

# THE LIFE OF DAVID

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A chief cause of false teaching is the wrong approach to the Old Testament. It is so often interpreted without reference to the New Testament, as if there is no *new* covenant that fulfilled the old! This series on the Life of David from 1 and 2 Samuel is designed to show how David is a spiritual example, and especially how his life points us to Christ.

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## 1. THE ANOINTING OF DAVID TO BE KING (1 Samuel 16:1-13)

### (1) Why study the life of David?

David lived about 3,000 years ago, in a totally different culture, and he became a king and so was no ordinary person. There are 2 basic reasons, apart from the fact that it is written in the word of God, and all Scripture is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

First, David was a true man of God, so an *example* to all believers. In contrast to Saul, God testifies of David: "I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will" (Acts 13:22, see 1 Samuel 13:14). Saul was not willing to submit unconditionally to the declared will of God through His prophet Samuel. He was told to wait 7 days for Samuel to come, but he gave up too soon (1 Samuel 10:8, 13:8ff.). He was told, "Go and strike Amalek and devote to destruction all that they have. Do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, child and infant, ox and sheep, camel and donkey," but he did not do it exactly as he was commanded (1 Samuel 15). David is a great example of careful, strict obedience to the will of God. God encouraged Jeroboam to be like David in this respect: "Do what is right in my eyes by keeping my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did" (1 Kings 11:38, see also 14:8, 15:3-5, etc.). So it is right to use the Old Testament David as an example for us as Christian believers, for this is what the New Testament does (as in Matthew 12:3, Hebrews 11:32, see also 1 Corinthians 10:11).

Second, David as the King of Israel, is a *type* of Christ. The circumstances of David's reign were so ordained by God to be a pattern or type of Christ's own coming reign. In the same way Adam is expressly called a type of Christ in Romans 5:14, for there are similarities between them that God ordained: they are both representatives, the heads of their respective peoples. David is so much a type of the coming Christ, that Christ is prophesied as if He is David (in Ezekiel 34:23-24), and as if Christ sits on David's throne (Luke 1:32, Acts 2:30). In the raising up of David to be king in Israel God announces the particular person in all the tribes from which Christ is going to proceed, the Son of David. Therefore, in the life of David there is much to learn about Christ.

### (2) Why David was anointed?

Saul had been chosen as the first king of Israel, and God had done it as an example to the people of what a king should not be like. They had cried for a king, "that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:19-20). Saul had been rejected because of his disobedience to the word of God (1 Samuel 15:26). As he grieved over Saul's terrible condition, Samuel feared for the future of the nation. But God had His own plans in the midst of this darkness. God would not let His people be destroyed so as to frustrate His very own plans! He was actually about to do a glorious thing, totally unforeseen by Samuel. Let us take note that God's promises will always

be accomplished, no matter how hopeless the situation appears to be. Listen to Hannah and pray and praise the Lord (1 Samuel 2:9-10)!

### **(3) How David was anointed**

First, it was to be done *secretly*. This was probably so as not to provoke the wrath of Saul against Samuel and David. This had the purpose of bestowing gifts upon David so it was not necessary to be public (as it was later in 2 Samuel 2:4 and 5:3). Samuel did not lie when he only spoke of coming to sacrifice. While we must always tell the truth, it is not necessary to tell all the truth. But we must never withhold truth with the intention of deceiving. Here we need to learn to be as wise as serpents.

Second, it was the *youngest son* of Jesse who was surprisingly anointed. Israel had already made the mistake of selecting a king on the basis of physical qualities alone (see 1 Samuel 9:2, 10:23). As the youngest, and as the one keeping sheep, David appeared insignificant, yet he was actually excellent. God's choices are not based on visible outward appearances but on spiritual qualities. We can tell how people look, but God can tell what they really are. In David, God saw a heart attitude of faith and submission to Himself, something that others lacked.

Third, the *anointing* was a symbol of his receiving the Holy Spirit in order to carry out the task for which God had chosen him (as with Saul in 1 Samuel 10:9ff.). God not only calls; He also equips. Jesus is called 'The Christ' = the anointed One because He received the Spirit to do His work (Matthew 3:16, Acts 10:38). Our Lord commanded His disciples to go and preach throughout the world; and He told them to wait until "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). John relates the anointing that all true Christians have to the teaching work of the Spirit (1 John 2:20,27).

