

Our connecting the dots' journey has given us a new lens to view the Word of God. As you read, study, and give consideration to the biblical historical events chronologically, we clearly see the Hand of God in the affairs of man.

Volume 6 begins with the failure of King Saul. God rejects Saul and raises up a new king and a kingdom that will never end. King David becomes the new king and the Lord calls him, "*A man after my own heart, who will do my will.*" **(Acts 13.22)** Volume 6 also traces David's kingship through his son Solomon's life and concludes with the Kingdom of Israel divided and the beginning of the ministry of the prophet Elijah.

Within this volume comes much intrigue as well as the ongoing failure of God's own people. Our only hope is found in the faithfulness and unending grace of God.

## **WEEK 66 SAUL DISOBEYS THE LORD**----Dennis Watson

Chuck Missler wrote that Saul was God's "911" man. Saul was an interim king. A king before the king God intended, which was David. God gave the people what they wanted, but warned them of the consequences. God's permissive will, in this case was a stop-gap measure. Saul did not obey God. Like most of us, he would partially obey. Partial obedience is disobedience. This week, we will see Saul forfeit his kingdom due to disobedience. Always remember that God is in control.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 1 Samuel 15:1-3**

It is a dangerous thing to leave your spiritual enemies lying around! Sin is the believer's enemy. Sin robs the believer of the life that God intends for the believer to have. In fact, Paul uses words to describe sin which makes sin sound like an enemy who takes control (see Romans 6:12). The Amalekites were enemies of God's people and He wanted them eliminated. Not partially eliminated, but totally! God told Saul to lead his army against the Amalekites and completely wipe them out. This sounds very mean and cruel, but God is serious about sin. His ultimate plan is a new heaven and earth where right, truth, and holiness prevail. The Amalekites were idol worshippers who had attacked Israel when they were fleeing Egypt. God is not mean; He is loving, gracious, and kind, but He hates sin! This is why He sent Jesus to rescue people from sin and its consequences.

God's judgment on sin is a good thing. Think of a person with cancer. A doctor who is a good doctor will attack the cancer. He is not mean, but he sees something in a person's body which has to go. This may include surgery which is radical, painful, and takes time for recovery. The treatment may also include some kind of therapy such as chemo or radiation, both of which are very tough to endure. However, when all goes well, the cancer is eliminated or 'judged.' God's judgment on sin is like that. Sin is a cancer and God

has taken extreme steps to get rid of it. In Jesus' death on the cross, God took extreme steps to judge sin and take away its power and consequences. God's ultimate plan is the total elimination of sin and its consequences. He will make a new heaven and a new earth in which there will be no sin.

Thank God for His judgment on sin! Judgment is painful, but it is a good thing. He is not mean. He is righteous and holy and He plans for all of creation to be the same.

## Day 2

### Read 1 Samuel 15:4-12

As I write these words, Israel and the Middle East are very much in the news. Israel is being attacked by her neighbors. These attacks are unprovoked, but as has been the case throughout Israel's history, nations are jealous and hate Israel. Very interestingly, in keeping with today's passage regarding Israel, Israel warns the Kenites of the attack and instructs them to get out of the way. Today, speaking of 2020, when attacked without provocation, Israel warns their attackers of the incoming missiles, before Israeli forces retaliate.

Saul obeyed God's instructions and attacked the Amalekites. However, he only partially obeyed. Partial obedience is disobedience. Saul partially obeyed and defeated the Amalekites, but did not totally wipe them out. God had made it clear they were to take no prisoners and they were not to take any of their personal property, they were to burn it. However, they took King Agag as prisoner and they took the best of the animals. Not only did Saul disobey in taking King Agag, he also took credit for the victory and built a monument for himself instead of giving glory to God.

*I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory I will not give to another; Nor My praise to carved images. Isaiah 42:8 (NKJV)*

At times, I am prone to this kind of living—partial obedience. It is obeying in some areas and feeling like that obedience earns me points to take liberty of disobedience in others. It seem like this was Saul's thinking, but it would be costly. It always is. Remember, all we do in obedience to Him is for His glory, not ours.

As you pray, ask God for the grace to be fully obedient!

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### Read 1 Samuel 15:13–23

Saul had been only partially obedient to God’s instructions through Samuel. He defeated the Amalekites, but in disobedience, took the King and some of the best animals and kept them and built a monument to himself. When Samuel and Saul met, Saul immediately said with great pride, “*Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.*” Really? Samuel’s response was very convicting (it would be humorous if it were not so serious). *Samuel replied, “What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” He said, “Why is it that I hear the sound of sheep and oxen?”* Saul’s answer seems ridiculous in light of his blatant disobedience. He tells Samuel that they kept the best of the animals to sacrifice to “*Your God.*” Your God? Wasn’t He Saul’s God, too? Saul was in a mess! Samuel rebuked him for his disobedience and Saul rationalized by telling Samuel that he did obey and only took the king and the people took the animals. He even said he was obedient!

Samuel told Saul that God wanted obedience and not sacrifice; especially the sacrifice which comes from others. For his rebellion and disobedience, the kingdom would be taken away from Saul.

Once again, this hits a little too close to home. I often rationalize my own sin. What about you? When my obedience to God is only partial, I usually have a pretty good excuse. Sin always has a good excuse. Obedience comes out of a love and desire to fully express love to the one being obeyed. It is not about the rules but love, honor and respect for the one being obeyed. This is why Samuel told Saul that obedience is better than sacrifice.

As a king, Saul was just a man and he was a sinful man at that. God ultimately sent Jesus to be the King of Kings

and Lord of Lords. Jesus was perfectly obedient and God's King.

It seems appropriate to close today with this:

*Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." Matthew 22:37 (NKJV)*

## Day 4

### Read 1 Samuel 15:24-35

One great biblical truth is that “*Nothing can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus*” **Romans 8:38-39**. This is known as the security of the believer. I am thankful that I am secure in Jesus. However, we can wander away from God by our own choices and experience some very tough consequences. Saul did confess, but his confession included blame. He blamed the people over whom he was king. He said he did it because he feared the people. Fearing people can bring a snare (Proverbs 29:25). This fear of people can take control of a person’s life. How often do we do things to please or impress other people? The second half of Proverbs 29:25 says that trusting the Lord will keep a person safe. What a struggle for the Jesus follower. Obey God or other people? We really see this played out in Saul’s life. He feared the people and did what he thought they wanted and lost his kingship. Had he trusted the Lord, things would have been quite different.

Saul wanted to be liked by the people. Rather than leading, he followed what they wanted. This is a huge dilemma for most of us as Jesus followers. Saul was in tune to what other people wanted and he aligned his life with that. I am sure you see the application in this for our lives as believers. Are you tuned to obeying God or other people? This is a tough question. Think about it all day today and take note of when you are making decisions based on following God or other people.

Ask God for the grace to be surrendered to Him and not to other people.

## Day 5

### Read Isaiah 28:14–16 and 1 Peter 2:5–9

Today, we look at an Old Testament prophecy which finds its fulfillment in Jesus. This one is very clear. Isaiah spoke of a cornerstone that would be a foundation stone. In the New Testament the writers acknowledged that Jesus is that foundation and cornerstone.

A cornerstone is a symbol of the aligning truth of life. In construction, a cornerstone is the first stone laid. When it is laid correctly, all of the other stones are lined up with it and the wall is straight and strong. Then, the whole foundation is built correctly.

It is easy to follow lies. We just align ourselves with people who will tell us what we want to hear. The promise is that their way will be good for us. Israel's leaders had turned to Egypt for help and deliverance instead of following God consistently. This was not the first time they had aligned themselves with a pagan foreign nation. It is so easy to get out of alignment. Israel was out of alignment because she had turned to another foundation and had sought to build on that foundation rather than the true foundation.

Isaiah gave a message to correct the leaders of Israel. He rebuked them for following foreign nations and making lies their refuge rather than God. The appeal was for them to turn away from foreign alliances and turn to God.

This week we have seen the inconsistency of King Saul. His obedience to God was only partial, which is really disobedience. Isaiah gave us a prophecy that one day God would send the true foundation of life. Peter confirmed that foundation is Jesus. Jesus alone is the true cornerstone and foundation stone. Build your life on Him and Him alone!





## **Week 67 God Chooses a New King-----Chris Watson**

It's always better to do things God's way. Israel decided to do things their own way when they desired a new king before it was time. This week we will see God choose a king over Israel. While it would take time for him to come to his reign, God's plan would be made known.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 1 Samuel 16:1-3**

Samuel is given what seems to be a pretty tough job. With Saul technically still king, though the Lord has rejected him, God told Samuel to go and anoint the next King of Israel, as God showed him. He had instructions from the Lord, but he was technically going against the king, seeking to overthrow him, in a sense. Samuel was scared for his life, and rightfully so. I wonder if Samuel was always looking to see if Saul was around, while he was on this journey and during this process.

Remember that God is choosing a new king because of Saul's disobedience to follow the Lord's command. The reasons the Israelites wanted a king in the first place were wrong and not in God's plan. We see, in this account, that disobedience is costly.

Samuel made the choice to trust God on his journey. God told him (Verse 3) what he was to do. Samuel didn't depend on his own understanding or give into his fears or weaknesses, he trusted God. As believers, we are to do the same. We have God's Word and know God's desires and plans, we just need to carry them out. It is often uncertain, uncomfortable, lonely, and not what everyone else is doing. However, we can choose to trust men and the things of men or we can trust God. As we have seen up to this point in the Old Testament, God has been faithful and will continue to be. God gave Samuel an indication, or at least a direction of where the next king was coming from when He asked him to bring Jesse to join in on the sacrifice. Remember, we

saw the genealogy of Perez in the book of Ruth and it included Jesse. We saw that Boaz and Ruth were Jesse's grandparents. Samuel may not have connected the dots, but he knew Jesse was to be part of the sacrifice with him.

May we trust God in all we do wherever we find ourselves. Whether we find ourselves afraid, weary, lonely, happy, sad, joyful, scared or tired, let us be like Samuel and put our trust in God! Not lagging behind or going ahead, but walking step in step with the Creator of the world, the Lamb of God.

## Day 2

### Read 1 Samuel 16:4-10

Samuel was once again following God's lead looking for the next king. He first thought it was Eliab, the oldest son, as he must have looked like a king. However, it wasn't Eliab nor was it any of the six other sons with Jesse. Before Samuel asked him if there were any other sons, the Lord told Samuel not to consider appearance or height. For the Lord does not look at the things men look at, the outward appearance, but rather God looks at the heart (Verse 7).

In biblical times the people expected kings to be good looking and large in stature. God told Samuel not to look for these things because the heart is what matters and God would choose someone whose heart was right. This is true with Jesus. In Bible times, the Jews expected a Messiah that would create fanfare, be macho looking, be demanding, etc. However, Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a donkey, not exactly what they expected from a king; this was just one of the many reasons they missed the Messiah.

God looks at all hearts. The outside of a person can be handsome, beautiful, in shape, almost perfect looking and yet inside can be just the opposite. A person's appearance on the outside can be "not so good" by the world's standards and they can have a heart of gold. This isn't saying that it has to be one or the other, but God looks only at the heart.

What is your heart like? Is it in tune with God? Is it seeking Him and His plans? Or, is it angry, bitter, unforgiving, mean spirited, hateful, conniving, or divisive? Are you worried more about your physical appearance compared to your spiritual appearance? Today, pray that your heart is in tune with the things of God. May our hearts be beautiful because we have and know God. As David said, "*Create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me*" (**Psalms 51:10**). May our spiritual condition be one that we

always keep in check and ask God to continue to work on us. What does your heart look like? If it needs to be redirected towards God, ask Him to help you and begin every day tuning your heart to His.

## **Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS**

### **Read 1 Samuel 16:11-13**

Jesse had seven of his eight sons go before Samuel, but not one of them was to be the king. Why wasn't his son David there? The Bible says he was tending the sheep. Maybe Jesse thought he was too small or insignificant to be a king. Maybe someone needed to watch the sheep while the other brothers were taken before Samuel and since he was the youngest, it was his responsibility. There could have been many reasons he wasn't there, but when the rest of the sons had passed by and the Lord had not chosen one of them, they sent for David.

As we see in this passage, David was God's choice to be king and it wasn't a coincidence. This was continuing the process leading up to Jesus. If you look in Matthew 1, we see the genealogy of Jesus. In Verse 6 we see Jesse and David and then, in Verse 16, we see Jesus. David was in the line of Jesus. God was orchestrating all of this so that in God's time, Jesus would be born, live a perfect life, and die for our sins. Revelation 5:5 speaks of both of them in the line of Judah, both David and Jesus!

Not only do we see this connection as vital, but we can also see similarities between David and Jesus. David was chosen by God to lead Israel; God would send Jesus to lead His people and save the world. David was a shepherd and Jesus is called the Good Shepherd. Again, these are not coincidences, but details of God's intricate plan.

Take some time today to thank God for Jesus. Take some time to thank Him for His elaborate plan in which He would bring forth the Savior of the world. While many, including His chosen people, would rebel and do their own thing and go their own way, God would remain faithful and His love would carry forth and win. Thanks be to God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! God's plan would prevail through Jesus, even though sinful people sought to mess things up.

## Day 4

### Read 1 Samuel 16:14-23

David was anointed, but as we see today, he didn't immediately become king. In today's passage, we see the process of the Spirit of the Lord departing from Saul and an evil spirit tormenting him. We learned yesterday that the Spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.

