hebron a fitting first capital for David's reign?
3. Who was Ishbosheth? Who was Abner? What did these men do?
4. How is David a picture of Christ in this chapter?
5. Who was Joab? How did Joab and Abner become fierce enemies?

## Answers

1. After a time of mourning, he inquired of the Lord what he should do and where he should go.
2. Hebron was the place where the patriarchs were buried. It was the area that Caleb had conquered for Judah. Hebron became one of the leading cities of Judah, since Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites at this time.
3. Ishbosheth was a son of Saul and Abner was the general of Saul's army. Abner set up Ishbosheth as king over the remainder of Saul's kingdom of Israel for two years.
4. David was the rightful king over all Israel, but he waited patiently on God to bring the whole kingdom to him. This is a spiritual picture of Christ waiting for God the Father to bring in the earthly kingdom where the Lord will reign as king.
5. Joab was the commander of David's army (and David's nephew). Joab's brother Asahel was pursuing Abner in the woods, when Abner turned and killed him with the blunt end of a spear.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the earthly reign of our Lord as King. Right now our Lord is the rightful king, and is recognized as such by believers. But everyone will recognize Him as King; every knee will bow, when He returns to earth to reign. What is the Lord doing now?

2. A civil war resulted from Abner's challenge to Joab. This could have been avoided if there were no challenge, and the men talked instead. Discuss how often conflicts in churches could be avoided if people would talk things out rather than constantly challenging one another. Refer to Galatians 5:15,26.

## Challenge

1. Although David knew he was the rightful king, he consulted with the Lord before he made a move. Follow David's example. Ask the Lord first, about your next move.

**Abner Shifts Loyalty to David and is Killed by Joab**  
**2 Samuel 3**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. He who sows to the flesh will reap destruction.**

**2. The wrath of man shall praise God.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Hope that the sermon text at your funeral is in context.**

**Questions**

1. Who was Abner? Who was Joab? Why did these men vehemently hate each other?
2. Why did Abner switch his loyalty from Ishbosheth to David?
3. How do we see the biblical truth of Galatians 6:8 illustrated in this chapter?
4. How did the conflict between Abner and Joab end?
5. What was David's response to the death of Abner?
6. "The wrath of man shall praise God." How does this chapter illustrate our doctrinal point?

## Answers

1. Abner was the commander of Saul's army. Joab was the commander of David's army. Joab's brother Asahel was pursuing Abner in the woods, when Abner turned and killed him with the blunt end of a spear.

Ishbosheth accused Abner of going in to one of Saul's former concubines. Whether it was true or not, Abner denied this charge of treason. He then began to do all in his power to unite the kingdom under David.

3. God's Word had clearly stated that kings were not to practice polygamy (Deuteronomy 17:17). David disobeyed God's Law and sowed to the flesh by taking numerous wives and concubines. As a result there was heartache after heartache in David's life and reign.

4. When Joab heard that David was making a deal with Abner he felt angry and threatened. He lured Abner back to Hebron and killed him in the gate.

5. He pronounced a curse on Joab and his descendants and forced Joab to publicly mourn Abner's death.

6. In the midst of all the sin, war, and intrigue of this chapter we see that God was working through it all to accomplish His purpose to bring David to the throne over all of Israel.

## Discuss / Consider

1. In the remainder of 2 Samuel we will see Galatians 6:8 played out in David's life. Think ahead to the stories you know that demonstrate the destruction reaped from sowing to the flesh.

2. "The wrath of man shall praise God." Psalm 76:10 Discuss this on a global level and on a personal level. See also Romans 8:28.

## Challenge

1. He who sows to the flesh will reap destruction. David's life was a living illustration of this truth. Will yours be?

## **The Murder of Ishbosheth 2 Samuel 4**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

- 1. God will not break His own moral laws to accomplish His purposes.**
  
- 2. Capital punishment is not murder.**

### **Practical Application**

- 1. Let your judgment be public.**

### **Questions**

1. Review some of the highlights we have seen in David's life of faith thus far.
2. Review some of the low points in David's life of faith thus far.
3. What lie did Rechab and Baanah tell King David? How do we know this was a lie?
4. How do people today act like Rechab and Baanah?
5. What is the biblical basis of the death penalty for murder?
6. Why did David have the executed rebels hung up in public?

## Answers

1. David showed his strong and courageous faith when he fought Goliath. He would not lift his hand against the Lord's anointed, although King Saul was trying to kill him. And he sought the Lord's guidance about what he should do following the death of Saul.
2. He turned to the Philistines for security from Saul, rather than turning to the Lord. He made a deal with Abner, which he certainly knew would involve the murder of Ishbosheth. He also disobeyed God's law by having several wives and concubines.
3. They claimed that the Lord had led them to murder Ishbosheth, their king. God does not commit murder, in violation of His own moral law, to accomplish His purposes.
4. Some people try to blame God for their sins and sinful choices, or at least excuse themselves for this wrongdoing, because they say God is able to pick up the pieces and still accomplish His purpose.
5. The death penalty is a requirement for murder under the Mosaic Law. It was first mandated in the Noahic covenant that God made with all mankind in Genesis 9:6.
6. This was to make sure that everyone knew that judgment had taken place. This public display was a warning and vivid reminder to the people that law breakers would be judged in David's kingdom.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss: God can work through all the mistakes and evil of mankind to accomplish His purposes. But this does not mean that God is the cause of the mistakes and evil. Refer to Acts 2:22-23.