### **(4) Important lessons from the anointing of David**

First, the *importance of the heart* as compared to the outward appearance (16:7). God always sees through our outward man into our very heart (so 1 Chronicles 28:9, Revelation 2:23). Consider the following 4 aspects of life:

- In human relationships as young people seek a life partner. Do you pay more attention to your character than your outward appearance? Is this how you look at others also? (1 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 3:3-4)
- In performing your religious duties. Do you remember that God sees the heart, and that is important to Him, rather than outward actions done and words spoken (Matthew 15:8-9, Simon in Acts 8:21). How often the prophets say that God rejects mere outward obedience even if it is what was commanded (see especially Isaiah 1:10ff.)
- In the church as spiritual leaders are chosen. It is so easy to be impressed by the extravert who captivates with smooth speech, by the paper qualifications. Yet the first mark of a true leader is, he "must be above reproach" (1 Timothy 3:2).
- On the Day of Judgment. God will judge with perfect justice because knows the very depths of the heart (Romans 2:16). So it is not just actions, but words, thought, desires and motives. Are you prepared to face Him on that day with your heart naked before Him? (Hebrews 4:12-13). Has your heart been cleansed from sin by faith? (Acts 15:9)

Second, the *importance of the Spirit of God* to enable us to do the will of God. No matter what is the responsibility God has given you to do His Spirit is both necessary and fully able to equip us to do it. So it was in the building of the tabernacle (Exodus 35:31), and for the various Judges (for example Samson, Judges 13:25), and for the prophets. It is especially true

as we contemplate our responsibility to be His witnesses among all nations (Acts 1:8). By nature you might consider yourself to be totally unable, but remember that the Spirit of God totally transforms you, as He did with the apostles. How the apostle Peter was changed as a result of the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost! Go forth in faith. Have no doubt that the God who chose you to be a Christian gives you all you need to faithfully live out your Christian life. God is not like Pharaoh who commands bricks to be made but does not supply the straw.

Third, the *importance of David as a type of Christ*. Where did God find His ideal king, the one after His own heart? In the insignificant town of Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:1, see Micah 5:2), and amongst the shepherds! This is the humble origin we find in *the* anointed One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was not born in Jerusalem, in the palace of the king, but with the animals in their shed. He was welcomed into the world by “shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night” (Luke 2:8). He did not come to be served, but to be a servant to do the will of God. As to His human nature, He was totally dependent on the Spirit of God, so He was given the Spirit without measure (John 3:34). He learned obedience through the things He suffered, and offered up a perfect sacrifice of Himself to God on our behalf. This is the infinite costliness of salvation (Philippians 2:5-8). This pattern of humiliation and exaltation in God’s servants is seen in Joseph, in Moses, in David, and fully in Christ. It is a pattern for all Christians (Romans 8:17).

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## **2. DAVID’S RISE TO FAME (1 Samuel 16:14-17:58)**

### **(1) God’s providence in exalting David**

Remember that Samuel had not anointed David in public before all Israel, but only before his family (16:13). However, the Lord was soon at work to show all the people that David was indeed the king after His own heart.

- King Saul actually called him into his royal court to play soothing music when he was tormented by an evil spirit from God (16:23). David needed this experience in court where he was going to serve the Lord in the future.
- It was David whom his father Jesse sent to the battle front, arriving at the very time when Goliath appeared with his taunts against Israel (17:23).

Even though he had been anointed, he never sought these things for himself, but was always walking in the path of humble duty. He went to Saul by Saul’s request and his father’s permission, and returned from court when he was not required. He obediently carried out his father’s commands to care for the welfare of his older three brothers. God fulfilled His plans for David in these seemingly ordinary ways. Yet remember how important is David’s position in God’s plan of redemption in Christ, for Christ would be his descendent and sit upon his throne! Here is one great principle to know the guidance of God in your life. Always carefully continue in the path of duty, however insignificant that duty may seem to be, for God is able to open and close doors as He sees fit. Conversely, do not try to take advantage of opportunities that make you forget your duty. For example, things that come up on the Lord’s Day as a test of your obedience to the 4<sup>th</sup>. commandment.

### **(2) The enemy that needed to be defeated**

Perhaps the Philistines had heard that Samuel and Saul had parted ways, and that an evil spirit from the Lord made Saul basically unfit to rule. They would hope that now was the

opportunity to go into battle again after the defeat at Michmash (ch. 14), and this time they were going to do it by a representative man, Goliath.

- *Goliath's person* (17:4-7). What a formidable foe! His height, his armour, and his obvious strength. No wonder that Israel feared (17:11). Even the formerly courageous Saul, but now without God's Spirit. And Jonathan his son also cowered.
- *Goliath's challenge* (17:8-10). Let the battle only be decided by a duel between 2 men. They think the army of Israel will not be able to produce one strong enough. Goliath was a man who trusted in himself and his own gods (17:43-44).

There were none in Israel who could overcome Goliath by his own native strength. The situation looked hopeless, as if the nation of God would now be subjugated by the Philistines.