God's Spirit (Holy Spirit) is real. Of course, we know this and it is what we need. It is literally God and Jesus with us. In Acts, the beginning of the Church, we see the Holy Spirit come down and do what only God can do. Having the Spirit of the Lord among us is what it's all about. Today, as in Old Testament times, a lot of "good things" are done in and outside of the Church, but without the Spirit of the Lord being in these "good things," we are just spinning our wheels. A lot of things can "happen" and a lot of things can be "going on," but God must be our focus and the Holy Spirit must be moving in and through us. We must be active in prayer and seeking God for what He can do rather than doing things in our own strength and desires.

When the Spirit of the Lord left Saul it was obvious, so obvious that Saul sought counsel and asked David to play for him when the evil one tormented him. Again this was part of God's plan of setting things up for what was to come. David, who had been anointed by Saul as the next king was now playing for the one which was still technically king. I wonder what that must have been like. As we will see in the weeks to come, David waited on God and His timing, trusting His plan. We must trust the overall plan of God. We can learn from David in this. David wrote many of the Psalms, like Psalms 62 and Psalm 23, when he was either on the mountain top or in the valley. May we learn from God's plan, His Word, and those who have gone before us. Regardless of our situation, we can put our hope in God.

## Day 5

### Read Psalm 95:1-3

Psalm 95 is a great psalm, especially the first 3 verses. Take time to read them over again. This psalm tells us to sing to the Lord as He is the Rock of our Salvation and we are to praise Him with music. As we see in this passage, this is one reason music is part of our weekly Sunday worship and should be part of our everyday worship. God tells us to sing and praise His name with music.

Worship should be our lifestyle. We often think of music when we think of worship. Music is one way to worship, but we also worship in how we live our lives to and for Jesus. However, worship through music is very important. David tells us to worship through music and song. Scripture also tells us to make a joyful noise. When you sing to and about God, it does something for your soul. You are singing truth back to God. I am sometimes saddened when I look around at the various worship opportunities and see people not singing. Why do I feel sad? God tells us to sing! He doesn't tell us to sing if we have the best voice. He doesn't tell us to sing when we want to, or sing when we feel like it, but to make a joyful noise. We are singing to and worshiping the God of the universe. Verse 3 of this passage tells us that the God we serve is the King of all Kings. May we live, sing, and play to Jesus with everything we are.

In your quiet times, sing to Jesus. The next time you are in corporate worship, sing with all you have. Maybe you have never really been one to sing during Sunday worship. Maybe you drift off into space or watch other people. I challenge you to try singing to the God of the universe. It will do a work in you; God will do a work in you as you sing truth back to Him. So, wherever you are, make a joyful noise.





## **WEEK 68 DAVID AND GOLIATH-----** Dennis Watson

David was secretly anointed king by Samuel, but it was more than fifteen years before the death of Saul and David's public acknowledgement as king. During this fifteen year period, there were many biblical historical events, one of which was the victory of David over the Philistine giant, Goliath. We can also look back to the account of Ruth and Boaz and know it is possible to see the hand of God moving events and people into place to make David the king of Israel. This is so important because David's line would be the royal line into which Jesus, the King of Kings, would be born and the Kingdom eternally established. This week's account shows the incredible power of God at work through a very young David.

### **Day 1**

#### **READ 1 SAMUEL 17:1-10**

The nation of Israel was in an ongoing war with the Philistines. At this point, the two armies were at a standstill. It appeared that nothing was going on except the daily taunting by the Philistine giant, Goliath. The plan was that the two armies would designate a man from each army to represent them in a one-on-one battle. Goliath would represent the Philistines. Goliath was over nine and a half feet tall. His body armor weighed approximately 125 pounds which, in itself, was probably about the weight of David. The head of his spear weighed fifteen pounds. David had already entered the service of King Saul to play music for him to calm him down. He would go back and forth from shepherding to serving the king.

On this occasion, David had been sent by his father to take some food to his brothers who were in Saul's army. God's timing is always perfect. The whole Israelite army, including King Saul, was terrified of Goliath and his morning and evening taunts.

The Israelite army was defeated by default. They were overcome with fear and believed they had no one to represent them before the giant, Goliath.

It seems that today there are many giants taunting believers and we have already been defeated by default. Just remember, that as believers, we are God's representatives (ambassadors). **1 John 5:4** says, "*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.*"

Take the time to thank The Lord today for being our victory.

## Day 2

### READ 1 SAMUEL 17:11-27

In the new covenant, God's Spirit comes to live in the believer and He will never leave. That is a blessing! However, in the Old Testament the Spirit of God would rest upon a person, but not always abide. We read that the Spirit was taken from Saul because of his disobedience (1 Samuel 16:14). The people of Israel wanted a king so they would be like other nations. They wanted a king to go out and fight for them. However, now that the Spirit had departed from Saul, he was just as frightened of Goliath as the rest of his army. They needed someone to lead the way in victory.

When Saul and his army saw Goliath, they saw an undefeatable foe. However, when David saw Goliath, he saw an enemy of God. David came to the camp of the Israelite army and talked with them about what was going on. While he was talking with them, Goliath issued one of his daily taunts to the Israelites. He watched as the army of Israel ran away in fear and hid from Goliath. The men told David that whoever could defeat Goliath would be given riches along with the king's daughter and he would be exempt from taxes. David's next question had to do with the identity of the giant:

*Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?"* **1 Samuel 17:26 (NKJV)**

It seems that David's main concern was the defying of God's army! Did anyone else have that concern? It seems not! They were more fearful for themselves, rather than giving any thought to what this giant was really doing. David gave no thought for his own safety, only for the name of God and His army.

Where was David's fear? It was not at all present. He had a heart for God! He trusted God with a simple believing faith. He believed that if he stood with God, God would give the victory.

Fix your eyes on the living God and ask God to ignite in you a burning faith in Him.

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### READ 1 SAMUEL 17:28-37

David went to the battle lines to deliver food to his brothers. He questioned his brothers as well as other soldiers about the situation. He was not being insolent as they accused, he was concerned the name of God was being blasphemed. David's words were reported to the King and he sent for David. David said he would go and fight Goliath. Saul, like his brothers and the other soldiers, tried to discourage him. David refused to be discouraged because he knew God had given him victory over wild animals and He would also give him victory over Goliath!

David did not need the motivation of riches or tax exemption. His motivation came from his heart! For believers, Jesus is the unseen factor who makes all the difference in their approach to life and circumstances. Warren Wiersbe wrote, "When we walk by sight, we calculate everything from the human perspective, and this always leads to discouragement; but when we walk by faith, God comes into the equation, and that changes the results."<sup>1</sup> David walked by faith. He was different because the living God was in him and he was listening to Him and not to others or looking at the circumstances.

On another occasion, when David was being threatened, the writer of 1 Samuel says of David, "*But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.*" I am not sure about you but that sounds like a needed and ongoing activity for me. "*David strengthened himself in the Lord.*" I am not sure of what all that entails but one thing I do know is that David must have continuously reminded himself of the power and faithfulness of the Lord His God.

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<sup>1</sup> Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - Old Testament- The Bible Exposition Commentary-History

David was the man God sent to deliver Israel from their enemy, represented by Goliath. God sent Jesus to save all people from the enemy, sin and Satan. The emphasis here is God's provision of the deliverer. Ultimately, all of the deliverers pointed to the ultimate deliverer. The ultimate deliverer was not just a man, He was God in the flesh. His name is Emmanuel—"God with us."

## Day 4

### READ 1 SAMUEL 17:38-58

Paul wrote in Ephesians “*Put on the full armor of God.*” Saul was concerned that David was going to fight Goliath and he tried to discourage him. Then, Saul wanted to give David his armor. David put on Saul’s armor, but said, “*I cannot walk with these because I have not tested them.*” This was not what he was used to. Instead he chose to use what he used when he was protecting the sheep in his care—his slingshot and five smooth stones. Why five stones when all he really needed was one? If you look at 2 Samuel 21:22, you will discover that Goliath had four sons and David was prepared to take out the whole family, if need be.

David knew several things. First of all, he knew God was with him and that the victory would not only be for God, but it would be because of God’s power. He was confident because of God’s power, not his own. Second, he knew he had to do battle according to his giftedness and not with armor and sword. Goliath mocked David saying “*You have come to me with sticks.*” He would not use sticks, but the weapon he was accustomed to using—his slingshot and five stones. Thirdly, notice that David was clear in giving credit where it belonged—to God. Verses 45-47 are so powerful and David confidently tells Goliath he would whip him not by his own power but with God’s power and for God’s glory and name. I love the phrase in Verse 47, “*For the battle is the Lord’s!*” David was young, but he was not foolish. He was confident and had a real faith in God. He knew his ability came from God and he lived from that ability.

We have been looking at many people who we may call great. In reality, there are no great people, only a great God! David was great by association with the One who is great. The victory, he knew, came from the God he loved and served. So, what about you? Don’t seek greatness, seek the Great One and trust Him!



## Day 5

### READ PSALM 95:3-8

In the book of Psalms, we find some very significant connections. As you read in Psalms, pay close attention to wording which is applied to Jesus in the New Testament. Be sure to keep in mind the things Jesus said and did and what the other New Testament writers wrote about Jesus. Many of the Psalms were written by King David at times in his life which were either very positive or very stressful. In those Psalms, he expressed some thoughts that look forward to the redeemer. Psalm 95:5 references the One who created all the heavens and the earth. In **Colossians 1:16**, it is written that Jesus is the One who made all things. In fact, it says *“All things were made by Him and for Him.”* David writes that since He is the creator, we should worship Him and acknowledge He is the maker of all things. Look around and see all that He has done and worship Him in the beauty of His creation.

David used another phrase that causes us to worship Him, *“We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.”* This is an expression of God being our Shepherd. Jesus said in John 10:11 that He is the Good Shepherd. John 10:16, goes on to say that His sheep hear His voice. When you put the two passages together (Psalm 95:7-8 and John 10:16), we are to hear His voice and maintain an attitude and life of submission to what He says. We are to hear His voice and not harden our hearts.

Is there a place in your heart that is hardened to the Words of Jesus? If so, ask Him to make your heart pliable and obedient to Him.



## **WEEK 69 SAUL PERSECUTES DAVID; DAVID’S KINDNESS TO SAUL ----- Dennis Watson**

Saul had already been rejected as King by the Lord and the Lord had sent Samuel to anoint David as King in his place. But, David did not immediately become king. This week we look at how King Saul, after the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, began to treat David with contempt and sought to kill him. It is all linked to the distressing spirit that troubled King Saul and his jealousy of David.

We will see how David continued to honor Saul as King and when the opportunity arose for David to kill him, he would not *“Lift his hand against the Lord’s anointed.”*

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 1 Samuel 18:1-16**

After David defeated Goliath and the Philistines, Saul was speaking with David and most likely congratulating him for his victory. After the conversation, Jonathan, Saul’s son, committed himself to David as a close friend. They even entered into a covenant. Close friendships are a blessing. They remained friends until Jonathan’s death. Jonathan became somewhat of a mediator between Saul and David. It had to have been an awkward situation. Here is what the Life Application Bible says about this situation:

“Jonathan realized that the source of truth was God, who demanded his ultimate loyalty. It was his relationship with God that gave Jonathan the ability to deal effectively with the complicated situations in his life. He was loyal to Saul because Saul was his father and the king. He was loyal to David because David was his friend. His loyalty to God guided him through the conflicting demands of his human relationships.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Life Application Study Bible.

David was loyal to King Saul and sought in every way to do right by him. However, the problem came when David began having greater victories in battle than Saul. When they would return from battle, the women would welcome them back, dancing and singing, “*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.*” As you can imagine this outraged Saul. After all, he was the king. Anger and jealousy gripped Saul’s heart. From then on, Saul watched David with jealousy. It would get the best of him. On this occasion, the day after Saul congratulated David on his victory, Saul’s jealous anger takes over. Saul took the spear in his hand and threw it at David in a fit of rage.

The Lord knew what was in Saul’s heart. He had already rejected Saul and taken His Spirit from him and replaced it with a distressing spirit. How easy it is to be taken over by our own corrupt speech, to become critical and have a bitter spirit. Saul became bitter, angry and hate-filled and the Lord gave him over to his own ways. Does the Lord allow this in us hoping we will become convicted and convinced that we are out of His will?

Be careful of hanging on to and meditating on your jealousy and anger. It can get the best of you.

## Day 2

### Read 1 Samuel 24 and 26

We know David was a man of exceptional character. We also know he was not beyond the reach of sin. We read today two separate accounts that enable us to see inside the character of this mighty leader. On two separate occasions, David was in a position to deal with King Saul, this man who had made it his goal to kill David. On one occasion, David and some of his men were hiding in a cave when Saul came in alone to take care of some personal needs. Saul must have dozed off. David's men saw it as an opportunity for David to kill Saul, but David saw it as an opportunity to show grace. Instead of killing Saul, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe. When Saul left the cave, David came out behind him showing Saul the piece of robe he had cut off, telling Saul that he had the opportunity to do him harm, but he had chosen not to. Saul told David, *"You are more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I rewarded you with evil."*

On another occasion, David and two of his men went into Saul's camp while they were sleeping. David had another opportunity to kill Saul but he *"Would not lift his hand against the Lord's anointed."* Instead, David took Saul's spear and water jug and later showed it to Saul telling him he could have killed him, he but did not. He had decided ahead of time that he would not take revenge.