2. Capital punishment continues to be a hot topic in modern society. Is the death penalty a low view of life or the highest view of life? What arguments would you use in support of the death penalty for murder?

## Challenge

1. Making judgment public is a wise principle for the government and for church discipline. It serves as a warning to others and keeps false rumors from circulating about what judgment is being carried out.

**David is Anointed King Over All Israel**  
**2 Samuel 5**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. **Successful believers realize that their prosperity is from the Lord.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **Successful believers receive their directions from the Lord.**

**Practical Application**

1. **How many “meanwhiles” are in your life as a believer?**

**Questions**

1. How many times was David anointed as king?
2. What does the coronation of David picture spiritually?
3. Why did David move his capital from Hebron?
4. What was the status of Jerusalem at this time? How was it taken?
5. What is the key to success by God's standards?

## Answers

1. Three times: First by Samuel in 1 Samuel 16; then by the tribe of Judah in 2 Samuel 2; and now 7 years later by the leaders of the northern tribes in 2 Samuel 5.
2. It is a spiritual picture of the coronation of the greater David, our Lord Jesus. In a coming day He will begin His reign over the earth and all the world will recognize Him as King.
3. Jerusalem was a more neutral location between the north and the south.
4. Jerusalem was in the hands of the Jebusites, Canaanites who had not been removed from the land back in Joshua's day. Jerusalem with its walls and surrounding valleys was easily defended. But Joab climbed up the water shaft (1 Chronicles 11) and successfully took the city.
5. Obedience to His Word and following His directions

## Discuss / Consider

1. David recognized that his prosperity was from the Lord. See 1 Corinthians 4:7. Do you consciously give God credit for your blessings and prosperity? What are some intentional ways you could do this?

2. Discuss the difference between success by the world's standards and success by God's standards. Read Joshua 1:7-8 for clear guidance on having success by God's standards.

## Challenge

1. David was following the Lord and being blessed by Him, but meanwhile he was also taking more wives and concubines. Are you segregating different parts of your life, and being obedient in some while being disobedient in others?

**David Brings the Ark of the Covenant Up to Jerusalem**  
**2 Samuel 6**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. There is judgment for activities outside the bounds that God has ordained.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. There is liberty for activities inside the bounds that God has ordained.

**Practical Application**

1. Don't do the Lord's work in the world's ways.

**Questions**

1. What is the Millo?
  
  
2. Where had the Ark of the Covenant been before David attempted to bring it up to Jerusalem?
  
  
3. What critical mistake did David make in his transportation of the Ark?
  
  
4. Why was Uzzah punished when he had the good intention to keep the Ark from falling?
  
  
5. Why did Michal become upset?

## Answers

1. The Millo was a huge reinforcing wall constructed so that more level ground could be attained on top of the hill where David had his palace built.
2. It had been in Kirjath Jearim for about 100 years, since it came back from the land of the Philistines in the days of Samuel.
3. He planned to transport the Ark by a Philistine method, on a cart, rather than by God's method. God had ordained that only the Kohathites from the priestly tribe of Levi were to carry the Ark of the Covenant (Numbers 4:15).
4. Uzzah was in the covenant community of Israel. He knew the Law and was under the Law. Only the Kohathites were to carry the Ark, and even they were not to touch it.
5. Michal, David's wife, looked down on him for exhibiting behavior which, from her perspective, was unbefitting for a king.

## Discuss / Consider

1. There is judgment for activities outside the bounds that God has ordained. Think of some examples of boundary lines and the consequences for breaking them.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. There is liberty for activities inside the bounds that God has ordained. It's okay to be emotional in the expression of your faith, just as David was. Discuss some practical examples of this.

## Challenge

1. David's motives in transporting the Ark were good, but his method was wrong. Are you trying to do the Lord's work in the world's ways?

**God Makes an Eternal Covenant with David**  
**2 Samuel 7**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. God honors right motives even when they are not in line with His perfect will.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. God honors right responses to the revelation of His perfect will.

**Practical Application**

1. Let your house convict you

**Questions**

1. Where did David put the Ark of the Covenant when he brought it up to Jerusalem?
  
2. What good thing did David desire in this passage?
  
3. What was God's perfect will in this matter?
  
4. How is the word "house" used in this chapter?
  
5. How did David respond to the revelation that he would not be the one to build the Temple?

## Answers

1. David pitched a tent for the Ark, but this was not the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle remained at the high place in Gibeon until the Temple of the Lord was built by King Solomon.
2. David desired to build a Temple as a permanent house for the Lord.
3. David would not build a house (Temple) for the Lord, but the Lord would build a house (royal dynasty) for David.
4. David humbly accepted and submitted to God's revealed will. Then he did what he could to pave the way for Solomon to build the Temple, including the gathering of materials.
5. David would not build a house (Temple) for the Lord, but the Lord would build a house (royal dynasty) for David.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the elements of the Davidic covenant. How will this unconditional covenant be completely fulfilled? Look at Psalm 89.