### **(3) How David defeated Goliath**

First, by his *jealousy* for the honour of the Lord. It was this that provoked him to action (17:26). He could not stand idly by when the name of the Lord of hosts was being blasphemed (17:45). God's great and holy name had to be vindicated against Goliath's, an uncircumcised man, defiance. David shows that he really is the man after God's own heart, who is 'out and out' for God, putting God's honour and glory before all other considerations. He takes his place with Phinehas (Numbers 25:6-13), Elijah on Horeb (1 Kings 19:10), Ezra (9:3), and of course our Lord (John 2:14-17). No personal cost is too great where God's glory has suffered loss in the earth (17:46). We desire all the earth to know who God is, and that God's people be strengthened in the faith. If you rightly have jealousy over your marriage partner, what about your divine Husband? Are you appalled when God's name is blasphemed, when His truth is perverted by professing Christians, when evil is tolerated in God's church? Have you displayed jealousy for the name of Him you call your God? Are you strong enough in the Lord to stand, and to take the initiative, my brethren?

Second, by his *faith* in the Lord's power to deliver him from the enemy. David was not a novice in religious experience, and he applied his past to the present (17:34-37). Saul's own unbelief could not therefore discourage him (17:33). He did not go to meet Goliath in self-confidence at his ability to sling stones (see Judges 20:16), for he knew the battle was the Lord's, who would honour His own glory (17:47). David knew what God would do, because He knew Him as a covenant-keeping, faithful God. We must be sure that God will do what He has revealed in His word, and go forth in faith. Our faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). Read Hebrew 11 and consider what faith has accomplished in the lives of God's people (especially vv. 32-37). Faith does not guarantee worldly success, but it does guarantee spiritual victory.

- The preaching of the gospel is God's primary means of saving sinners (so 1 Corinthians 1:21-24). If you really believe this, then be bold in your proclamation both publicly and privately. Recall past experiences of God's blessing.
- God will answer persevering prayer (Matthew 7:7-8). Be encouraged to zealously continue in prayer for the unsaved, for the growth of the local church, for the triumph of Christ's kingdom throughout the earth.
- God will bless unswerving obedience to His will, as with David. This is in direct contrast to Saul from whom God took away His Spirit because of his disobedience. Do not fear man or let the world dictate what you do or say. Could this be why you are not experiencing the blessing you desire?
- This is a clear example of what true faith is. Saul and all Israel had a profession of faith in Jehovah. But they did not believe that He was able to help them in this situation. Faith is

nothing, it is dead, if it is not practical. Christ and the word of the gospel are strong enough for you to act upon for time and eternity. As David trusted the Lord, trust Him yourself, that you might be reconciled to God and live knowing His daily help to do His will.

## GOD'S METHOD OF SALVATION

There is something even more fundamental to learn from the story of David and Goliath. Most people stop at the practical lessons to be learned from David's life. But we must look deeper, and ask what is David's **God** doing? Why is this episode so important that it is recorded in such great detail? Is it just a story for Sunday School (although it is gruesome)? We must learn to see the Bible, not as isolated events, but as *salvation-history*. God is working out His purposes in individual lives, and the life of the chosen nation, to prepare for the coming of the Saviour, and to show how it is that He saves His people.

### 1. How God brings salvation to His people

The Philistines were gathering their armies in the expectant hope of defeating Israel, God's people. The question is, How will God deliver them? He does not do it by a mighty army crushing the Philistines, nor even by a mighty man of valour to overcome Goliath. Remember, all are afraid (17:11).

- Through a *representative*. The whole issue between the two nations was to be decided by one from each. Great Goliath stood on behalf of the Philistines. To defeat him was to defeat all (17:9). This is the way God deals with men, both in condemnation and salvation.
- (a) The whole human race was reckoned guilty by God because of the one sin of Adam in the Garden (Romans 5:18). This is why we are all sinners and all are subject to death. You may have questions about this, but this is the way God has decided to deal with us, and He has also made a way out.
- (b) All who are united to Christ by faith are acquitted and receive life through \his one act of obedience when He died on the cross (Romans 5:18). Adam failed the test and plunged humanity into death. Christ has come as the second Adam, and He did not give in to temptation as Adam did, but obeyed His Father perfectly in everything, so defeating the devil. The cross was the final encounter (Luke 22:53, John 14:30-31) when Satan's head was bruised and he was overcome (Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 2:14-15). It was the seed of the woman defeating the seed of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). Satan holds us in his iron grip. He is our accuser on account of our sin. But Christ has borne the punishment for our sin and has risen again triumphant from the battle. You cannot fight 'Goliath' and win. You must have a representative to do it. And only the God who became man, and who is without sin, can do it.
- Through the *Lord's anointed*. This is what made David different. Only one set apart and equipped by God can enter into this battle. For this reason David was anointed and given the Holy Spirit (16:13). Now it is Jesus Christ alone who has supremely been anointed to be the Saviour (Acts 10:36-43). He is David's greater Son (Matthew 22:41-45), designated 'the root of Jesse' (Isaiah 11:1,10, Romans 15:12). Like David with only his sling before mighty Goliath, Jesus of Nazareth may seem weak; as He hung seemingly helpless on the cross one might think He was on the brink of defeat. But behold the cry of victory, "It is finished!!" (John 19:30) as the hours of darkness end. **He** is the victor. Would you have been ashamed to own David's victory over Goliath as yours, because you had not fought, and you had been afraid? But it was just an earthly, temporary victory. Christ has obtained a spiritual, eternal victory. Come to God and by faith claim His victory on your behalf.