We all need, as best we can, to anticipate the temptations that may come our way. In doing so, we can seek the power of God to overcome those temptations rather than be overcome by them. In Psalms 54, which seems to be directly linked to these two events, David prays for the Lord to vindicate him so he will not have to seek vengeance. The heading to Psalms 54 reads, "To the chief musician. With stringed instruments. A contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is not David hiding with us?" These headings to the Psalms are not considered

inspired, but they do give us an idea what might have led to the writing. We see that this Psalm probably had to do with David asking God to enable him to trust God to take care of those who would attack him. Therefore, David decided in advance that he would not take revenge but he would rely on the Lord.

It would do us all well to leave any retaliation to the Lord so we will be free to show grace and kindness and leave the wrath to the Lord.

*“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. **Romans 12:19 (NKJV)***

## Day 3

### Read 2 Samuel 7:10-13 and Matthew 22:42-46

King Saul was rejected by God as king. God also took His Spirit from Saul and gave him a distressing Spirit. Saul had become prideful, arrogant and disobedient. The Kingship was taken from him and given to David. God seeks those through whom He can display His greatness. David was a man after God's own heart. In the book of Acts, these words of Paul speaking about David are recorded:

*And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. <sup>22</sup> And when He had removed him, He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'* **Acts 13:21-22 (NKJV)**

Saul was insanely jealous of David, but David was a man after God's own heart. In spite of his terrible sin, he was faithful, loyal and obedient to God. In his sin, he was broken and repentant. He loved the Word of God as we see in the Psalms.

But, the most significant thing that can be said about David is that Jesus was a descendant of King David and, therefore, the true, rightful, eternal heir to the throne as the Messiah anointed of God. In seventeen verses in the New Testament, Jesus is called the "*Son of David*." Jesus was the promised Messiah which means He had to be of the lineage of David.

In the 2 Samuel passage, we read that David wanted to build a house for the Lord. The Lord spoke through Nathan, the prophet, to tell David that he would not build the house (temple) but another would. Of course, in the immediate fulfillment of this, Solomon, David's son, built the temple. The Lord was also referring to the house which was the

house of Israel—the kingdom which God would build on the descendant of David—Jesus the Messiah. The promise to David was that the King would come from His line. The website [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) writes:

“Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’ legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David” (Romans 1:3).”<sup>3</sup>

King Saul’s reign ended abruptly because of his disobedience. The kingdom was taken from him and his descendants and given to David. David was not a perfect man, but he was a man who was quick to repent when he did sin.

It is amazing to watch as God’s redemptive plan unfolds in this biblical historical record.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-son-of-David.htm>



## Day 4

### Read 2 Samuel 1

Currently we are in the thick of presidential politics and it is clearly a cutthroat activity. The scene was incredibly different for King David. David was a man of great character. While waiting for his time to be King of Israel, he was learning how to conduct himself and show respect and honor. We have already seen that when he had opportunities to kill Saul, he refused because Saul was the Lord's anointed. Today, once again, we see the respect and honoring character of David.

David had just returned from a battle where he and his army were victorious. Although David was still despised and hated by King Saul, David still respected and honored the King. A young man came from the area where King Saul and his sons had been in a battle. When David asked the young man about the battle and how things were going with Saul and his sons, he was told that Saul's people had fled the battle and Saul and his son, Jonathan, were both dead. David continued to ask more questions, he wanted to know how this young man knew Saul was dead. He told David that he just happened to be in the area and Saul saw him and called him over. He said Saul had been mortally injured and that the King asked him to, "*Stand over me and kill me.*" We know from the account in 1 Samuel 31 that this was not true because Saul had committed suicide (**1 Samuel 31:4-5**). This young man was actually foraging through the dead bodies looking for loot when he came upon the body of King Saul. He saw the opportunity to get a reward by telling David that he had killed Saul. He knew of David's opportunities to kill Saul and how David refused to lift his hand against the Lord's anointed. Instead of a reward, the young man was killed.

David and all of his men mourned for King Saul and Jonathan. David was not an angry or vindictive man. He was gracious and led by the Spirit when he responded to Saul. When he got news of Saul's death, he was grieved and honored him in his death. David is a great example to us in many ways.

## Day 5

### Read 2 Samuel 9

Today, it is relatively easy to get in touch with someone from the recent past using social media. In David's day, only kings could have elaborate searches made to locate someone. King David wanted to show kindness to the memory of Saul on behalf of his son, Jonathan, who was David's dear friend. Several years later David had a servant of Saul, by the name of Ziba, brought to him so he could investigate how a family member of Saul's might be found so David could show him kindness. Ziba told King David that he knew of a descendant of Saul by the name of Mephibosheth. He was the son of Jonathan and grandson of King Saul. Mephibosheth was "*Lame in his feet*" because when he was 5 years old, his nurse dropped him as she fled after news of Saul and Jonathan's deaths reached Israel.

David had Mephibosheth brought to him. This was not unusual because kings, in that time, would have family members of former kings put to death to remove any competition. When Mephibosheth came and fell down on his face before David he said, "*Here is your servant.*" I am sure Mephibosheth was expecting the worst. David announces to Mephibosheth that he has brought him to show him kindness on behalf of his father Jonathan. David restored to Mephibosheth all of Saul's property and provided for him to eat at David's table for the rest of his life. David provided for Mephibosheth and treated him as one of his own sons.

David received nothing in return, he was merely showing kindness and respect to the memory of King Saul and his son Jonathan. What a way to treat your enemy, both in life and death. In life David refused to seek revenge. In death, David refused to slander the memory of his predecessor. I cannot help but think of the words of David in Psalm 23 when I imagine Mephibosheth eating at the king's table, "*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.*" Oh, what incredible grace and kindness flowed through David. It should be the same for all of us.



## WEEK 70 DAVID KING OVER ALL ISRAEL

-----Dennis Watson

Have you ever found yourself impatient and frustrated with what seems like a delay in God's promises and blessings? Of course, we all have. Consider David who would become King of Israel. When he was sixteen, or maybe younger, at the instruction of God to Samuel, he was anointed King. Can you imagine? The youngest of the family was chosen by God and anointed to be King of Israel as a young child. What was going through David's mind? Not just at that time, but in the crazy years that followed when he was a shepherd and then a musician in Saul's palace. It was about twenty years after the death of King Saul that he became King over just the tribe of Judah. Then, it was still another seven and a half years before he was made King over all of Israel. This week we look at David as King over all of Israel.

### Day 1

#### Read 2 Samuel 5:1-5

The time had come. It was now twenty years or so since Samuel had first anointed David, as a teenager, to be King. It had been seven and a half years since he had been made King of Judah. Now all of the tribes came together to make David the King of Israel.

Consider what these people were saying about David.

First, David was one of their own. They were members of the twelve tribes of Israel. They were descendants of Abraham whom God had promised to make a blessing to all people. God is sovereign and accomplishes His purposes. Saul was the king of God's judgement.

*"I gave you a king in My anger, And took him away in My wrath."* **Hosea 13:11 (NKJV)**

*And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day--with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods--so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them." 10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king.1 Samuel 8:7-10 (NKJV)*

Second, David was also their military hero. He had led them time and time again into victory. They recognized David as their leader.

Thirdly, David was God's choice. David was most significantly God's anointed King. He was the one to whom God said, "*You shall shepherd my people, Israel and you shall become their leader.*" God knew His people would need a King, but more importantly He knew they would need a shepherd. This King was of the royal tribe of Judah. He was born in Bethlehem. He is the first of the dynasty that would bring the Messiah, Jesus Christ, into the world. King David was a shepherd of sheep and a shepherd of the sheep of God's pasture. God writes to us to make it known that He is the One who orchestrated all of history to bring His Anointed One, His Messiah into the world.

It is great to see how the Lord God has been, how He is, and how He will always be in control.

## Day 2

### Read 1 Chronicles 11:4-9

This same account is recorded in 2 Samuel 5:6-12 with a few other details.

After David is anointed King over all of Israel, he set out to establish Jerusalem as the capital of all Israel. The capital of the single tribe Judah, over which he was king, was Hebron and it was now time for there to be a new capital which would be for all of the tribes of Israel. Jerusalem was on the border of the tribe of Benjamin (Saul's tribe) and Judah (David's tribe) and had never belonged to any of the tribes, so it was neutral and best suited as the new capital.

David took his army and headed to Jerusalem to take the city for himself and for Israel. Jerusalem was inhabited by Jebusites which were descendants of Noah through his son Canaan. They were Canaanites. They were to be exterminated by the Israelites because of their pagan worship and other acts of great corruption that included the sacrifice of children. David now had to defeat the Jebusites in order to seize control of Jerusalem. We read in 2 Samuel 5, the Jebusites told David that even the blind and the lame could defeat David and his army.

Jerusalem was considered to be impregnable because of the topography of the city. Jerusalem was built on a rocky hill surrounded on three sides by valleys and hills. The North side was the only place of vulnerability and the north side was very well guarded. We read in 2 Samuel that David knew of a way in and he challenged his men, telling them "*Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain.*" Joab was the one who did so and he became David's chief.

Through God's providence and David's leadership, Jerusalem was defeated and became the capital of the Kingdom of Israel. David lived in Jerusalem and it was called "*The City of David.*"

I love the way 1 Chronicles 11:9 is paraphrased in the Message. "*David's stride became longer; his embrace larger—yes, GOD-of-the-Angel-Armies was with him!*"

**1 Chronicles 11:9 (MSG)**

The Message paraphrases "*Lord of hosts*" as "*God-of-the-Angel-Armies.*" The Lord gave the victory. He is your victory!

## Day 3

### Read Psalm 78:67-72

Psalm 78 is a lengthy Psalm. It is one of the Psalms of Asaph that are found in Psalms 50 and Psalms 73-83. Asaph was a worship leader King David had assigned to lead the tabernacle choir (1 Chronicles 6:31-32). In Psalm 78, Asaph gives a “Contemplation” in KJV called a “Maschil” which is an instruction for teaching. It is a Psalm of instruction covering Israel’s history from the exodus from Egypt until the time of David. In this tracing of history, we find that Asaph was seeking to instruct the readers about the past failures of the Israelites. It tells of the faithfulness of God, time and again, on their behalf. This Psalm encourages the people to be faithful but points to God’s abiding faithfulness as their motivation. It closes with the present situation and looks back to the time David was king and how his Kingship anticipated another who was to come.

He then traces the plan of God to establish the line of Judah and how He chose David to be His servant. It is important to note that he writes that God, “*Chose David His servant and took him from the sheepfolds.*” God made David, the shepherd, to be the shepherd of His people. Oh, what a beautiful picture we have in Psalm 100:3, “*Know that the LORD, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*” The Lord, in a beautiful and picturesque way, calls His people the sheep of His pasture. He then calls David, as King, the Shepherd of His people Israel.

As you think of David, the shepherd-king, your mind has to visit the 23rd Psalm and how it is the Lord who was David’s shepherd. In David’s day, he was the shepherd-king under the authority and watch care of the Lord who was David’s shepherd-king. Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd. “*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.*” **John 10:11 (NKJV).**



The dot connecting continues. David as shepherd, becomes King of Israel. He shepherds God people. David continues the miraculous line which will lead to the coming of the true Shepherd King of God's people!

Tony Evans writes, "God's people today need to be students of history. Knowing how God has acted in the past can influence how we respond in the future. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility go hand in hand."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Evans Bible Commentary, Advancing God's Kingdom Agenda.

## Day 4

### Read 2 Samuel 24:1-9

In my early days of pastoring Harp's Crossing, I (Dennis) would at times become discouraged. That discouragement usually had to do with someone who had gotten mad about something and left the church. A pastor grieves these events, at least this one does. Sometimes I would take out the church pictorial directory and look through it and see who I could count on. In my own way, I was taking a census so I could be encouraged by the people. Often some of the very people I thought I could count on were gone soon, too. I really think this was David's sin in counting the people on this occasion. He wanted to count on the men who made up his army and not count on the Lord.

David was a great shepherd, a great king and a man after God's own heart. However, he was still a weak and fallen man. He had plenty of shortcomings and one of those shows up in today's account. In this account in 2 Samuel, we read that the Lord, "*moved David*" to "*Go and number the people.*" This same account in **2 Chronicles 21:1** says "*Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*"

Tony Evans solves the seeming dilemma with this explanation:

"The story of David's census is an example of the mysterious interplay between God's sovereignty and human responsibility. Here the text says that the LORD's anger burned against Israel again, and he stirred up David against them to take this census (2 Samuel 24:1). But, according to **1 Chronicles 21:1**, "*Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to count the people of Israel.*" So, who did the action? The Lord or Satan? The answer is both."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Tony Evans Bible Commentary, Advancing God's Kingdom Agenda.

Joab and all the captains together sought to discourage David from taking the census. They knew this census was motivated by pride. We see this in the words of Joab in Verse 3. Joab and the captains of David's army submitted to his order and went out and did as David had instructed. So after nine months and twenty days, the census was complete. Between Judah and Israel there was a total of 1.3 million fighting men.

God allowed the counting of the troops. Yes, it was sin but even forgiven sin has consequences. When the consequences began to have an impact, David was grieved at what he had done. David was repentant and asked God, *"O Lord, take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."*

Tomorrow's regrets are being made today. Be careful to submit yourself in obedience and surrender to the Lord.