2. God blessed David because his desires and motives were honoring to the Lord. What about you? Do you have great ideas and plans for some new ministry or program that would be honoring to the Lord? How will you respond if the Lord says, "Not you, not now"? Remember, God honors right motives even when they are not in line with His perfect will.

## Challenge

1. Do you have a humble attitude like David to say, "Who am I that You have brought me this far?"

**David Expands the Kingdom**  
**2 Samuel 8**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. The Lord helps committed believers in spiritual warfare.**

**2. The Lord helps committed believers in spiritual administration.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Assume that there are no contradictions in the Bible.**

**Questions**

1. How does 2 Samuel 7:10-11 relate to this passage?

2. How far did David's kingdom expand?

3. What do these conquests of David picture spiritually?

4. Who were the Cherethites and Pelethites (verse 18)?

5. Why should we assume that there are no contradictions in the Bible?

## Answers

1. The Davidic covenant included the promise that all of Israel's enemies would be defeated and Israel would be planted in the land and have rest from all her enemies. Here we see that promise playing out as David was given military strength and strategy to defeat Israel's enemies.
2. The expanse of the kingdom began to approach the boundaries of the land that God had given to Abraham and his descendants – from Egypt to the Euphrates. David was really continuing the conquest of the Promised Land that had not been completed under Joshua.
3. They look forward to the return of the Lord in judgment when all the enemies of the restored and converted nation of Israel will be subdued. They also portray principles for victory in spiritual warfare for believers.
4. They were elite military troops in Israel.
5. Because the Bible is God's Word and therefore inerrant. The original biblical documents contain no errors, because the Bible is the inspired Word of God.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the principles for victory in spiritual warfare that we can learn from 2 Samuel 8.
  - a. The enemy forces must be defeated, captured, and destroyed (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. The Lord helps committed believers in spiritual warfare.

## Challenge

1. Is your church or ministry lacking in administration? Turn to the Lord for help. God is not a God of disorder and inefficiency, and He will help you to be more effective and efficient if you look to Him.

**David Extends Kindness to Mephibosheth**  
**2 Samuel 9**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. Forgiveness and restoration are provided for all in salvation.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. Believing and receiving are all that is required for salvation.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Praise the Lord! Our crippled feet are covered forever.**

**Questions**

1. Read 1 Samuel 20:14-17. What was the covenant that David made with Jonathan?
  
  
  
2. What was the standard practice when a new king came into power?
  
  
  
3. How is the fallen dynasty of Saul a picture of fallen mankind?
  
  
  
4. Who took the initiative in the relationship between Mephibosheth and David?

## Answers

1. David promised to show the kindness of the Lord to Jonathan and to his descendants.
2. The new king would quickly put to death all descendants of the former king to eliminate any possible rival threats to the throne. The best the descendants could hope for was exile.
3. Man was created by God and given a kingly position in God's creation. But, like Saul, man turned away from the Lord in disobedience and fell from his royal position into sin.
4. David took the initiative in searching out Mephibosheth. Perhaps Mephibosheth's attitude had been that David was someone to fear and hide from so as to avoid confrontation. Likewise, as members of the fallen human race we were not seeking God. Now we have come to know the love and compassion of the King (Luke 19:10 and Colossians 1:21-22).

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review the story of Mephibosheth as a picture of the undeserving mercy and over-whelming grace which God has shown us. What part of this story means the most to you? For more information check out the Devotion for Growing Christians entitled "Mephibosheth and Me" at our website, [www.growingchristians.org/dfgc](http://www.growingchristians.org/dfgc)

2. Discuss the many ways that people try to earn their salvation. Mephibosheth's lameness and his position in Saul's family illustrate our extreme unworthiness before the King. Yet God reaches out to us with salvation; all we must do is believe and receive.

## Challenge

1. Our crippled condition because our sin has been covered by God's grace and will be remembered no more. Read Ephesians 2:6-7 aloud in praise to the Lord.

## **Israel Defeats the Ammonites and Arameans** **2 Samuel 10**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

**1. Reception of God's grace results in blessing.**

**2. Rejection of God's grace results in judgment.**

### **Practical Application**

**1. Expect to be insulted!**

### **Questions**

1. What is David's history with the Ammonites?
2. What did David offer the Ammonites in this chapter?
3. Were the Israelites allowed to make peace treaties?
4. How did the Ammonites respond to David's gracious offer of peace?
5. What was the outcome for the Ammonites and Arameans?