## **2. How God brings the Saviour to the throne**

David's victory over Goliath brought him fame, and then aroused Saul's jealousy. As a result there were attempts to kill David (18:6-11, 19:9-10). For up to 10 years David led the life of a fugitive, at one point only narrowly escaping from the hand of Saul (23:25-27). Why did God have him anointed, then suffer, and even betrayed by some of his own people (e.g. the Ziphites, 23:5,12, 26:1ff.)? The leaders of God's people must first be trained through suffering, and even rejection by those they come to save. Think of Joseph rejected by his brothers and spending years in an Egyptian prison; of Moses rejected by his people (Exodus 2:11-15) and then looking after sheep in the land of Midian for 40 years. David had to be humbled by trouble and want to trust in the Lord more and more (see Psalm 59:16-17). It is no different with our Lord. He had to suffer as part of His training (Hebrews 5:8). Although He "learned obedience" it does not imply that He ever rendered less than perfect obedience. His own received Him not (John 1:11); He had nowhere to lay His head (Matthew 8:20). It was because He suffered even to the cross that God highly exalted Him (Philippians 2:8-9). The divine principle is: without suffering there is no glory; 'no cross, no crown'. Note two things from this divine pattern:

- Jesus Christ is a King who perfectly understands the sufferings of His people (Hebrews 2:18, 4:15-16). He has gone through exactly the same temptations that we experience. So draw near to Him no matter how perplexed, how burdened, how faltering you are. He will not cast you away, or give up on you, or upbraid you.
- The pattern for the Saviour is the same as for the saved. Suffering must precede glory. This is an aspect of true Christian experience which is largely ignored today. Read John 16:33, Acts 14:23, Romans 8:17, Philippians 1:29, 2 Timothy 3:12. So do not be surprised when suffering comes upon you as a Christian – jealousy, misunderstanding, opposition, false accusation. It even happened to your Lord and Master. Remember that this is one great way by which God is training you, moulding you into the image of His Son (Hebrews 12:10-11), preparing you for that great Day.

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## **3. DAVID AND JONATHAN: CHRISTIAN LOVE (1 Samuel 18-23)**

David returned from the great victory over Goliath the Philistine and spoke with King Saul. Jonathan, Saul's son, had seen the great victory, and heard the conversation. From that very day they became the deepest friends (18:3). This friendship is a wonderful Old Testament example of Christian love. Before describing the friendship, there are two observations to be made.

- Observe God's providence in bringing about this fellowship of friendship. David's very successes were about to bring upon him the wrath of Saul (18:8-9). How much David would need a true friend, and especially one from the household of Saul, to enable him to escape his wrath. Let us learn to discern God's hand at work in those God brings into our lives as true friends.
- Jonathan was the heir apparent and he could easily have seen in David just a rival for the throne. Yet he never turned away from David in unfaithfulness even when it became obvious to him that David would be the next king, and not himself. This is what makes it such a graphic example of love.

### **(1) Why did Jonathan love David?**

Jonathan saw and heard something in David which knit his soul together with David's. Friendship can only start with a common bond; the deeper the bond, the deeper the friendship. He observed that same courage and faith in David that he himself had displayed, as in 1 Samuel 14:6ff. He would have felt the need of David to be further strengthened in courage and faith in the Lord. What blessings he hoped to receive by being his close friend. Note that Jonathan had nothing to gain by way of earthly advantage; indeed it would be to his disadvantage (see 1 Samuel 20:30-31). He coveted spiritual blessings through David to bring him to the Lord. It is this spiritual bond that you ought to look for, that young people ought to look for in one another, and that one should seek in a marriage partner. So seek close fellowship with one who will benefit you spiritually. Don't look for that material advantage that the world seeks for in friendship which tends to self-destruction.