## Day 5

### Read 2 Samuel 24:10-25

After David's confession and acknowledgement, God sent David's seer, the prophet Gad, to give David three options to consider how judgment would come upon David. The choices—seven years of famine on the land; flee three months from his enemies; or a three day plague in the land. David chose the three day plague. David was counting on the mercies of the Lord because he had spent many years under constant duress from his enemies. The result of the three day plague was the death of 70,000 men. The plague was stopped only by the mercy of the Lord. He told the angel who was destroying the people, "*It is enough; now restrain your hand.*"

When David saw the many deaths and saw the angel who was striking the people, David was crushed because of his sin and the consequences on the people. Our sin is not just a personal thing. Our sin will have a lasting effect on people which we may never see.

Once again, the Lord sent David's seer to him and told him to build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah, a Jebusite. The Jebusites were the people who were in control of Jerusalem when David took Jerusalem as the capital of his kingdom. The exchange between David and Araunah is really a rich exchange. Araunah sees King David coming his way and meets David, bowing before him. Araunah asks King David why he has come and David tells Araunah he has come to purchase his threshing floor to build an altar to the Lord so the plague on his people would end. Araunah offers the land for David's use along with oxen for the sacrifice and wood for the fire. What a gracious offering for Araunah to give David—everything he needed for his sacrifice, but David responded that he would not offer to the Lord that which cost him

nothing. So, David paid Araunah fifty shekels of silver to purchase the threshing floor and the oxen. It was at that place, the threshing floor of Araunah, that David built the altar to the Lord and offered sacrifices and the plague ended.

The place of the threshing floor of Araunah was a very special and holy place. The Lord knew this and chose this place to continue to be a piece of holy ground. It was the place where Abraham put his son Isaac on the altar. After the plague ended, David consecrated the site to the Lord and used it as a place of worship and sacrifice. It was also the place where Solomon built the temple.

God orchestrates events in the world, even our sinful times to accomplish His purposes. God set all of this up and used it to direct David where the temple would be constructed. Here a great way to look at it from Warren Wiersbe:

If you were asked to name David's two greatest sins, you would probably reply, "His adultery with Bathsheba and his numbering of the people," and you would be right. But out of those two great sins, God built a temple! Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon and God chose him to succeed David on the throne. On the property David purchased and on which he erected an altar, Solomon built the temple and dedicated it to the glory of God. What God did for David is certainly not an excuse for sin (Rom. 6:1-2), because David paid dearly for committing those sins. However, knowing what God did for David does encourage us to seek His face and trust His grace when we have disobeyed Him. "*But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more*" (**Rom. 5:20**). What a merciful God we serve!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Bible Exposition Commentary (BE Series) - Old Testament - History.



## **Week 71 The Ark of God-----Chris Watson**

This week, we will move ahead in our devotions. In fact, between last week and this week's devotions Saul became jealous of David and went after him attempting to kill him. During this time, we read that Saul inquired of a witch and he sought to consult a spirit as he was not following the ways of God. In the end, Saul took his own life. We pick up this week after David is anointed King over Judah.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 2 Samuel 6:1-10**

David wanted to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem. Remember, the ark had been separated from the tabernacle and other places of worship for around 100 years. They were bringing it into Jerusalem on a new cart (Verse 3). Was this how the ark was supposed to be moved? No it wasn't. From Exodus 25:14 and 1 Chronicles 15:15, we know that the ark was to be carried with poles. They were transporting the ark incorrectly. Either they didn't know, didn't take the time to find out, or just didn't care.

We know from Numbers 4:15 that if any one touched the ark or the holy things, they would die. Remember, the ark was a visual reminder of the very presence of God. God is holy, sinless, and righteous. When Uzzah touched the ark, he was immediately killed. The ark was the very presence of God and they were not following God's instructions on how it was to be carried.

It seems a pretty harsh thing to do to Uzzah. He was only trying to make sure the ark was safe after the oxen stumbled. However, according to how the ark was to be carried, it should not have been pulled behind oxen in the first place. Uzzah was a sinner in the very presence of God and for that he was killed instantly.

There are two important truths we can learn here. When God speaks to us and gives us specific instructions, we are to follow those instructions. We are to be obedient immediately, we cannot ignore His instructions or wait until later “If we have time.”

In this passage we also learn about the holiness of God and our own unholiness. A life was taken because of touching the ark, this is a demonstration of God’s holiness. Not only does it show us God’s holiness, it shows us another reason we need the blood of Jesus. Without the blood of Jesus, we have no hope of God! Thanks be to God for His holiness and that He sent Jesus to die for us so we could have a relationship with Him.



## Day 2

### Read 2 Samuel 6:11-15

Notice that in yesterday's devotion, the ark was on a new cart, but today, the ark is being carried like it was supposed to be. Apparently, David and others got their focus right and carried the ark the way they had been instructed. At this time, the ark was at Obed-Edom's house and the household was being blessed.

When they began moving the ark, those carrying it took only six steps before David stopped to make a sacrifice and he began to dance before the Lord. I believe David realized the importance of the ark. He was also thankful and grateful as he was following the Lord's instructions and nothing negative had happened. He wanted to give thanks! David realized that his desire to bring the ark to Jerusalem, back among God's people, was becoming a reality. David was so overcome with the presence of God and His holiness and mercy, he began to dance. That's right! The king was dancing before the Lord, and he wasn't just dancing, Verse 14 tells us he was dancing with all of his might. He was dancing with everything he had in him, everything he was worth! He was thankful the ark of the Lord was with them, grateful no one was dead this time and thankful God was blessing him and giving him direction. He was expressing what was in his heart. He was worshipping.

Do you worship like this? Do you worship with all that you have? That's how I want to sing praises and worship Jesus, with all that I am, not caring what people may say or think. We serve and worship an audience of one, Jesus Christ. I challenge you this week to worship Jesus with all that you have and, as was said of David, with all of your might!

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### Read Leviticus 16:1-9

As we look at today and yesterday's passages, we see God made His instructions very specific and the sacrifices that were made pointed forward to Jesus. The ultimate sacrifice, Jesus Christ, was the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

Notice all of the details and instructions that David and Aaron were to follow as the sacrifice was made. The focus of the sacrifice was to cover the sins. We see the "covering" all the way back to Genesis 3 when God made coverings for Adam and Eve when they realized they were naked after they sinned. Since that time, God has provided covering for our sin. When Jesus died on the cross, He gave us the ultimate covering, the only covering that could wash away our sins. Nothing can wash away our sins except the blood of Jesus.

Can you imagine if you were the one who made the sacrifices in Old Testament times? Besides the killing of an animal for your sins and the visual that would be in your mind, you would have blood on your hands, literally. The blood or stains of blood would be a reminder of the blood which was given for your sins. Jesus' death is a reminder of the price it cost Jesus for our sin. Today, by the grace of God, we don't have physical blood on our hands, but we are reminded that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. When we come to God through Jesus with heavy hearts, struggles, or to confess our sins, we don't have to sacrifice anything. Rather, through Jesus' blood, we can speak directly to God. Hallelujah! Isn't this incredible? We can know, speak with, and hear from the God of the universe by the blood of Jesus. I don't understand it all. My mind can't fully comprehend, but thanks be to God for His love and His grace. Thank God for the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

## Day 4

### Read 2 Samuel 6:16-23

Michal, daughter of Saul, was also David's wife (1 Samuel 25:44). This is not just any woman saying that David is being ridiculous when dancing before the Lord, but his own wife. David was humbled and excited to have the ark, the very presence of God, back in Jerusalem.

David was dancing before the Lord. He was ecstatic to have the ark in Jerusalem and he was truly worshipping his God. He didn't care who was around or what was going on, as his focus was on his God. Yet, his own wife didn't care that the ark was with them. She didn't care, at least at this time, about the things of God. Rather, she was embarrassed about his celebration and couldn't believe the way the "king" was acting. However, David went on to tell her that he would celebrate and he would become even more "undignified" than he had already been. Matt Redman had a song out years back that went,

I will dance I will sing to be mad for my King  
nothing Lord is hindering the passion in my soul  
I will dance I will sing to be mad for my King  
nothing Lord is hindering the passion in my soul

and I'll become even more undignified than this  
some would say its foolishness but  
I'll become even more undignified than this  
some would say its foolishness.

In other words, I will dance and sing and worship my King and I don't care what others think. If our hearts are right, if we are right before God, if we are following Him and His ways, we can and will worship and not care what others say or think. This doesn't mean we seek to draw attention to ourselves for attention's sake, but that our focus and attention is on God as we worship. We won't care what's happening or going on around us.

## Day 5

### Read Psalm 132:1-14

In this Psalm, we see Jesus. His name is not mentioned per se, but He is right there. In Verses 11-12 it says, “*The LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath he will not revoke: “One of your own descendants I will place on your throne <sup>12</sup> If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever.*” The end of Verse 12 is talking about Jesus.

Jesus would sit on the throne forever and ever. As we know from several texts in the Bible, including Matthew 1, Jesus and David are in the same family line. So when God says “*Their sons will sit on your throne for ever and ever,*” He is including David, but referring to Jesus.

This Psalm is also about David making plans to bring the ark to the city with great rejoicing. As we see from this weeks devotions, David brought the ark back to Jerusalem. Remember the ark was the presence of God, so in this way God lived among His people. This whole passage is intertwined with Jesus.

Once we begin to put the pieces together and begin to better understand God’s Word and the history of events connecting everything together, we see the intricate details and prophetic nature of the Old Testament. The whole Bible is about God. The Old Testament points forward to Jesus and the New Testament teaches us to live in a love relationship with Him and to follow Him. If you have ever read a mystery novel, you often read it wondering who might have done what and you often don’t find out until the end. In the Bible everything points to Jesus. The Old and New Testament alike, it’s all about Jesus, all about Him. I hope and pray the more you read and study the Old Testament, the more you will see this and you will get excited about God and His Word. Take time today to thank God for His Word and thank Him for His intricate details and how He continues to show us how Jesus is weaved throughout the Old Testament. Thanks be to God, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!



## WEEK 72 God's Covenant with David

-----Chris Watson

What made Abraham, Noah, Moses, and David so special in the Old Testament? Nothing made them special except their willingness to be used by God. God chose these men to be a part of His plan just like He has chosen you and every believer who is willing to be used by Him.

### Day 1

#### Read 2 Samuel 7:1-11

Since the first day God brought the Israelites out of Egypt, the Lord's presence dwelt in a tent as the people of Israel moved from place to place. After moving into the palace, King David was concerned he was living in a nicer place than the presence of the Lord. David told Nathan his thoughts and plans concerning the ark and Nathan told him to go ahead and do what he had in mind, for the Lord was with him. That night, the Lord told Nathan to tell King David this was not the time to build the Lord a dwelling place.

Read the scriptures again about what the Lord told Nathan and what he was to say to David:

*“Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 since the time that I commanded judges to be over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD tells you that He will make you a house.’”* **2 Samuel 7:8-11 (NKJV)**

Nathan was to remind David that he was once a shepherd. He was also told to tell David the Lord would give Israel their own place and through him, God would make David a house - a dynasty of kings.

Does the Lord have you in a place that you could never have imagined yourself being in? You might be in a tough situation or have heard tragic news. Remember the Lord is in control and wherever He has you right now, He will use you if you are willing. Thank Him for where you are and commit to bloom where you are planted, for His glory.

## Day 2

### Read 2 Samuel 7:11-17

David would not build the dwelling place of the Lord. In Verse 12, the Lord said that after David's death, one of his descendants would build the temple. We know this descendent to be Solomon. In Verse 16, we read David's dynasty and kingdom would continue and through him, the everlasting throne would be that of Jesus.

Solomon was Israel's wisest and wealthiest king. Over time, his wanting and desire for God would become half-hearted. It is upsetting to read of Solomon's downfall in 1 Kings, Chapter 10 and how this man with such wisdom could stray so far from God.

“Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh: Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women, from the nations concerning which the Lord had said to the people of Israel, ‘You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods.’ Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. And his wives turned away his heart.” I find the next verse instructive. “For when Solomon was old his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” His wives turned away his heart so that it was not wholly true to the Lord his God. Solomon's heart was at first divided between women and God, but it soon turned away altogether.<sup>7</sup>

We read in Verses 14-15 that Solomon turned away from the Lord. Would the Lord choose not to establish His kingdom through David via Solomon? Not according to scripture and Verses 16-17 of our passage today. Solomon drifted far away from the Lord, but God was still faithful to carry out his line.

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<sup>7</sup><https://www.challies.com/personal-reflections/the-folly-of-solomon/>



We must obey and follow the Lord. This keeps our relationship in the right place as we will receive many blessings because of it. When we don't walk with the Lord and we disobey Him, we miss out on His blessings as Solomon did.

Spend time asking the Lord to help you obey Him and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Also, take time to thank Him for His forgiveness and thank Him that He is still faithful.

## Day 3

### Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 and Acts 7:44-50

Reread Acts 7:49. Heaven is His throne and the earth is His footstool. He doesn't need a place on earth to dwell because He made everything. Everything is His and this includes you and me.

In our 1 Corinthian passage, scripture reminds us we are His and we have been bought with a price, a very high price and that our bodies are not our own. Your body is the temple of God which encompasses the mind, spirit, and soul. The Lord wants to live in us and through us all the time.