**David's Sins of Adultery and Murder**  
**2 Samuel 11**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. Leisure misused gives opportunity to sin.**

**2. Lust conceived gives birth to sin.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Don't neglect the weightier matters of the Law.**

**Questions**

1. How does this sad chapter support the authenticity of the Bible?

2. How did David hope to cover up his sin with Bathsheba?

3. List the downward steps that David took toward sin.

4. What further steps did David take to cover up his sin?

## Answers

1. The Bible tells history as it happened. It does not hide the faults of its heroes.
2. David called Uriah back to Jerusalem from the front lines of battle. He was trying to make it appear that Bathsheba got pregnant when Uriah was home on leave. But Uriah would not go home to his wife while a battle raged elsewhere.
3.
  - a. He saw Bathsheba bathing.
  - b. He inquired about beautiful Bathsheba.
  - c. He brought Bathsheba to the palace.
  - d. He committed adultery with Bathsheba.
4. He conceived the murder of Uriah by planning to make it appear that he was struck down in battle. In reality, David conspired with Joab to have Uriah abandoned by his fellow soldiers.

## Discuss / Consider

1. You may think your life is too busy for you to get into trouble in your leisure time. But studies show that modern Americans have more leisure time than ever before. What wholesome activities do you turn to to fill your leisure time? Do you believe that leisure misused could give you opportunity to sin?

2. Read James 1:15. Lust is not an easy topic for believers to discuss, but it is a very real problem. Discuss some of the consequences of lust for a believer and his or her family.

## Challenge

1. David and Bathsheba followed the laws of purification and mourning, although they were guilty of adultery and murder. Are you guilty of sin while on the surface you are following the rules? Don't neglect the weightier matters of the law.

**Nathan the Prophet Confronts David**  
**2 Samuel 12**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. There are consequences to sin that is forgiven.**

**2. There is hope for infants who die.**

**Practical Application**

**1. You've got to move on!**

**Questions**

1. In what way does this chapter mark a transition point in David's life?

2. What insight do we gain from Psalms 32 and 51?

3. Summarize the story that Nathan told David. What was David's response?

4. List the fourfold consequences for David's sin.

5. Can 2 Samuel 12:23 be used as a proof-text that children who die before the age of accountability go to heaven?

## Answers

1. From this point on, for the rest of David's days, he suffered the consequences of his terrible sins.
2. We see that David's conscience was overwhelmed by guilt, and the hand of the Lord was heavy upon him.
3. Nathan, the prophet, presented David with an account of a rich man who had many sheep, but robbed a poor man of his one little lamb in order to kill it for a meal. David at first believed it was a real case and was very angry.
4.
  - a. The sword would never depart from David's house. This is seen in the violent deaths of David's sons, Amnon and Absalom.
  - b. Absalom, David's son, would usurp the throne.
  - c. David's wives would be taken from him and violated publicly.
  - d. David and Bathsheba's child would die.
5. Probably so. When David said, "I shall go to the child," he probably meant that he would join the child in heaven. Matthew 19:14 also supports this position.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the principle "There are consequences to sin that is forgiven." When we confess our sin, our forgiveness is sure and complete (1 John 1:9). But we might still have consequences from our sin in this lifetime. Have you seen this to be true?

2. David was diligent in fasting and prayer while there still was hope of a changed outcome. Look at verses 22-23. When the outcome was complete, David graciously accepted it as God's will and worshipped Him. This is an amazing attitude! Discuss how we oftentimes approach similar issues in a backwards way. How can you apply David's example to your life?

## Challenge

1. Are you guilty of a grievous sin like David? Confess your sin. Get restored to fellowship with the Lord. Face the consequences of your forgiven sin. Let the Lord pick up the pieces. And move on in life!

**Tamar is Raped by Amnon; Absalom Takes Revenge**  
**2 Samuel 13**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. Unchecked lust leads to fornication.**

**2. Unchecked hate leads to murder.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Did you ever feel like Tamar?**

**Questions**

1. How does this chapter relate to the previous chapter of 2 Samuel?

2. How does David react to these sins in his household?

3. What do we learn about lust from Matthew 5:28?

4. Was Absalom punished for the murder of Amnon?

## Answers

1. In 2 Samuel 12 we saw the fourfold judgment that was pronounced upon David for his sins of adultery and murder. Although David was graciously forgiven for his sins, there would be sad consequences resulting from those sins. One of those consequences would be that David would reap what he had sown in his own household.
2. David seems to be both desensitized to sin and reluctant to discipline sin. David is angry (verse 21), but he doesn't do anything about it. David does not even rebuke Amnon, let alone discipline him.
3. From lust to the act of fornication is a process. If something isn't done to check and stop the lustful thoughts, the process will proceed to the act.
4. No, David did nothing to judge or even rebuke Absalom.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Parents are often reluctant to talk to their kids about difficult issues (drugs, sex, etc.), because they took part in these sins themselves. Perhaps this is why David did not discipline Amnon for his sexual sins. As Christian parents, discuss how you could address these topics, even humbly using yourself as an example.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Tamar suffered lifelong consequences just for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Have you ever felt like Tamar and not understood why God allowed you to be hurt? We might not know the answer in this lifetime. Discuss how you must turn to God's sovereignty as your source of comfort.

## Challenge

1. Are you experiencing hatred or lust? These must be checked and stopped before the process goes any further.

**David Brings Absalom Back to Jerusalem**  
**2 Samuel 14**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Proper discipline must involve more than righteous anger or sorrow.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Proper discipline may involve permanent scars and separation.