### **(2) How did Jonathan love David?**

1. *Sharing personal belongings* (18:4). David needed to look the part of a warrior not of a shepherd in order to fight the battles that lay ahead of him. True love will always give what the other needs, where it is possible (see 1 John 3:17).
2. *Protecting from danger* (19:1-3). Jonathan warned David of his mortal danger, and that from his own father (Saul). Love always considers the interests of others and so acts (see Philippians 2:4).
3. *Reconciling with an enemy* (19:4-7). Jonathan spoke such good words about David to his father, reminding him of the debt he and all Israel owed to David, and that it would be sin to kill him. This is the great character of a Christian, a peacemaker (Matthew 5:9).
4. *Being trustworthy* (20:12-13). David was forced to be on the run from King Saul. Jonathan assured David that he would always tell him the truth about his father's attitude, whether positive or negative. Deep friendship cannot exist where such important things are hidden, especially in adversity (Proverbs 17:17, 18:24). Do you have the character of utter dependability in which friendship can grow? Is your 'yes' yes, and your 'no' really no?
5. *Continuing loyalty* (20:14-15). David promised not to cut off his steadfast love from the descendants of Jonathan forever, and Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, and not just David himself. See also 20:23,42, and see Proverbs 27:10. True friendship is not an on and off thing; it even seeks to include friends of friends. David actually did this to Mephibosheth, a surviving son of Jonathan (2 Samuel 9).
6. *Never being jealous* (20:13-16, 23:17). God had appointed David as the next king, and not himself. He was willing to take this lesser place. True friendship is when we can rejoice in the blessings and success of the other from the heart.
7. *Showing sacrifice* (20:33). Jonathan was ready to endanger his own life. By defending David before his father he almost lost his own life, but he was willing to do this to protect his friend David (see 20:4, and 1 John 3:16).
8. *Encouraging in difficulties* (23:16-17). This is the last time it is recorded that they met in the flesh. Jonathan actually sought out his friend and "strengthened his hand in God". He assured him that God promise that he should be king would come to pass despite Saul's hatred. A true friend is a great encourager.

## Conclusions

1. As a Christian, you need to actively seek out such friendships. Do not just wait for them to fall into your lap. Depend upon divine providence (18:1ff., 23:16-17). Maybe you complain of lack of fellowship. What are you doing about it? Do you see more clearly now how great are our responsibilities towards each other as we are commanded to love one another?

2. The ultimate pattern for our relationships is Christ's great love for us. He gains nothing from loving us; He only sacrifices Himself. All He does is for our good. He gave His life for us, He protects us from being destroyed by evil, He is faithful to the end, He draws near with special grace in our times of peculiar need.

Such friendships are only possible in Christ who so loved us. Do you see how everything always comes directly back and centres in Christ? Until you first humble yourself and receive God's love in Jesus Christ as your only hope, you will never learn to love others in return (see 1 John 4:11). We proclaim to you the mutual love of David and Jonathan, but more than that, the infinitely greater love of God in Christ to sinners. Jonathan loved David because of his courage and faith; God loves us though we are rebel sinners. What possible reason can there be to refuse such love?

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## **4. FAITH TESTED THROUGH SUFFERING (1 Samuel 18-27)**

David had been anointed as king in the place of Saul (ch. 16), and had gained great victories over Goliath and the Philistines (18:5). Yet ahead of him were years of suffering to be endured before he would actually become king. This is not what we would have expected. What was God's purpose in this long time of suffering? Clearly, God knew that David was not yet prepared to sit on the throne of Israel as the Lord's anointed one. He did not sufficiently understand himself, his own weakness, and the deceitfulness of indwelling sin. There were lessons he needed to learn and re-learn. The nail is not driven into the wood on the first blow. Such suffering is a prerequisite to a deepening trust in the Lord. Hezekiah had to learn what was in his heart (2 Chronicles 32:31). The wilderness wanderings were for the purpose of humbling the people (Deuteronomy 8:2,16). Therefore, we cannot expect there to be any sanctification without suffering (read Romans 5:3-5, Hebrews 12:10-11, James 1:2-4). So after all we will not be surprised at David's experience; suffering is the common experience of all Christians, for our good, to prepare us to enter glory. This is in stark contrast to so much unbiblical teaching today which rejects any suffering for the Christian.

### **(1) How was David's faith tested?**

1. There was *jealous opposition* from Saul, the highest and most powerful person in the land. What a severe trial this must have been for young David who had only done good for Saul, fighting his battles and winning victories, and soothing him in his depressive moods. David had no consciousness of having done him any wrong (24:11-15, 26:18). Yet three times Saul sought to kill David directly by throwing his spear while David was playing to him (18:10-11, 19:9-11). Then he relentlessly pursued David so that he could not be safe in his own land (David's great complaint in 26:19). There were even various schemes 'guaranteed' to see him killed (so 18:17,20-22). These are some of the wiles of the evil one, sometimes a roaring lion, then at other times an angel of light. Christ experienced it. The history of the church is full of it. Political power has always been a great persecutor up to this very moment. What hope



can there be against such principalities and powers? We need to be put in such situations as David was to be convinced of our own utter weakness.

2. There was *no support* from many of those who ought to have been closest to him. Some of his own people from the tribe of Judah sought to betray him, either from fear of Saul or from wanting favours from him. The Ziphites twice told Saul where David was hiding (23:19, 26:1). The Keilahites would also have done so although David had delivered them from the Philistines (23:12). How hard it is when relatives and professing Christians turn against us! But we have been warned to expect this time and time again (see Matthew 10:34-36, Luke 21:16-17, John 16:2). In the history of the church the greatest persecution has been by professing Christians. Sometimes it comes so unexpectedly, and is so uncalled for, that it is a great test, as with Nabal's vilifying when David had done so much for him (25:10-11, see v. 7). Remember Peter, bold with the soldiers, but denying Christ before a maid (John 18:10,17-18). How we must be on the lookout against those outbreaks of indwelling sin aroused by such unexpected things as ingratitude, false witness, and gross injustice, which are great tests of our sanctification. Are you ready for such tests as you follow your Lord?