He lives within us and there is nowhere we can go that He is not. He is not looking to dwell in a building, He wants to reside within us. This means that everything you do, say, think, and where you go matters to God. Think about this statement as you go throughout your day.

Often times, we make the mistake or make the choice of having a Christ life at church when we are with other believers and a different life when we are around others who are not believers. This is not what Jesus desires for us. He desires for us to have the same life in or outside of the church. Our speech, actions, thoughts and attitudes should be the same and they should be on Him.

Ask God to remind you daily that you are His temple and that He lives in you all the time.

## Day 4

### Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29

In 1969, Frank Sinatra had a hit song entitled, “My Way.” This song is about how a person came to the end of their life and how they lived “life” their way. As believers, our song should be just the opposite and entitled, “His Way.”

David is very humble as we read in our 2 Samuel passage today. Read his words again in Verses 18-19:

*“Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said: ‘Who am I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?’<sup>19</sup> And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant’s house for a great while to come. Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?’”*

David realized there was nothing special about him. He did not arrive this far in life on his own, it was part of God’s plan. David acknowledged how great God is, he understood that he nor Israel were anything without God. In time, God would make David’s name even greater, not for David’s sake, but for God’s.

Is our mindset the same as David’s?

- Do we recognize what God has done for us and without God, we are nothing?
- Do we acknowledge that without salvation, there is no hope?
- Are we aware that all we have now and all the success we have achieved has come from God?

Do not get tempted by looking around and thinking “look what I’ve done.” We have the choice to do it “my way” or His way. God’s way is always best. Whose way are you currently following?

## Day 5

### Read Psalm 84

Have you ever been to the Grand Canyon or another place where you were so taken back at what you saw that you had no words to describe it? I went on a mission trip years ago and I remember seeing Niagara Falls for the first time. I had seen pictures and videos of it, but actually seeing it with my own eyes, I was speechless. Can you think of anything you have seen or something you have experienced and it left you speechless? Someone said that after seeing or experiencing things which are indescribable, we are reminded of the awesomeness and greatness of our Creator.

This particular Psalm speaks of being amazed with our God, the one true God. Look again at some of the phrases which are used in our passage today:

*My soul longs, yes, even faints  
For the courts of the LORD;  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. (Verse 2)*

Do you long to know and be with God, do you cry out to Him with all that you are?

*Blessed is the man whose strength is in You! (Verse 5)*

Where is your strength found? Where do you look for hope, peace, rest and contentment?

*For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Verse 10)*

Take some time to thank God for His goodness and grace and for loving and leading you. Ask Him to mold your heart to walk with Him and love Him more. Thank Him that through Jesus, we can know, love and worship Him.



## WEEK 73 DAVID THE PSALMIST- Dennis Watson

King Saul became outraged and hated David. This was due to his jealousy of David. Saul's son, Jonathan, and David became very close friends. On several occasions, Saul tried to kill David, but Jonathan warned David of the coming attacks. Through it all, David continued to honor King Saul and would not "*Lift his hand against the Lord's anointed.*" On at least two occasions, David was in a position to take Saul's life, but refused to do so.

David was referred to by God as, "*A man after my own heart.*" However, David was a man, which means he was also sinful. Thank God He uses weak and sinful vessels. David became involved in adultery with Bathsheba which led to the murder of her husband, Uriah. The result of this sin was heartbreak for the family of David. God used David, but the consequences of this sin plagued him throughout his life. Although God does forgive sin, it sometimes brings with it some very devastating consequences.

David was a shepherd, king, and warrior. He was also a songwriter. I believe that songwriters, to some extent, are also philosophers. A song writer looks at things, thinks about them, and then expresses feelings and ideas about them in songs or poems. So, add philosopher to David's resume. He is the best known songwriter in all of history. As you read the psalms that David wrote, it becomes easy to pick up on his mood. Occasionally, there are words that tell us exactly what is going on. Psalm 23 is by far the best known of David's Psalms. This week we will look at the beloved 23rd Psalm.

## Day 1

### READ PSALM 23:1-3

On a beach vacation when our two granddaughters were both about 18 months old, I would often follow them at a safe distance as they toddled on the beach. They didn't know I was keeping watch over them, they were oblivious to my watching eyes. I thought about this and realized that is exactly what God does. He watches over us and, for the most part, we are oblivious. Yet He still keeps His watch. David wrote this Psalm as one who had been an experienced shepherd. He kept watch over the sheep. He protected them and fed them and took them to the water's edge to drink. He brought this picture to bear in his own life saying, "*The Lord is my shepherd.*"

David knew the heart and the task of a shepherd. He also knew that much of his life he lived in constant danger. As a shepherd, he lived in danger of wild animals. Later, Saul wanted and tried on numerous occasions to kill him. He faced the giant, Goliath. He faced murderous plots from his own children. As king, there were always people who wanted to bring him down. He faced struggles, most of which were far more severe than anything we might face. He found comfort in knowing that God was His shepherd.

In these first three verses, David finds strength, comfort and encouragement in his Shepherd's nourishment, restoration, and guidance. Our Good Shepherd nourishes, restores, and guides us. Please know that although most of the time you may be oblivious, our Shepherd is always keeping watch.

Try to stay aware that God is always keeping watch over you as One who provides and protects. Allow that truth to bring comfort and strength.

## Day 2

### READ PSALM 23:4

Once again, it appears David is speaking from experience; the experience of being a shepherd. He is also speaking from the experience of one who was being pursued by his enemy for the purpose of killing him. David lived for a long time with Saul chasing him down, trying to kill him out of jealousy. On at least two occasions, David had Saul right in front of him but David did not kill Saul. Saul was relentless in his pursuit to kill David, yet God spared and protected David. David knew God had spared his life and he knew God had a purpose for him. He was to be king. As he experienced these things, he did not fear, though he was in death's valley. On at least three occasions in the Psalms we read, "*What can man do to me*" (**56:4, 11; 118:6**). David came to know and trust God was his shepherd and could deliver him from his enemies.

He speaks of two of the shepherd's tools—the rod and the staff. The rod was a weapon of defense. He used it to fight off would-be attackers. He kept the sheep safe from the lions and bears using the rod. The staff was an instrument used to give direction to the sheep. I have pictured this in my mind as a tool the shepherd uses to gently keep the sheep on the correct path with a nudge, hopefully, but at times a little more than a nudge. I have heard it said that at times, a shepherd would break the leg of a sheep which had a tendency to stray. In doing this, the sheep could not stray, but the shepherd would then be forced to carry him. David says the shepherd's rod and staff gave him comfort.

The protection and guidance of the shepherd for his sheep is due to his love and care of the sheep. This truly is comforting!

Thank God for His shepherding care!



## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### READ PSALM 23:6

Think about God's goodness. Of course, you don't have everything you have ever wanted or dreamed of, but most of us can honestly say we have received incredible blessings from God. I often think back to my college and seminary days. I looked forward to serving in a church and one day being a pastor. But, in my wildest and most hopeful thoughts and dreams, I would never have dreamed of being the pastor of such a wonderful and incredible church. In this regard, I have definitely received the goodness of God.

The only hope any of us have of anything good coming to us from God is found in the forgiveness bought for us by the death of Jesus on the cross! In this verse, chosen specifically for today, David anticipated receiving only God's goodness and mercy. How else can such goodness come from a holy God who chooses to associate with sinful man except by His grace and mercy? David looked forward to living in God's house and presence forever. Obviously, David is making reference to the eternal life that would be purchased by the shedding of the innocent blood of Jesus, the sinless Son of God!

Now we know that the basis of David's hope was in the shepherd. Jesus proclaimed, "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep*" (**John 10:11**). This was much more than the shepherd risking his life by fighting an attacking bear or lion. This was Jesus, the good shepherd, intentionally laying down his life to accomplish the forgiveness and salvation of the sheep. He did not risk His life. He gave His life! We now know what David anticipated and we can anticipate, with absolute confidence, we will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Thank God for His goodness and mercy! We should all joyfully anticipate living in His house forever!

## Day 4

### READ PSALM 23:5

This verse does not reflect a change in metaphor. David was still using the image of the shepherd. He was not talking about a banquet, but about a flat place in a hilly country. “Table” here does not mean a piece of furniture. The word simply means “something spread out.” In this scenario, “table” means a flat place where the shepherd would gather the sheep to eat and rest before going to the sheep fold. Out in the open, in a very large and flat place, the shepherd would have one last time to deal with his sheep before they slept for the night. The sheep fold was an area surrounded by a stone wall. The shepherd would sleep across the opening that served as the door. While the sheep slept, thieves and wild animals would come to the fold, but they could not get to the sheep. The sheep slept after eating in the presence of their enemies. In the New Testament, Jesus is the Shepherd and He says that He is the door of the sheep—meaning the sheep fold. He protected them.

I am sure there were many nights David would slept as the door of the fold. The sheep would sleep in peace with no concern for their enemies. David knew of his enemies. The sheep didn’t and they didn’t have to be concerned with their enemies because the shepherd was. We, too, can find this rest as Jesus keeps us safely as the door.

David continued with this analogy speaking of the anointing oil. Warren Wiersbe wrote:

The shepherd would examine the sheep as they entered the fold to be sure none of them was bruised, injured, or sick from eating a poisonous plant. To the hurts, he applied the soothing oil, and for the thirsty, he had his large two-handled cup filled with water. He would also apply the oil to the heads and horns of the sheep to help keep the flies and other insects away. The sheep knew they were safe and they could sleep without fear.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Bible Expositin Commentary (BE Series)-Old Testament-The Bible Exposition Commentary-Wisdom and Poetry.

David knew that the Lord had blessed him to a point of overflowing. I am often overwhelmed with the blessings of our Lord. Give thanks to Him for His loving care and abundant provision.

## Day 5

### READ 2 SAMUEL 7:1-17

On day five, we look at a passage from Psalms or one of the prophets to see how it points to Jesus.

In this passage, we read David wanted to build a house for the Lord and, in particular, for the ark of God. He realized he had a nice cedar home and the ark was in a tent. The prophet Nathan received a word from God for David. He told David that he would not be the one to build the house for God. Nathan told David that God had blessed him and made his kingdom and his name great. The Lord used this as an opportunity to tell David some things about his place in the future. In this passage, we find what is known as the Davidic Covenant. This covenant had great meaning for David, but also for today, in particular, for Israel and the church.

I am sure for David there was initial disappointment that he would not build the temple, but knowing his son would build it was a blessing and encouragement. He was encouraged to know his throne and line would continue. What the Lord started in Abraham would continue through David's family. He would continue to shepherd the people.

For Israel, the Davidic Covenant builds on the covenant the Lord made with Abraham. It, too, speaks of the land, the nation, and the Messiah. The Lord told David there would be rest for the people. Their rest came in the land, but ultimately it would be the coming Messiah and His kingdom that would bring them rest. He also told David that He would establish David's house. The word 'house' is used fifteen times in this chapter. It refers to David's palace, the temple, and to David's dynasty, culminating in the Messiah Jesus Christ. The coming Savior was prophesied in Genesis 3:15—He would be human. In Genesis 12:3, the Savior would be born of Abraham's line—a Jew. In Genesis 49:10, we read that He would come through the tribe of Judah. In

Micah 5:2, we are told He would be born in Bethlehem. In these passages, David was told his house and kingdom would be forever.

For believers today, the Davidic Covenant encourages us because we see God's plan unfolding from the beginning. In Matthew 1:1, Jesus is called the "*Son of David, the Son of Abraham.*" Connecting the dots! God is in control. The whole universe finds its origin in Him, its destiny in Him and He is moving history toward that glorious destiny! Sing praise to Him!



## **Weeks 74 David's Sin and David's Repentance**

-----Chris Watson

No one is perfect except Jesus. We are all sinful, but being a sinful person is not an excuse or a license to sin. Both Old Testament prophets and New Testament disciples knew this and they were careful to guard against sin because they desired to walk with God. We all have times when our guard is down and we let a “little” sin creep in. This “little” sin opens the door to bigger sin as we read in our devotions this week.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5**

Things escalated quickly. We have war, lust, sex and pregnancy, all in the first five verses. Reread Verses 1-2 again. Notice anything strange? It was spring, the time when kings normally went to war. David sent Joab, his servant, along with the Israelite army off to war. In Verse 1, we read King David stayed behind in Jerusalem.

Have you ever been guilty of being some place you were not supposed to be as a child? Do you remember your parents saying, “I told you that you shouldn’t have been there” or “I’m glad you were not there?” When I was in college, my suite mates went to Statesboro for the weekend. They invited me, but I didn’t go because I didn’t feel right about it. Come Sunday afternoon, my friends were no where to be found. Finally, late Sunday night, they came walking in. We chatted and I just assumed they enjoyed their weekend; however, it was quite a different story. They wanted to get into a concert, but they did not have the money. They cut through a fence and went inside only to be caught and they spent the night in jail. This was a “Thank God I wasn’t there!” moment.

David was not where he was supposed to be that day. He should have been in battle with his men, but he was in the

palace lounging in his bed. He gets up and looks next door. Instead of quickly going back inside when he sees Bathsheba taking a bath, he inquires of her and finds out she is married to Uriah. He continues to follow his heart which was filled with lust.

We often say, “Just trust your heart.” This is lousy advice! The Bible tells us our heart is deceitful and wicked. If we follow our heart, we might end up like David.