**Practical Application**

1. Don't neglect to discipline your good looking and talented children.

**Questions**

1. Briefly summarize the events of 2 Samuel 13.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What did Joab scheme to do?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Discuss the different factors and agendas involved behind the scenes.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What would have been the right thing for David to do with Absalom?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Did Absalom ever show repentance for his sin?

## Answers

1. In the previous chapter we saw the rape of Tamar by Amnon and the murder of Amnon by Absalom. Absalom fled the country and was not brought back or forced to return home to face trial.
2. Joab sensed David's dilemma of wanting Absalom to come home, but also knowing he was responsible to carry out justice. Joab schemed with an old woman to go before David with a made up story about her predicament as a poor widow with a son who had killed his brother.
3. Joab had a selfish agenda to stay on the good side of both David and Absalom who had a claim to the throne. There was a portion of Israelites whose sense of justice would demand that Absalom be properly brought to trial for murder. Then there would be those who favored Absalom, because they would not see him as a murderer, but as a good brother who defended his sister after her rape.
4. Absalom should have been brought to trial – regardless of the fact that he was the king's son. Perhaps mercy could be shown to Absalom at the trial, in view of Tamar's rape by Amnon, but Absalom had committed murder and should have been brought to justice.
5. No. Absalom uses his restored position and good looks to lay the groundwork for his agenda of usurping the throne.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Proper discipline must involve more than righteous anger or sorrow. David was angered and sorrowful about his sons' sins, but he did nothing about it. Can you think of a modern example of this in your home, church, or civil government?

2. Do you think good looking and talented people "get away" with more? Discuss whether you think this trend begins in childhood and how it may continue throughout life.

## Challenge

1. Proper discipline may involve permanent scars and separation. Do you know someone who is under discipline by your church? Do you love them enough to separate yourself from them for their ultimate good?

**Absalom Usurps the Throne; David Flees Jerusalem**  
**2 Samuel 15**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. The hearts of the unfaithful are stolen by looks and talk.**

**2. The hearts of the faithful are committed through thick and thin.**

**Practical Application**

**1. You can serve the Lord in many different ways.**

**Questions**

1. How did Absalom lay the groundwork to overtake the throne?

2. How did Absalom steal the hearts of the people?

3. What lie did Absalom tell David? Why did he tell this lie?

4. How did David react to Absalom's declaration?

5. Who was Ittai?

## Answers

1. Absalom drew attention to himself by a display of kingly appearance. He provided himself with an impressive entourage which drew admiring crowds. He then set himself up in a strategic spot in the city where official complaints and grievances would be registered. He would tell the people that their claims were right and just, and if only he were in charge, justice would be done.
2. By looks and talk.
3. Absalom lied to David about a vow he had supposedly made to serve the Lord. This was all part of his evil plan to get to Hebron and carry out his agenda of declaring himself king in Hebron.
4. David decided to leave Jerusalem rather than stay and fight and put the city through a bloodbath.
5. Ittai was a Gittite (from Gath) who went with David when he fled Jerusalem. Ittai showed incredible loyalty to David and stuck by him in his time of distress.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Good-looking, sweet-talking public figures can win hearts in the secular arena and in the church as well. Can you think of some examples of this? What were the consequences when hearts were drawn to these people?

2. The hearts of the faithful are committed through thick and thin. When you ask committed Christians, "Are you willing to die for your faith?" many will quickly say yes. But if you ask if they are willing to be laughed at, ridiculed, or rejected for their faith, they may pause as they realize the true cost of loyalty. What about you? How will you be like Ittai the Gittite?

## Challenge

1. Many different people served David in different ways, whether by accompanying him on his flight or returning to Jerusalem to spy on Absalom. So you can serve the Lord in many different ways, too.

**Absalom Claims the Throne; David Escapes to the Jordan River**  
**2 Samuel 16**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. God sometimes allows the situation to go from bad to worse.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. God always provides the believer with help from behind the scenes.

**Practical Application**

1. Can you suffer in silence?

**Questions**

1. What is David doing as this chapter begins?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Who met David on his way over the Mount of Olives?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Who was Shimei? Were his accusations fair?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. How was 2 Samuel 12:11-12 fulfilled?

## Answers

1. David wisely decided to leave Jerusalem in the face of Absalom's rebellion. He knew that if he stayed in Jerusalem and fought, many people would be killed in the civil war.
2. Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth. Ziba reported that Mephibosheth had stayed behind in Jerusalem in hopes that this civil war would somehow lead to the restoration of Saul's throne.
3. Shimei, a relative of Saul, came out and began to curse David as he fled Jerusalem. Shimei's taunts were unfair, but not without some foundation. David had murdered Uriah, but he had gone the extra mile to show kindness to the house of Saul.
4. In verses 21-22 we read of Absalom going in to David's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

## Discuss / Consider

1. David realized that God had allowed Shimei to curse him so that something good might come of it. Read Romans 8:28. Can you give a personal example of things going from bad to worse, where God brought something good out of it?
2. Discuss the three different ways that God provided help for David:
  - a. David received encouragement from the Lord Himself (Psalm 3).
  - b. The Lord brought David to a place of refreshment by the Jordan River, where they could regroup.
  - c. The Lord provided help through Hushai who was buying time for David by thwarting the counsel of Ahithophel. If you were suffering as David was, which of these means of help would have meant the most to you personally?