## **(2) David's weaknesses that needed purifying**

We have such a full account of this time in David's life that it is clear that God was not finished with David after just one test, but that he needed testing on the same thing repeatedly.

1. David lied for immediate gain (21:2, 27:10). He did not think Ahimelech would listen to him if he said he was fleeing from Saul, so he lied to get the favour he was seeking. This resulted in Saul's revenge on the whole priestly family as subjected to the 'ban' (22:11ff.). The ultimate effect of lies needs to be noted. Then he deceived Achish into thinking he was fighting against Judah and so got drafted into the Philistine army!

2. David sought refuge outside Israel's borders with Israel's enemies (21:10, 27:1). It was hard for David to learn the lesson that God was able to protect him in Israel itself. What a mess he put himself in! Imagine David going to Goliath's home town with his sword and expecting not to be recognized. He only escaped by playing the madman (21:13). The second time he almost had to fight with the Philistines against Saul, and was only released because some of the Philistines still did not trust him. The Lord let David do what he desired and then got him out of the impossible situations. We must learn not to rely on our own insight, but on God's promise, even if it seems impossible of fulfilment.

3. David relied on earthly weapons (21:9). He took the weapon of the very man he had defeated using only a sling through the Lord. He wanted to use it to defend himself! There is a fine line between a responsible use of means and trusting in them. This is a constant temptation (see 2 Corinthians 10:3-4).

4. David desired self-vindication against Nabal (25:13,21-22,26,33-34). He never did this towards Saul, but he was caught off guard by Nabal's insolence and ingratitude. What a grievous sin was planned, a terrible over-reaction, against which Abigail intervened just in time. Christians are warned against such revenge (Romans 12:19-21). Christ is our great example (1 Peter 2:21-23).

## **Application**

Such are the sins that lurk even in the man after God's own heart, one who had done such great things in the Lord's name. These sins are always ready to break out. If you think you stand, take heed lest you fall (1 Corinthians 10:12). Sin is not eradicated in the Christian in this life and so we must constantly fight against it. But note that in contrast to Saul, it is such

trials that show David to be the man of God. Saul is full of religious expressions, full of confidence in God only when things go his way (23:7,21), but with no care to keep his oaths to the Lord (19:6). His repentance over tracking David to get him killed was very short lived. But David, even in his weakness, shows he is different. A Christian is most truly seen in his times of suffering. David constantly sought God's will, and repented when it was clear to him that he had done wrong (see Psalm 51). What do the sufferings you experience in this world reveal about your faith? Do they highlight your weaknesses and sins and send you back to the Lord in sorrow and for help? Do you discern God's gracious hand in them? Are you being saved from sin as a constant experience? If not, then perhaps you know nothing of God's saving grace. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners *from* their sins and not *in* their sins. And one of God's methods is to test so as to refine.

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## **5. PRESERVATION AND PERSEVERANCE (1 Samuel 18-29)**

Although David had been anointed king by the command of God, he had to undergo years of continual suffering in order to put his faith in the Lord to the test. Many sins in him were uncovered, so revealing the reality of indwelling sin in the believer. Such suffering humbles our pride, gets rid of self-dependence, and renews our desire after holiness in every aspect of our lives because it shows that we have not 'arrived'. In the true Christian trials of suffering not only reveal the sin that still indwells, but also the work of the God's grace to produce the pure gold of Christian profession. So it was with David and his suffering.

### **(1) A true Christian perseveres through suffering**

It is our responsibility to persevere in the faith until the end (Matthew 13:21, 24:13). There will not only be failures, but also victories, important areas of faithfulness to the Lord, the real evidence of the work of God's grace. Consider the following aspects of David's perseverance.

#### **1. *David's longing for the Lord's presence and guidance.***

There were times when David seemed to forget the Lord and to act on impulse, as when he fled to the Philistines. But note the following –

- ✓ David fled from Saul to Samuel, God's prophet, after he sought to kill him (1 Samuel 19:18).
- ✓ David obeyed God's word through the prophet Gad as to where he should go (22:5).
- ✓ David went to the High priest, Ahimelech, to inquire of God for him, as he had many times previously (22:15).
- ✓ David earnestly and repeatedly sought God's will concerning what he should do about the situation in Keilah (23:1-12)
- ✓ David's greatest sorrow was that he was driven from God's heritage by Saul (26:19), the temple worship. His inheritance in Canaan, and God's people.
- ✓ David inquired of the Lord what to do after the death of Saul, instead of trying to work things out himself (2 Samuel 2:1).