Scripture says, “*Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.*” **1 Corinthians 10:13-15.** We are tempted by our own desires and sin and if we don’t squash them, they will squash us.

Flip Wilson, a comedian on television years ago, was famous for saying, “The devil made me do it!” The verse above tells us that it is our own desires which lead us to sin if we don’t submit to Jesus. We make the choice to disobey and not follow God.

Are you currently involved in willful sin? Are you, like David, not where you should be? Maybe you are praying for someone who is not where they are supposed to be, keep praying. Are you walking with Jesus and connected closely to Him? If so, thank Him for keeping you near Him.



## Day 2

### Read 2 Samuel 11:6-26

“Sin will take you farther than you want to go .....” is a quote that is often attributed to Ravi Zaccharis, but in 1995 the Cathedral Quartet recorded the following song which could have been written about our passages today.

As a child I foolishly turned God away  
Not knowing the heartache a sinner must face  
But God in His goodness has let me return  
To share with His children this lesson I've learned  
Sin will take you farther than you wanna go  
Slowly but wholly taking control  
Sin will leave you longer than you wanna stay  
Sin will cost you far more than you wanna pay  
So with pleasure and promises sin took control  
Leaving me dying with nothing to show  
Gone were my loved ones and my dearest friends  
Only a Savior could love me again  
Sin will take you farther than you wanna go  
Slowly but wholly taking control  
Sin will leave you longer than you wanna stay  
Sin will cost you far more than you wanna pay

Our passage today reads like a soap opera. King David found out Bathsheba was pregnant and he sent for her husband, Uriah, who, along with his army, was off at war. David believed that once Uriah arrived back in Jerusalem, he would go home and be with his wife. After Uriah refused to go home, David got him drunk, hoping that in a drunken state, he would go and be with his wife, but to no avail. David sent Uriah back into battle and onto the frontlines knowing he would be killed. Once David received word Uriah had been killed by the enemy, we read in Verse 25 he tried to cover it up by sending word back to his servant Joab to not be discouraged “*For the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.*”

No one can truly count the cost of sin beforehand. Do you think it ever entered into David's mind that by having an affair with Bathsheba, he would then choose to have her husband killed? We can never calculate the cost of how going our own way will not only hurt us and our relationship with God, but how it might hurt others.

As a believer, I have learned to ask this question when I am struggling with a sin: Is this really what I want? As a believer submitted to Jesus, is this sin really what I want to be part of my life? What we think we want or desire, most often, ends up in regret. The sin you are struggling with right now, how is it affecting you or affecting others?

God has called us to die to ourselves daily, hourly and minute by minute. If you are struggling with a particular sin, ask God to help you live for Him. You may want to have another believer pray for you and hold you accountable. Pray now God will give you that someone to pray with you. Maybe you are walking with God and currently you do not have a life altering sin you are struggling with, be careful not to become prideful. Cling to Jesus.

## Day 3

### Read John 8:1-12

This week, we have been reading about David and his fall into temptation and sin with Bathsheba. Today, we read about a woman caught in adultery. Going by the teachings and law of Moses, the Pharisees were ready to stone her because of her sin. They brought her before Jesus and asked, *“What do you say?”* These men wanted to trap Jesus into saying something they could use against him, but He just bent down writing in the dust with his finger and He gave the all familiar answer in Verse 7, *“He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone ..”* No stones were thrown that day as they all began to walk away, oldest to the youngest because they realized they were all sinners, too.

The law was given primarily to show us our sin and our need for a Savior. God’s Word in **Matthew 5:27-28** says, *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* Adultery is not just the act itself, it also includes what goes on in our minds. Every Pharisee was as guilty with lust as we all are. Some have said, “I thought it, so I might as well say it” or “I thought it, I might as well do it.” Heaven forbid we think like this. We all are capable of committing adultery. When we hear of other believers who have fallen into sin, we should pray for that person or situation and if God would have us to help someone, be willing to do so.

Without God, we have no hope of heaven or a relationship with Him. Thank God for saving you from yourself. Look back at the choices and mistakes you have made and ask for God’s forgiveness, if you haven’t already. Thank Him that He has forgiven you and like the woman at the well, hear His words again, *“Neither do I condemn you, now go, and sin no more.”*

## Day 4

### Read Psalm 51:1-10

In 2 Samuel, Chapter 12, we read about Nathan telling King David about a rich man with many cows and sheep and a poor man who had just one lamb. The poor man's family loved and cared for that one little lamb. When a visitor came to town, the rich man took the poor man's only lamb to kill for food instead of using one of his own. After hearing this story, David burned with anger and said the man who did this deserved to die. Nathan responded, "you are that man." Every time I read this account, I am reminded of a scene from the 1992 movie, *A Few Good Men*. Inside the courtroom, a soldier is being questioned about whether he ordered a code red or not and the lawyer tells the soldier he wants the truth. The soldier answers, "You can't handle the truth!"

This story brings us to our passage today. Reread David's words again from his prayer in Psalm 51 after Nathan confronts him about his sin. Notice, in the beginning of David's prayer, he acknowledges his sin and recognizes he has sinned against God. David also acknowledges he was born a sinner and asks God to cleanse him with hyssop. Hyssop was a plant often used for cleansing a person with leprosy. Then, in Verse 9-10, David pleads with the Lord to remove the stain of his guilt and to create in him a clean heart.

Have you acknowledged your sin before the Lord? Have you trusted Him to save you? Are you a believer and, like David, you recognize the sin of others, but are blind to your own? Ask God to reveal your sin and ask Him to forgive you because of your desire to walk with Him.

## Day 5

### Read Psalm 51:10-19

It is clear from yesterday and today's scripture reading that David truly felt the weight of his guilt. Guilt is often what happens once we recognize our sin. It does not mean one is saved or that one will change. David recognized his heart was dirty and he desired for it to become clean. He wanted to make sure that the Spirit of the Lord would always be with him. In his sinning, he had lost the joy of his salvation as it hurt his fellowship with God. Notice it hurt his fellowship with God, but it didn't sever it. As believers, nothing can sever our relationship with God.

In Verse 16, David knows God does not desire a sacrifice or burnt offering, rather He wants a broken and repentant heart. Are we broken over our sin of how we have treated our spouse or children? Are we broken over the way we have treated co-workers or church members? Are we broken over bad attitudes or constant complaining? In **Hebrews 12:1-2**, Paul wrote, *"Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* We are to throw off everything that slows us down, especially sin that gets in our way. We should make time to walk with God and be where we are supposed to be. If David was where he should have been, none of this would have taken place.

Are you where you are supposed to be? Are you doing what God wants you do to right now or are you doing your own thing and you know it? Do you feel your heart being tugged away from God? Ask Him to bring you back. If you are walking with God, continue that walk day after day.



## **Week 75- Solomon and the Temple-----Chris Watson**

In reading books such as 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, and 1 and 2 Chronicles, you will find that these books have accounts of the same events. For instance, you will find in 2 Samuel and in 1 Chronicles similar accounts, with different focuses of Saul taking his life and the ark being brought back to Jerusalem. In today's devotions, David had been at war for several years. This is also the time he yielded to temptation with Bathsheba. This week we pick up in 1 Chronicles 22 where Solomon is going to be instructed to build the Temple of God.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 1 Chronicles 22:7-10**

The time had come to build the temple of the Lord. As today's passage tells us, David originally hoped to build the temple, but because he had too much blood on his hands, God told David that his son, Solomon, would build it instead. Notice in Verse 9 and 10 that God told David before Solomon was born, Solomon would be the one to build the temple. This didn't happen by chance. The Lord had planned this in advance and had given His plan and message to David. God would bring Solomon into this world, through David, to build the temple of the Lord and, as scripture tells us, he would bring peace. We know that God would actually bring the peace, but He was going to do it through Solomon.

The temple, of course, was where the presence of the Lord would be and God had raised Solomon up for this time. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, we are reminded that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. To believers, this means the Holy Spirit, God Himself, lives in us! It means that God dwells in our hearts and is with us wherever we go. You and I are God's temple. He made (built) us to be His dwelling place, just like He dwelt in the temple that Solomon built. This means I can seek God any time,

pray at any time, cast my cares on Him at any time, and call on His name at any time. The very presence of God, which dwelt in the Temple, lives in every believer today. Incredible!

We need to be reminded that we have the very presence of God, the Holy Spirit, living in us. He walks with us, talks with us, and He guides us. Just like the Lord gave David instructions for the temple and who was to build it, that same Lord instructs and guides us every day. The Creator of the universe dwells in us. Today, let us recognize that we are a living temple and God lives in us. Might we live our lives to honor God.



## Day 2

### Read 1 Chronicles 22:11-19

Not only was the Lord preparing and giving instructions to Solomon through David concerning the temple, but He was also raising up other leaders to help Solomon build the temple. This was no small feat. Marty Machowski, author of the Long Story Short devotion book, says if you were to translate the gold and silver alone to today's time and values it would be in excess of 84 billion dollars. We are not talking about a measly temple. This temple was being built for the Lord and it was to be done right.

Notice the words David gave to Solomon, words that we should heed today. In Verses 12 and 13, he told Solomon to observe the laws and decrees of the Lord, be strong and courageous, and do not be afraid or discouraged. He also told him in Verse 19 to devote himself to the Lord and that the building of the temple was for the Name of the Lord. What words of wisdom, spoken by David, to his son Solomon! I believe these were words from the Lord, given to David, to encourage and challenge Solomon as he set out on this step of obedience. I am sure Solomon would look back and remember these words encouraging him to keep following the Lord and to be obedient while building the Temple. The temple was a building with great detail that took years for Solomon to build.

As we saw yesterday, you and I are temples of God and He is still working on us. At times, we get discouraged when we don't feel like we are where we need to be. At times, we can become scared or unsure. At times, we need to hear or read the words that David gave to Solomon, to devote ourselves to the Lord, and realize that all of what we do needs to be for Him. God continues to work on us, refining, guiding, directing, and sometimes rebuking us. Thank God He is still working on us and wait and trust on the Lord.

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### Read 1 Chronicles 28:1-19

As David gave his speech to the officials of Jerusalem he reminded them of God's direction. Look at Verses 4-5 again. *"Yet the Lord, the God of Israel, chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah as leader, and from the tribe of Judah he chose my family, and from my father's sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. Of all my sons—and the Lord has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel."* We know from Verse 4, that Jesus would come from David's line. That's how David could say he was chosen from his whole family to rule over Israel forever. From the tribe of Judah, God chose his family and from there, David, and in time, Jesus would follow. This is how their family would be king over Israel, God's chosen people, forever.

This is pointing forward to Jesus, the Savior of the world. Not only was God on His throne then, but He is on His throne now. I think we have all seen that the Old Testament is full of connections to the New Testament and in particular, to Jesus. These are not coincidences, but truth. From the very first time we see Jesus in Genesis 3 until now, He is all over the pages of the Old Testament and we haven't even hit all of them!

We serve a big, yet detailed God. We see the details given in the instructions for building the temple. They were instructed exactly what it was to be built with, what it was to look like, what to be put in it, all the way down to the weight of the gold used for the forks. God cares about every detail; He cares about all aspects of our lives. This is why He sent Jesus. He wanted us to know Him and spend our time on earth, and in eternity, getting to know Him more and more. Thank God for His elaborate plan and how even in the building of the temple we see Jesus, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!

## Day 4

### Read 2 Chronicles 7:1-18

In both Kings and Chronicles, we see the account of the temple of the Lord that Solomon built. In today's passage, we see the dedication of the Temple and the Lord's response to Solomon's prayer in Chapter 6. The Lord was pleased with the temple. We see that the Lord filled the temple and the people began to worship and Solomon offered many sacrifices to the Lord.

After the temple was built and Solomon had carried out all the Lord had in mind, God answered his prayer. We often remember 2 Chronicles 7:14, we have either memorized it or we have seen it printed on many different items. This verse was God's response to the prayer that Solomon offered in Chapter 6. In particular, it is an answer to the part of the prayer that we see in Verses 6:26-31. Solomon was pleading for his people based on some prior decisions and what he knew might come. He knew his people would turn from the Lord; he knew they would do things on their own and they would forget God. He asked God to please forgive them when they returned to Him in confession and repentance.

2 Chronicles 7:14 was the answer to his prayer. In fact, when they sinned, if they would come humbling themselves, praying, seeking His face, and turning from their wicked ways, then He would hear, forgive, and heal. This stands true for us today. In fact, we are a lot like the people of Israel. At times, we are walking almost step in step with the Lord and our relationship is great, but then sin creeps in, we begin to worry, bitterness digs in, or pride takes over. We then find ourselves depending on ourselves and turning away from God. However, if we turn to Him with repentance and conviction and humble ourselves, then God will hear us, He will forgive us, and He will direct us. It doesn't start with others; it starts with me, it starts with you. We need to be right before the Lord, we need to seek Him daily.

Take time to thank God for His continued forgiveness. Not only for our salvation in Jesus, but for the fact that even when we turn and go our own way, God is still there. If we turn and seek Him, He will hear and forgive. Praise the Lord for being a loving, all-knowing, forgiving, and gracious God. May we walk step in step with Him, the author and perfecter of our faith.

## Day 5

### Read Isaiah 60:16-20

Our passage today speaks of eternity with our Lord. What a glorious day that will be! Just look at the things that will or will not be. We will meet our Redeemer face to face. We will no longer experience violence or destruction. There will be no sun because God will be our light. Wow! That's exciting.