## Challenge

1. David did not retaliate against Shimei's curses. Like Jesus, David entrusted himself to the Lord who judges righteously (1Peter 2:23). Can you suffer in silence?

**Absalom Rejects Ahithophel's Counsel; David Prepares for Battle**  
**2 Samuel 17**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. God has ways to thwart the counsel of the wicked.**

**2. God has ways to prepare the path of the righteous.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Don't stop praying because God has ordained everything.**

**Questions**

1. Who was in Jerusalem, giving counsel to Absalom?
2. What was Ahithophel's counsel? What was Hushai's counsel?
3. How did Ahithophel respond when his counsel was rejected?
4. How did Hushai send warning to David?
5. How did God further provide for David?

## Answers

1. Ahithophel, who had betrayed David, was ready to counsel Absalom on the best way to defeat David and eliminate any possibility of his return to the throne. Hushai, David's faithful spy, was also in Jerusalem ready to counsel Absalom and buy time for David, as well as send David word of Absalom's plans.
2. Ahithophel counseled Absalom to immediately pursue David and defeat him and his company while they were still exhausted. Hushai reminded Absalom that David was a man of war and could easily outwit a superior force in the Judean Wilderness, which was like his own backyard. Instead, Absalom should wait until he could gather a vast army force from all Israel and surround David, so there would be no possibility of escape.
3. He went home and hanged himself.
4. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar the priests. The priests told a female servant. She told Jonathon and Ahimaaz, the priests' sons. These boys traveled to tell King David.
5. The Lord gave time, rest, supplies, and a fortified city for David and his faithful company to plan and prepare for the coming battle.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Although Ahithophel's advice was obviously superior, God used Hushai to thwart the counsel of this wicked man. Read Psalm 64. Discuss how this psalm was lived out in 2 Samuel 17.
  
2. Discuss whether David can be called a righteous man. He certainly was not righteous in all his doings, and the events in this chapter are a direct consequence for his sins of adultery and murder. But David had confessed his sin and his heart was now right before the Lord. Can you think of other biblical examples of people who committed unrighteous deeds, but later were considered righteous?

## Challenge

1. In His sovereign will, God has ordained everything. But we are still called to pray – because God answers prayer!

**The Death of Absalom and David's Grief**  
**2 Samuel 18**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. God has ordained nature to serve His purposes.**

**2. God has ordained sorrow to serve His purposes.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Watch that your strength does not become your weakness.**

**Questions**

1. What did David command his generals right before they left for battle?
2. How did God use nature to give David's outnumbered forces the victory?
3. How did God use nature to end Absalom's short-lived revolution?
4. Who killed Absalom?
5. How did David respond to the news of Absalom's death?

### **Answers**

1. To deal gently with his son, Absalom
2. God ordained for this battle to take place in the dense forest of Ephraim. Absalom's men probably got separated, lost, and fell into pits and over rocks, so that they were no longer an effective fighting unit.
3. God ordained a great oak tree in the forest, and when Absalom rode underneath it, his head got caught in the branches.
4. Joab and his armor bearers struck him while he was hanging in the tree, despite David's specific instructions.
5. David was overwhelmed with grief when he heard the sad news. He wept and cried out, "O my son Absalom -- my son, my son Absalom" (verse 33).

### **Discuss / Consider**

1. It was probably Absalom's beautiful hair, which brought him much pride, that got caught in the branches of that tree. Absalom's proud strength became his weakness. What strength has God blessed you with? Watch out for pride in this area.

### **Challenge**

1. Do you believe that God uses nature to serve His purposes? Read the accounts of the flood and Sodom and Gomorrah if you need convincing.

**David Returns to Jerusalem After the Death of Absalom**  
**2 Samuel 19**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. Doing the right thing involves controlling your emotions.**

**2. Doing the right thing involves listening to reason.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Praise the Lord! Our crippled feet are covered forever.**

**Questions**

1. Read 1 Samuel 20:14-17. What was the covenant that David made with Jonathan?
2. What was the standard practice when a new king came into power?
3. How is the fallen dynasty of Saul a picture of fallen mankind?
4. Who took the initiative in the relationship between Mephibosheth and David?

## Answers

1. David promised to show the kindness of the Lord to Jonathan and to his descendants.
2. The new king would quickly put to death all descendants of the former king to eliminate any possible rival threats to the throne. The best the descendants could hope for was exile.
3. Man was created by God and given a kingly position in God's creation. But, like Saul, man turned away from the Lord in disobedience and fell from his royal position into sin.
4. David took the initiative in searching out Mephibosheth. Perhaps Mephibosheth's attitude had been that David was someone to fear and hide from so as to avoid confrontation. Likewise, as members of the fallen human race we were not seeking God. Now we have come to know the love and compassion of the King (Luke 19:10 and Colossians 1:21-22).