What better thing for a man of God to do than to flee to God's people in time of difficulty, especially to the spiritual leaders? This is what you will do eventually if you are concerned about the will of God. Is this characteristic of God's professing people today? Or is there a fear of what the word of God will say?

## *2. David's continual joy in the Lord.*

There were times when David seemed so discouraged that he was without hope (see 23:15, 27:1). But a Psalm such as 56 is one that reveals his triumphant faith in the Lord (see vv. 3-4, 10-11). David was not one who was bitter against God in his sufferings. In the same way a child who has been disciplined runs into the arms of the one who spanked him, so David ran back to God! What is your attitude to God in times of difficulty? Are you drawn to Him? Or are you full of complaint and bitterness? Do you say, 'Why me?' and 'It is more than I can bear'? Or do you rejoice in the sure victory to come (as in Psalm 56:9,13)?

## *3. David's attitude towards Saul his persecutor.*

There was a time when David so foolishly and sinfully vowed to wreak revenge on Nabal (1 Samuel 25). But as regards Saul, David even refused to kill him when it was twice in his hands to do so (chs. 24, 26). David refused to reason that providence revealed the will of God, as his men encouraged him to think (24:4, 26:8). Like Christ, he left judgement to God (25:39, 26:10, 1 Peter 2:23). He would not try to fulfil God's promises by taking advantage of the situation. Rather he saw himself as having a plain Biblical duty towards the Lord's anointed, to preserve a respectful and humble attitude (24:11 calling him "my father", 26:17-19). He even had a bad conscience for cutting off a piece of Saul's robe (24:5-6). Are you as patient as David in your sufferings? Is your heart committed to doing the will of God, even if that seems to prolong your own sufferings? This is the attitude in the heart of the Christian (as Philippians 4:11-13). And you must continue in this way until the end, the final victory.

## **(2) God preserves a true Christian in suffering**

God has not promised to keep us from suffering, but to be with us and bring us through suffering (e.g. Isaiah 43:1-2). Look at the amazing way God both protected and prospered David when he feared for his life.

- ✓ Three times David evaded Saul's strong, accurate spear throw designed to 'pin him to the wall' (18:11, 19:10).
- ✓ He was protected from the Philistines he had to fight in order to get Saul's daughters (18:17-27).
- ✓ When Saul commanded David's death, Jonathan, Saul's very own son, "delighted much in David" and spoke well of David to Saul (19:1-8).
- ✓ Michal saved David from her father Saul's messengers who came to kill him, by letting him down through the window (19:11-12).
- ✓ When messengers from Saul came to get hold of David at Ramah they "prophesied", and even Saul himself "prophesied" (19:18-24).
- ✓ David's playing the madman before Achish, because of the suspicion of his servants, worked and David was sent away from the Philistines (21:10-15).
- ✓ God brought Abiathar to him, with the ephod and Urim and Thummim (22:20-23).
- ✓ God daily protected him from the hand of Saul while he was holed up in the strongholds in the wilderness of Ziph (23:14).
- ✓ Saul was called away from pursuing David when he was just about to overtake him, with only a mountain separating them (23:25-28).
- ✓ God stirred up Abigail to stop David from sinful revenge against her husband Nabal (25:32-34).
- ✓ The suspicion of some of the Philistine commanders got David sent away from the ensuing battle with Saul (29:1-11).

After these things David ought to have had no doubt of the Lord's keeping power. God even kept him when he made sinful choices. He provided all that David needed. We might say that all earth and hell joined together to kill David, but it could not succeed, because of God's promises to David concerning the kingdom and coming Redeemer. The Lord knows how to rescue His people (2 Peter 2:9)! Go forth in confidence in the Lord to obey Him at whatever cost. He has given you Christ, and so in Him you have all things. Persevere because God will surely preserve you, although you might not see how He can possibly do it. You might not be able to see the end of the dark tunnel, but it is there, and you must walk by faith. If you are not yet a Christian and you are afraid to become one because you fear you would not be able to persevere, look at the God we urge you to trust. In His grace He has first given His Son when we were His enemies living in sin. Now if He is able bring you from darkness to light, He is surely able to keep you! His purposes and promises cannot fail. There is a glorious inheritance for the people of God, but only obtainable to those who trust in Christ as their Saviour and repent of their sins to God.

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## **6. DAVID BECOMES KING OVER ALL ISRAEL AND JUDAH (2 Samuel 1-5)**

Samuel had gone to the house of Jesse the Bethlehemite to anoint a king over Israel instead of Saul (1 Samuel 16). The youngest of his sons, David, was anointed, yet he did not become the king immediately. In fact for about the next 10 years he suffered under Saul. And even when Saul was slain in battle it was still another 7 years before he reigned over "all Israel and Judah" (2 Samuel 5:5).