As believers, we are experiencing God right now. As each new day appears, hopefully, we are learning and growing as we spend time with Him in prayer and reading scripture. We will be with God for the rest of eternity. If we are going to spend eternity with God, we should get to know Him and walk in His ways while here on earth.

When we enter God's presence, we will be amazed. We will also be sinless and live in a never ending sinless environment. You and I can't fully comprehend what this means. All we have ever known is sin. We were born into sin and we sin; it is all around us. When we say we will live for eternity with God in a sinless heaven, we can only imagine what that will be like. Not only will there be no sin, but we will be with God for eternity and things will be perfect. There will be no pain, no heartache, no sickness, no hate, no more lying, cheating, or stealing. Thanks be to God for what He has and will do.

Right now, we are preparing for that day. If you are a believer, you know God and God is where you are, but on that day we will experience God in an incredible fashion. On earth, we grow, learn, study, and walk hand in hand with God. We know heaven will be much like this. May our time here prepare us for what is to come. May we desire for others to know God through Jesus and may we share His truth with everyone we meet. Thank God today for the fact that He is with you right now and when you enter heaven, He will be with you forever. Spend some time thinking what that day will be like!



## WEEK 76 SOLOMON'S HEART TURNS FROM THE LORD -----Chris Watson

Over the past year, we have read many commands and warnings written in the Old Testament. The Israelites disobeyed and ignored many of God's commands and it cost them greatly. We think we know what is best for us, too. God gives commands, instructions, and warnings throughout scripture because He loves us and knows what is best for all of us.

### Day 1

#### Read 1 Kings 11:1-3

God gave the Israelites the command not to intermarry with the Canaanites in **Deuteronomy 7:1-3**: *“When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, <sup>2</sup> and when the LORD your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. <sup>3</sup> Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.”*

Are you seeing a trend? The Israelites had a tendency to do the opposite of what God told them to do. A few years ago I heard someone say, “We all want a new or fresh revelation from God, I’m not sure why, we don’t do half of what we know already.” I’ve also heard it said we want God to speak to us while His Word sits on our table collecting dust. The issue is not so much knowledge, it is also about obedience. Adreian Rogers used to say, “If you really want to know God’s Word, start obeying it.” Tom Eliff once said, “We are educated beyond our obedience.” When we fail to obey what He has told us through His Word and through the Holy Spirit, we get ourselves into trouble.

In our passage today, Verse 2 says that Solomon clung to those he loved. He didn't dabble in sin, he jumped in with both feet. He did totally the opposite of what God wanted. Is there an area in which you are dabbling in sin? Ask God to search your heart and show you His ways and help you obey and know Him. We will see in tomorrow's passage that there will be consequences for those who do not obey Him.



## Day 2

### Read 1 Kings 11:4-8

Do you remember who built the temple? It was the same man who is now building and worshipping other gods. In yesterday's passage, we read Solomon had disobeyed God's commands and intermarried with women from the forbidden nations. In 1 Kings 11: 2, it mentions that the women would lead God's people to worship their gods instead of the one true God.

Proverbs 16:18 tells us that pride proceeds the fall. You might think Solomon had it all and wonder what could possibly go wrong? He failed to put God first and failed to follow His commands. Sometimes when life is going well, if we are not careful, we push God to the side. I have learned and grown the most in my spiritual life, not during the good times, but in the tough ones. The tough times where I had nowhere else to turn, but to the Lord.

We can't coast in our relationship with God. Every believer is either growing closer to the Lord or growing further away. There is no neutral ground. Would you say you are growing in your relationship with Lord? When we stop learning and growing, it makes way for bad choices and decisions. Ask the Lord to help you walk with Him daily.

## Day 3

### Read Ecclesiastes 12 and Matthew 22:36-40

Solomon was the author of Ecclesiastes. If you have not read the entire book of Ecclesiastes, I encourage you to do so. Solomon was rich, he had many wives and concubines, and he was well known across the land. From a worldly perspective, Solomon had it all. Throughout the book, he looks for what will make him happy. He often writes, “Vanity, vanity, it’s all vanity” and life is valueless and really has no point. He realized through it all, life had no point without God.

Read the conclusion of Ecclesiastes 12, beginning with Verse 13:

*<sup>13</sup> Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man’s all.<sup>14</sup> For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing,*

In all that Solomon had and in all of what he did, at the end, it came down to fearing God and keeping His commandments. It is that simple. Solomon didn’t always live like it, but he knew this to be true.

In our Matthew passage today, we see the equivalent of Solomon’s conclusion. Solomon lived before the time of Jesus and Solomon’s focus was to fear and love God and keep His commandments. Matthew tells us that as followers of Christ, we are to love God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This is what life is about. Life is not about our money, job, status in life, hobbies, friends, or even our families, it is about loving God with all we have first and then loving our neighbor. Everything we do in our life should revolve around these verses in Matthew 22. The Bible tells us we love because He loved us. Our love to Him is in our response of His love to us. We love with His love.

Do you know Jesus? Do you love Him? Are you loving Him with all you have? What is your life about? Solomon writes in Verse 12, that without God, it is all meaningless like chasing after the wind.

## Day 4

### Read 1 Kings 11:9-13

As we have seen in the last few weeks one person's sin can affect many people, even for generations to come. We see this in our scripture reading today. Today's passage prophesies about how Israel would become divided. How did it all happen?

Throughout their history in the Promised Land, the children of Israel struggled with conflict among the tribes. The disunity went all the way back to the patriarch Jacob, who presided over a house divided. The sons of Leah and the sons of Rachel had their share of contention even in Jacob's lifetime (Genesis 37:1-11).

The enmity among the half-brothers continued in the time of the judges. Benjamin (one of Rachel's tribes) took up arms against the other tribes (Judges 20). Israel's first king, Saul, was of the tribe of Benjamin. When David was crowned king—David was from the tribe of Judah (one of Leah's tribes)—the Benjamites rebelled (2 Samuel 2–3). After a long war (2 Samuel 3:1), David succeeded in uniting all twelve tribes (5:1-5).

However, the frailty of the union was exposed when David's son Absalom promoted himself as the new king and drew many Israelites away from their allegiance to David (2 Samuel 15). Significantly, Absalom set up his throne in Hebron, the site of the former capital (v. 10). A later revolt was led by a man named Sheba against David and the tribe of Judah (20:1-2).

The reign of David's son, Solomon, saw more unrest when one of the king's servants, Jeroboam, rebelled. Jeroboam was on the king's errand when he met the prophet Ahijah, who told him that God was going to give him authority over ten of the twelve tribes of Israel. God's reason for the division of the kingdom was definitive:

*“Because they have forsaken me . . . and have not walked in my ways.”* However, God promised that David’s dynasty would continue, albeit over a much smaller kingdom, for the sake of God’s covenant with David and for the sake of Jerusalem, God’s chosen city. When Solomon learned of the prophecy, he sought to kill Jeroboam, who fled to Egypt for sanctuary (1 Kings 11:26-40).

After Solomon’s death, his son, Rehoboam, was set to become the next king. Jeroboam returned from Egypt and led a group of people to confront Rehoboam with a demand for a lighter tax burden. When Rehoboam refused the demand, ten of the tribes rejected Rehoboam and David’s dynasty (1 Kings 12:16), and Ahijah’s prophecy was fulfilled. Only Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to King Rehoboam. The northern tribes crowned Jeroboam as their king. Rehoboam made plans to mount an assault on the rebel tribes, but the Lord prevented him from taking that action (vv. 21-24). Meanwhile, Jeroboam further consolidated his power by instituting a form of calf worship unique to his kingdom and declaring that pilgrimages to Jerusalem were unnecessary. Thus, the people of the northern tribes would have no contact with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

*“So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day”* (**1 Kings 12:19**). The northern kingdom is called “Israel” (or sometimes “Ephraim”) in Scripture, and the southern kingdom is called “Judah.” From the divine viewpoint, the division was a judgment on not keeping God’s commands, specifically the commands prohibiting idolatry. From a human viewpoint, the division was the result of tribal discord and political unrest. The principle is that sin brings division (1 Corinthians 1:13, 11:18; James 4:1).

The good news is that God, in His mercy, has promised a reuniting of the northern and southern kingdoms. “He will raise a banner for the nations / and gather the exiles of Israel; / he will assemble the scattered people of Judah / from the four quarters of the earth. / Ephraim’s jealousy will

vanish, / and Judah's enemies will be destroyed; / Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, / nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim" (Isaiah 11:12-13). When the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ—reigns in His millennial kingdom, all hostility, jealousy, and conflict among the tribes will be put to rest.<sup>9</sup>

Wow, talk about a tangled web. We must always remember that decisions we make or don't make not only affect us, but those around us. It has the ripple effect and it keeps going. God was gracious in that He left one tribe for the sake of David. What was the difference between Solomon and David? David acknowledged, confronted and turned from his sin back to God. Solomon stayed the course, albeit the wrong one. Our decisions matter, both big and small. This can be godly or ungodly decisions. Ask the Lord to help you follow Him and seek Him daily as you seek to honor Him.

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<sup>9</sup><https://www.gotquestions.org/Israel-Northern-Southern-kingdoms.html>

## Day 5

### First Read Proverbs 10

In 1 Kings 3:1-15, Solomon asks for wisdom from the Lord and it is granted to him. If Solomon had followed what he knew to be from the Lord, he would have offered a lot of godly wisdom and advice. Can't that same be said for us?

There is so much truth and wisdom offered in these passages. Pick one verse to meditate on and discuss with your family how God is speaking to you.

Here is the one I chose. *"He who walks with integrity walks securely, but he who perverts his ways will become known."* Solomon found this out as well. He walked with integrity at the beginning and middle part of his life, but later in life, he went his own way. I meet with a group of 5th graders at Pike Elementary every Monday during lunch as part of a mentoring program. We have talked about integrity. If you ask the boys to tell you what integrity is, they will answer "Doing the right thing even when no one is watching." This simply means always do the right and Godly thing whether you are in a crowd of 1000 or by yourself. Jesus had integrity, He always did His Father's will no matter if in a crowd or by Himself.

Notice the second half of the verse says, *"But he who perverts his ways will become known."* Solomon openly carried out his ways, and not only was it publically known, but it cost him dearly. Numbers 32 speaks of our *"Sin being found out."* We never sin in secret. God ALWAYS knows! As a believer, there is no place we can go without God being present. Scripture repeatedly points this out. Is there an area in your life where you are not walking with integrity? Is there sin in your life that you don't want others to find out about? What sins do you continue in that would not only be devastating to you, but to those closest to you? Ask God to help you overcome and walk with integrity.





## WEEK 77 THE KINGDOM IS DIVIDED----- -----Dennis Watson

At the very beginning of his kingship, Solomon humbly asked only one thing of the Lord. He asked that the Lord give him a wise and understanding heart so he could be the king he needed to be. God answered that prayer and made him wise and discerning, but also gave him great riches and honor. King Solomon was off to a great start. The Lord allowed him to build the temple that David had wanted to build and it was completed in seven years. The Queen of Sheba came to see the greatness and wealth of Solomon's reign. A great beginning does not guarantee a great ending. In fact, the failure of Solomon to guard his own heart led to his downfall and his kingdom being divided.

### Day 1

#### READ 1 KINGS 11:1-8

**Proverbs 4:23** is one of the proverbs attributed to King Solomon in which he wrote, "*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*" This is one of my favorite verses and, in fact, a life verse for me. However, it was in this very thing that Solomon failed. He gathered to himself 700 wives and 300 concubines. In essence, he had 1,000 wives! This led to his downfall. With these wives came hundreds of false gods and Solomon became an idol worshipper. Starting out, his heart was devoted and loyal to God, but with his wives, many whom were the result of alliances with foreign kings, his affections were compromised. The danger here was the departure of his heart from following God. This is called divided affections. At first, it is subtle and does not seem like a big deal, however, eventually the heart is totally turned away from the Lord.

King David was a man who was loyal to God. He was not perfect, he was human. However, his heart remained loyal to God. Solomon was the son of King David and he started

out like his father, loyal to the Lord. He loved the Lord and only wanted wisdom and understanding to lead the people. It is sad when a person does not guard his heart. The heart is considered the place of our affections. As Solomon grew older, he no longer had a heart for God. His heart had departed from God. A departed heart can lead to some pretty devastating things. The most devastating of all is the forfeiture of blessings. Perhaps the greatest blessing of all, apart from the personal relationship we have with God through Jesus, is the blessing of being used of God. God chose Solomon to be the king after David. He chose Solomon to be the one to build the temple. It seems there were many more opportunities for Solomon to be blessed as an instrument of God.

What about your heart? Has there been a time in your life when you were walking closer with God? A departed heart usually happens over time. The heart grows colder over time. If your heart is moving away from God, seek Him with your whole heart. As David said, “*Delight yourself in the Lord.*”

## Day 2

### READ 1 KINGS 11:9-12

David wrote in **Psalm 53:1**, “*The fool has said in his heart, ‘there is no God.’*” Wisdom is skill in godly living. It is taking the truth of God and applying it to daily living. I have come to believe that the people of God often live like fools. By that, I mean we, at times, live like there is no God. It is not our confession, but at times, it is our profession—living like there is no God. Sadly, many of God’s own people merely give lip service to Him—“*Honoring Him with their lips but have removed their hearts from Him*” (**Isaiah 29:13**). Solomon began with confession and a matching profession of loving and serving God. As he continued and turned to idols he lost his way. The man who wanted wisdom more than anything else became foolish in his living.