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review the story of Mephibosheth as a picture of the undeserving mercy and over-whelming grace which God has shown us. What part of this story means the most to you? For more information check out the Devotion for Growing Christians entitled "Mephibosheth and Me" at our website, [www.growingchristians.org/dfgc](http://www.growingchristians.org/dfgc)

2. Discuss the many ways that people try to earn their salvation. Mephibosheth's lameness and his position in Saul's family illustrate our extreme unworthiness before the King. Yet God reaches out to us with salvation; all we must do is believe and receive.

## Challenge

1. Our crippled condition because our sin has been covered by God's grace and will be remembered no more. Read Ephesians 2:6-7 aloud in praise to the Lord.

**The Rebellion of Sheba**  
**2 Samuel 20**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. One foolish man can divide a fellowship.**

**2. One wise woman can save the day.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Would we be as loyal as Adoram?**

**Questions**

1. How many men did Joab murder?

2. What motivated Joab?

3. Sheba is called a “rebel,” or literally, “Son of Belial.” Why is this significant?

4. How did Sheba take advantage of the conflict recorded at the end of chapter 19?

5. Recount the story of the wise woman at Abel Beth Maachah.



## **The Sad Consequences of a Broken Covenant 2 Samuel 21**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

- 1. It is important to keep covenants made before God.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2. It is important to have agreement in the Word of God.**

### **Practical Application**

- 1. Let's be like Rizpah in times of great loss.**

### **Questions**

1. Refer to Joshua 9 and review the covenant that the nation of Israel made with the Gibeonites.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why did the Lord send a famine upon the land?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Explain how David may have been right in handing over seven of Saul's descendants to be hung by the Gibeonites.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Who killed Goliath the giant? Explain the apparent disagreement in 2 Samuel 21:19.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Where is there another textual discrepancy in this chapter?

## Answers

1. The Gibeonites were part of the Amorite people and should have been wiped out in the conquest of the Promised Land. But the Gibeonites deceived the nation of Israel by making them think they lived far outside the Land and asked to make a covenant with them. Without consulting the Lord, Israel accepted. So although the Gibeonites had been deceptive, the Israelites were obligated to honor their covenant with them.
2. Because King Saul had broken the covenant that Israel had made with the Gibeonites
3. The Gibeonites lived in the tribal area of Benjamin (Saul's tribe), so some of Saul's sons may have been involved in the sin of ethnic cleansing. If this was the case, their execution would have been in line with the laws in Exodus 21.
4. David, the son of Jesse killed Goliath. The most likely explanation is that verse 19 contains a copyist error and Elhanan killed the brother of Goliath, as recorded in 1 Chronicles 20:5.
5. In verse 8, most manuscripts say "Michal," but some say "Merab." We believe Merab is correct, because this harmonizes with 1 Samuel 17:19 and 2 Samuel 6:23.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss any covenants you have made before God. How well have you kept those covenants? If you are experiencing a famine in your Christian life, you may need to go before the Lord as David did and ask if this is the cause.

2. As David and his mighty men had to fight the Philistine giants, so we must fight all kinds of enemy giants today. Discuss the spiritual giants we face such as doubt, unbelief, secret sins, and more. By faith we can see these giants defeated.

## Challenge

1. Rizpah rose to the occasion and did what she could, without complaining, finding fault, or being embittered. Let's be like Rizpah in times of great loss.

**David's Hymn of Praise for the Lord's Deliverance**  
**2 Samuel 22**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. Believers should praise the Lord for His deliverance.**
- 2. Believers should praise the Lord for His principles.**
- 3. Believers should praise the Lord for His enablement.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Let's give the Lord all the credit!**

**Questions**

1. Where do we find an identical psalm to the one recorded in 2 Samuel 22?
2. What is a Messianic Psalm?
3. Give an example of one of the messianic verses of this psalm.
4. What moral principles do we see in this psalm?
5. Explain how David could claim to be righteous in all of his ways (verses 21-25).

## **Answers**

1. Psalm 18

2. A Messianic Psalm means that many verses of the psalm go beyond the experiences of David and look forward to the greater Son of David – the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Verse 50 is not only David's personal testimony of praise, but it is also quoted in Romans 15:9 as a testimony of Christ Himself. There are many more examples; can you find them?

4. "The Lord rewards righteous living" and "You reap what you sow."

5. First, we note that this psalm was written before David's great sins of adultery and murder (verse 1). We also know that David is specifically referring to his time when King Saul was wrongly trying to capture and kill him. David had done no wrong; he was blameless.

## **Discuss / Consider**

1. God always delivers His people when they cry to Him for help. Discuss the ways He can deliver you. It may be from death, as in the case of David here. Or it may be through death, as in the case of our Lord Himself.

2. In the context of Philippians 4:13, Paul was talking about being enabled to endure any and all circumstances, situations, and tests that the Lord calls us to go through. Reread verses 29-46 of this psalm. Recall something the Lord has enabled you to do recently, or think of something you will need His enablement to do.

## **Challenge**

1. David gives all praise and credit to the Lord for every victory and accomplishment in his life. Be conscious to give the Lord all the credit in your life this week.