The wisest man in the world and a great king now found himself standing before the judge of the universe. I do not believe God was angry with Solomon. This is a case of the warning found in **Galatians 6:7**, “*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*” Solomon became a victim of his own folly. His kingdom would be taken from him. We see God’s mercy in this, as He told Solomon this would not take place while he was alive because God was keeping His word to David.

This is very agonizing. I have seen godly people with what seemed to be incredible potential forfeit the opportunity to be used of God in an incredible way. Having a greater love for other things will drag their heart away. Possessions, lust, and longings for the things we become obsessed with, can cause our hearts to be drawn away from God.

Ask God, by His grace, to enable you to keep your heart set on Him.

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### READ 1 KINGS 11:13-40

In 1962, Mary Wells recorded a song entitled, “Two Lovers,” that went to the top ten on the music charts. The song says, “Well, I've got two lovers and I ain't ashamed Two lovers and I love them both the same.” I know quite often, songs have ridiculous lyrics and this one is no exception. Jesus says we cannot have two masters because we will love one and hate the other (Luke 16:13). Solomon could not have two masters either. He turned away from the Lord and pursued false gods. He may have claimed to love God, but His affections were elsewhere.

The result was exactly as the Lord said; the kingdom was torn away from Solomon. Ten of the tribes were torn away, thus dividing the kingdom. The math says there were two left, but only the tribe of Judah was actually left. This also included the small tribe of Benjamin which was associated with Jerusalem. The southern kingdom would be known as Judah and the northern kingdom as Israel.

This passage says that Solomon would spend the remainder of his life as king, for the sake of his father, David. God had made a promise to David that he would have a son on the throne forever. So Solomon remained king. The long-term view was to Jesus who would come from the tribe of Judah and, in particular, from the line of David. God is in control and He is in the details.

Solomon received both bad news and good news. The bad news? Most of the kingdom was torn away from him. The good news? He would remain king over Judah and God would keep His promise. There is bad news and good news for us also. The bad news? There is sin in the world that seeks to tear us away from the blessed design of God. The good news? The gospel of Jesus who came to restore the image of God to all who will receive Him! Have you received Him?

## Day 4

### READ 1 KINGS 11:41-12:20

Solomon had been king over Israel for forty years. Solomon had run up some very large bills for the people, which seems to be the thing government leaders do. When he died, his son Rehoboam became king in his place. On-the-job training is a good thing if the person being trained is wise and listens to the more seasoned and proven trainer. However, when the new guy only listens to the less experienced, he may be headed for trouble. Rehoboam was approached by some people about lowering their taxes and making things easier on them. He told them to come back in a few days and he would give them his answer. First, he sought the advice of some of the older people who were associates of Solomon. They advised the young king to be kind, gentle, and to serve the people. Rehoboam rejected their words and sought the advice of some of the younger people with whom he had grown up. They told him to pour on the power and intimidation. Rehoboam took their advice and there was backlash. The people of the north selected Jeroboam as their king, who led them into idolatry, and Rehoboam was king over the southern kingdom. The kingdom was divided.

God told Solomon this would happen, but Rehoboam, by his own foolishness, made it a reality. He listened to the wrong group. He really heard and listened to what he himself wanted. He was power hungry and found those who would affirm his power grab.

Who are you listening to? Are you in tune only to people who will tell you what you want to hear? Seek wise counsel and make wise decisions.

## Day 5

### READ PSALM 132:8-14

We have read on many previous occasions that God established a kingdom which will be forever. Not “temporarily” forever, but “eternally” forever. Saul was the first king of Israel, an interim king before God’s intended king of Israel, King David. This psalm was probably a song that was sung by the people when they carried the ark into the temple which Solomon had built.

This Psalm speaks what we have already seen, “*For the sake of your servant David*” (1 Kings 11:13). God made a promise to David that one from his family would be the king and the line of David would continue. We know there was a long line of kings that came from David’s family tree. However, the ultimate fulfillment was in Jesus, the King of King and Lord of Lords. The dynasty of David would continue forever.

It is a wonderful thing to know that all of this is the result of God’s sovereignty. This promise to David was totally dependent upon God and not on the behavior of David’s offspring. Just look at the character of the kings starting with David. They were all sinful! God is the faithful one and the kingdom is totally dependent upon His faithfulness.

God established the eternal kingdom. The line of David is fulfilled in the Messiah--Jesus Christ. He is the One who will be King forever. He is called the son of David in Matthew 1:1. All of this culminates in Jesus. All we have studied and read to this point is about God establishing a people, a nation, and a kingdom that would ultimately be eternal!

In today’s passage, the term ‘Zion’ is used. Zion is Jerusalem. It is not just the temporal Jerusalem, but also the New Jerusalem spoken of in Revelation.

In the book of Revelation, we read these words:

*Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

**Revelation 21:2-3 (NKJV)**

The kingdom that God speaks of is the eternal one. It starts with David and continues, by the grace of God, through the Line of David. Jesus is the King of Kings and He will reign forever!





## **Week 78 God Provides for Elijah----- Chris Watson**

The kingdom is now divided and the Israelites are at it again. They are worshiping and following other gods, doing things their own way, and not seeking to trust the Lord. Many of the kings were leading the people to do things totally opposite of what the Lord desired and what His will was. As we will see this week, the Lord often raised up prophets to show the people the error of their ways, seeking to lead the people back to God.

### **Day 1**

#### **Read 1 Kings 16:29-17:7**

Fifty plus years had passed since the kingdom was divided (1 Kings 12). Between the division and this passage, Israel had gone through several kings while Asa was king of Judah for forty one years. Toward the end of Asa's reign, we learn that Ahab became king over Israel. As we see in today's reading, Ahab was a very wicked king. He even set up idol worship and built an altar for Baal. Verse 30 tells us that Ahab did more evil in the eyes of the Lord than those before him.

Notice how God intervenes. Ahab was going against the ways of God, totally doing that which was not right in the eyes of God and worshiping false gods. God sent Elijah to tell King Ahab that there would be no rain over the next few years except at Elijah's word. Notice he tells Ahab this with the authority of the Lord, the King of Israel (Verse 17:1).

We don't read that Ahab's "gods" helped him out, but we do read that the one true God fed Elijah and provided water for him. God was letting Ahab know, through Elijah, that He was in control. No man-made god or person could do what only God could do. God was in control and He provided for Elijah's needs.

Isn't there peace in knowing that God is in control? In spite of the storms of life, the ups, the downs, and the highs and lows, God is in control. He was letting Ahab know who the one true God was. Be thankful we don't serve a God who is powerless, unmerciful, unjust, or unloving. We serve a God who is holy and righteous and He will make sure His name is known. He accomplished this through Elijah. How does God want to use your life to help others hear and grasp the power and love of your God?

## Day 2

### Read 1 Kings 17:8-16

In this biblical historical event the widow trusted God, to an extent. Without rain, things had gotten so bad that all she had left was a handful of flour and a little oil. Elijah found her gathering sticks before she was going home to make a meal for her and her son to eat before they died. Notice what she does when Elijah asks her to make a small cake of bread for him before making one for her son and herself. She does just that! Just as Elijah told her, there was enough food for Elijah, the widow and her son and they didn't run out. Food was always there when they needed it. She trusted God and Elijah enough to do what Elijah had said.

Not only did the widow trust God, but so did Elijah. He trusted what the Lord told him in Verse 14, the flour would not be used up and the jar of oil would not run out! Elijah trusted the Lord would provide. If the Lord had not provided, this woman would have died after Elijah had taken all that she had.

I want to trust God like this. I want to trust God and His words. We have His very words here in the Bible. We have heard them and now we need to trust them and take them to heart. We need to believe them even for our next meal as Elijah and the widow did. They were following God in some very wicked times and they trusted that God was in control.

We need to realize that God is sovereign and always in control. Take time to write down some things that you are trusting God for, putting them in His hands. Pray over these and trust God to carry out His will and His plan.

## Day 3 CONNECT TO JESUS

### Read Luke 4:16-30

In today's passage, Jesus speaks of Elijah and the widow. God was sharing with the people that salvation was not just for Israel, but for all people. Coming from the Old Testament into the New Testament, we see the Jews were having a hard time coping with the news that God (salvation) was not just for them, but also for the Greeks (everyone who was not a Jew). In fact, you can read more about this in Romans. Paul was seeking to convince the Jews that God and Jesus were for all! When the Jews in this passage heard that God was for all, they were upset and sought to drive Jesus out of town.

We also read in this weeks passages that God sent Elijah to a foreign widow instead of a widow of Israel. The widows of Israel had rejected God and His prophet and were now worshiping false gods like Baal, rather than the one true God. In fact, Jesus was comparing his situation to Elijah and the people to the evil king, Ahab. He even said in that time many had leprosy in Israel, but they were not healed and they did not seek after the one true God.

Not only were the people rejecting Jesus, they were seeking to get Him out of town. In fact, they were trying to dismiss the Messiah. Scales were on their eyes and they would not accept and acknowledge that Jesus was, in fact, the Messiah.

The people rejected Elijah and his words from God and they also rejected Jesus, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Remember, we are to share Jesus. We are to teach His life, His hope, His death, His burial, and His resurrection along with the fact that He is love. If folks reject it, remember that they are not rejecting you, they are rejecting Jesus, the King of the universe. Share that Jesus is the only way to heaven. When folks don't listen, continue to pray and share the truth of God with them. God is our only hope through Jesus. Thank Jesus for your salvation today!

## Day 4

### Read 1 Kings 17:17-24

While Ahab was praying to Baal to send rain, God was in the process of making His name great and real to the widow with whom Elijah was staying. The widow's son died and understandably, the mom was distressed. She even asked Elijah if he came to remind her of her sin and kill her son! She had just seen God work a miracle in providing for her, her son, and Elijah, yet now, her son was dead. Why? Was God sleeping? Did He not know her son would die? Did He make a mistake?

God was using this situation to bring glory to Himself and, in particular, to help the widow understand that Elijah was God's servant. When God performed this miracle, it helped the widow fully believe in God and in His prophet and understand that it was all for God and for His glory. It wasn't so much for the widow, although she obviously desired her son back. It was for God's glory, so the woman would know and see God for who He was.

We all face struggles, good news, difficulties, pain, celebration, hardships, tragedies, and the like. However, in each of these situations God can work! He desires His name to be glorified and magnified in all situations. After all, He created the world! He created you and me, and He holds all of us in His hands. We will all face struggles and tragedies. We will hurt and we will cry. We will also face life's finest moments and as we continue to walk through these situations, let us be certain that it is God's desire to be magnified in all these situations. God is right there with us, He is near and He wants all people to come to know Him.

During such times, we are to trust God. Sometimes it comes easy and other times it may be difficult. We pray and seek God, but in the end, we pray for God's plan and His will. It may happen as we would hope, or God may have another

outcome in mind. In the end, it's all for God's glory. Even in the difficult times, may God's name be made known. Whether or not God answers our prayer like we want, He is sovereign. May His name be glorified! Whatever the case may be, we can be certain that we know the Creator of the universe, the One who makes our hearts beat, the One who watches over us and holds the whole world in His hands. We can trust Him. It's been said that when you cannot see His hand, trust His heart. Even when we don't understand, we can trust God knowing His plan will prevail and He will get the glory. Today, lay those things down at His feet, and trust His heart.

## Day 5

### Read Psalm 78:23-39

These few verses give us a very clear picture of the life of the Israelites. I have often said the Israelites had the “bent neck” syndrome. Their necks would bend towards God then away, towards Him and then away again, and it happened over and over again as we see in this passage. Verses 36-38 says “*But then they would flatter him with their mouths, lying to him with their tongues; their hearts were not loyal to him, they were not faithful to his covenant. Yet he was merciful; he forgave their iniquities and did not destroy them. Time after time he restrained his anger and did not stir up his full wrath.*” The Israelites would lie to God. They were not loyal, even unfaithful to the covenant, but He was merciful and forgave them, not destroying them.

What a loving God we serve. God hates sin and it has to be punished, but He loves us just like He loved the Israelites. God is faithful, we are not! I may not be able to speak for you, but speaking for myself, I often do things my own way, not God’s. By the grace of God I usually recognize my foolishness quickly (though not all the time.) God then reminds me who I am and who He is. I wish I could say it has only happened once, but I can look back and see how I have questioned God many times in the past. Maybe thinking God didn’t know what He was doing, or I just decided to do things my way instead of God’s. By His grace, He was patient as He loved me through His blood, conviction, and His choice! I can be just like the Israelites, following God with everything I am one minute and in the next minute, questioning what He is doing. Thank God, He doesn’t leave.

God waits for us with open arms. If we are caught in blatant sin, God waits for our return! If we make unwise choices, God waits for our return. If we are questioning God’s choices or motives, God waits for our return. Even if we have run far, far away like the prodigal son, God waits

for our return. Verse 38 tells us, “*He was merciful and forgave their iniquities.*” Praise God, He has done the same for us. He didn’t leave us in our sin, but He brought us to Himself to walk hand in hand with the Creator of the world and the Savior of our souls.

Spend time thanking God for His forgiveness and His patience. Let us model His forgiveness and His patience as it has been given to us.

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