**The “Last Words of David” and The Deeds of Three of His Mighty Men  
2 Samuel 23:1-12**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. The words of David’s pen convey inspired words of Scripture.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. The deeds of David’s men portray insightful lessons from Scripture.

**Practical Application**

1. Are you listed with the mighty ones?

**Questions**

1. What does it mean that these were the last words of David?
  
  
2. Did David meet the ideal of a righteous ruler?
  
  
3. What is divine inspiration?
  
  
4. David as king is a type or spiritual picture of Christ, our king. Who do the mighty men represent?

**Answers**

1. They were his last formal words recorded.
2. No, David acknowledged that he fell far short of the ideal righteous ruler, but God had made an everlasting covenant with him that included the promise of a coming righteous ruler, the Messiah, who would be in the line of David.
3. Divine Inspiration is the process by which God superintended the writers and writings of Scripture.
4. David's mighty men picture believers who are willing to serve the Lord, our King, courageously and sacrificially.

**Discuss / Consider**

1. The fact that God keeps a detailed record of the names and exploits of David's fighting men indicates that God records our personal service, too. Discuss how and when this is an encouragement to you.

2. Review the three mighty men in this passage and the lessons they teach us about spiritual warfare. Which is most applicable to you at this time?

**Challenge**

1. Every man who joined David in the wilderness entered into David's kingdom, but few made the list of David's mighty men. So, every Christian is in the kingdom of Christ, but not all Christians are on the Lord's list of mighty ones. Are you?

**The Valiant Deeds of More of David's Mighty Men**  
**2 Samuel 23:13-39**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. **Spiritual worship involves love, courage, and sacrifice.**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. **Spiritual warfare involves the world, the flesh, and the devil.**

**Practical Application**

1. **Be more than a Joab.**

**Questions**

1. What is one good reason for this roster of David's soldiers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How do Benaiah's heroic achievements can give us insight into our struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Who was Joab? Is he listed as one of David's mighty men?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Who is a surprising inclusion in the list of David's mighty men?

## Answers

1. Lists of names in genealogies or rosters authenticate the historicity of the biblical account. These names authenticate the Old Testament characters as real people who actually lived in history and make it harder for critics to dismiss them as Jewish folklore.
2. The world – Egypt was an enemy of Israel and represents the world in our picture of spiritual warfare. As God redeemed His people out of Egypt, so God has redeemed us out of this world. The world at times looks impressive to us as the Egyptian looked to Benaiah, but Benaiah used the Egyptian's own spear to defeat him! The flesh – The flesh is the sinful fallen human nature that we all possess and must overcome. The Moabites can be representative of the flesh when it is not under control. Benaiah showed no mercy to the Moabites, so we must show no mercy in overcoming the flesh. The devil – Satan is pictured as a lion in 1 Peter 5:8. Benaiah took the offensive and killed a lion in a pit.
3. Joab was a brave and courageous military commander in David's army. But he did not please the heart of David. He fought for David, but he did not always obey David and was often out for his own advancement.
4. Uriah the Hittite (verse 39)

## Discuss / Consider

1. Reread and discuss the beautiful picture of worship in the actions of the three mighty men of verses 15-17. Spiritual worship involves love, courage, and sacrifice.

## Challenge

1. Joab was brave and courageous, but he was a self-seeking individual. As a result, Joab did not make David's list of mighty men. Are you on the Lord's list of mighty ones?

**God's Judgment on Israel Because of David's Pride**  
**2 Samuel 24**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. The sin of David's pride was very serious.**

**2. The site of David's sacrifice is very significant.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Let's not give offerings to the Lord that cost us nothing.**

**Questions**

1. Do we know the reason for the Lord's anger in verse 1?
2. Why was this census against God's will?
3. What were David's choices for punishment for his pride?
4. Why did David choose three days of pestilence for his punishment?
5. What was significant about the site of David's sacrifice?

## Answers

1. No, but there is a good possibility that it was national pride on the part of the whole nation – a pride that led David to number the military strength of the nation.
2. In taking this military census, David was not trusting in the Lord for protection, but rather in his military forces.
3. Three years of famine; three months of military defeat; or three days of pestilence
4. This choice put David more directly in the hands of the Lord. Even in a time of judgment, David knew that the Lord was a God of mercy, certainly more merciful than famines or enemy armies. David also chose the discipline that would directly affect him the most, since he acknowledged he was the cause of the problem.
5. The threshing floor that David bought from Araunah the Jebusite became the site of Solomon's Temple. This was Mount Moriah and there is a very good possibility that this was the very site where Isaac was brought for sacrifice by Abraham. This is also the site where the Temple stood at the time of our Lord's earthly ministry and it will be the site of the future temple during our Lord's kingdom reign on earth.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Discuss the sin of pride. Do you find that the sin of pride is often the source of your other sins? The sin of pride always affects others and has serious consequences.

2. Think back over your study of 2 Samuel. What insights have you gained from studying the very real life of David? Now think of David as a spiritual picture of Christ. What is the most significant thing you have learned in this sense?

## Challenge

1. Let's not give offerings to the Lord that cost us nothing.