### **(1) How David became king over all Israel and Judah**

1. Negatively. Saul and Jonathan were dead; the army was defeated and fleeing. This was surely David's great opportunity to take by force of arms the kingdom promised by God to him! Let him encourage all those who had rebelled against Saul and rejoice because his great enemy is dead. Let him strengthen his forces for all-out war to gain the kingdom. As the man after God's own heart, David did *none* of these things.

2. Positively.

- David began by seeking the will of God (2:1), so taking nothing for granted. He knew that the will of God was to be sought not only in difficulties and deep distress, but also when there was a wide-open door of opportunity with providence sweetly smiling.
- David patiently waited until God providentially removed every obstacle to his becoming king. He played no active part in their removal and was genuinely grief stricken at what took place. Despite Saul's hatred David deeply lamented the death of Saul and Jonathan (chapter 1). Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was made king by Abner, who later turned against him in favour of David; when Abner was murdered by Joab David wept (chapter 3). He put a curse of Joab's house for the murder. The murderers of Ish-bosheth thought they were serving David, but he has them executed for so vile a deed (chapter 4).
- David was proclaimed king only when it was the will of the people, God having worked in their hearts; first Judah (2:4), then Israel (5:3). He did not force himself upon an unwilling people but awaited God's time.

## **(2) God's message from these events**

### **1. *About David.***

- David had learned much from the sufferings of the previous years. He knew he must patiently depend upon the Lord to fulfil His promises, without taking things into his own hands. Have you learned anything recently from the difficulties you have experienced? Is God's dealing with you bearing any fruit, giving evidence that you are a true son of God (so Hebrews 12:11)?
- David showed himself a good ruler in his great displeasure over the murders of Abner and Ish-bosheth. This much pleased the people, along with everything else that David did (3:36). What a contrast to Saul! David would not rejoice at wrong, even when done to his enemies, even when the result was in his favour. He was a ruler full of faithfulness and justice. Do you have this love which does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right (1 Corinthians 13:6)?

### **2. *About God.***

- Many centuries earlier God had promised that Israel's king would come from Judah as a preparation for the coming of Christ (Genesis 49:8-10). Some 15 years earlier Samuel had anointed David. Finally he was king over Judah and all Israel, though often there seemed only one step between him and death. God is not only faithful; His promises will certainly come to pass in His own time.
- David's acceptance by all Israel was a great step forward in God's redeeming purposes. It was necessary that there be a king in Israel after God's own heart as a type of Christ, the great King over the people of God. It was through David that great blessing came to the people of God as they were rescued from all their enemies and brought together as one people. When we see God's purposes slowly but surely coming to pass, how wicked to let any distrust intrude. So Jesus often spoke about the need to patiently wait for His return.

### **3. *About Christ.***

Christ sits on David's throne as David's greater Son and Lord (Luke 1:32-33). He was born in Bethlehem in the land of Judah and in the line of Jesse. Like David, Christ also obediently and patiently suffered after He was anointed at His baptism. Only afterwards did He sit on the throne (Philippians 2:7-11). Now He reigns at the Father's right hand, welcomed as the Lord of all His people, having authority over all things for the sake of the church (Ephesians 1:20-22). Is that how you behold Him, and worship Him? He is no longer in the manger, nor on the cross. The tomb is empty, but the throne is occupied. He is Lord. But His Lordship is written all over from the time of His birth by the declaration of the angels, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11), by the question of the wise men, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2) and their subsequent worship (v. 11).

### **4. *About Ourselves.***

David was to be submitted to by all Israel as the one anointed by God. In the same way they humbled themselves and came to David (5:1-2) you must come to Christ with similar pleas.

- The first plea for acceptance was their physical relation from Jacob (5:1). This is your only hope and plea in Christ, that He was born a human being like you, has died in the place of sinners like you, and now wears your nature as your great Highpriest in heaven (Hebrews 2:17, 4:14-16).
- The second plea finally recognizes all that David had done in times past (5:2). Perhaps until today you have not joyfully recognized what Christ has done for His people, the depths of

suffering He underwent for them, and the position of honour to which He is now elevated. Oh! may it melt your heart today, repenting of your unbelief and carelessness, so that you will come with everlasting trust and gratitude to Him.

- The third plea refers to the Lord's appointment of David as the king over all Israel (5:2). Remember that it is God Himself who has appointed His Son as King; the only response is to submit. Your refusal and rebellion not only makes no difference to Him, it simply cannot work (read Psalm 2). No matter how you have rebelled, even if you were one who had shouted "Crucify Him!" He will give you a great reception. See how David received the tribal leaders who had formerly been against him (1 Chronicles 12:23-48). What a great King Christ is to those who joyfully submit to Him! He both provides and protects. But the day of grace and opportunity will one day be gone. But we have seen one way of describing how to become a true Christian now. Submit to Christ who God has appointed for your own salvation (Acts 2:36-39). Christian, renew your joyful submission as you come to Him repeating, "My Lord and my God".

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## **7. JERUSALEM: THE CITY OF GOD (2 Samuel 5-7)**

The long-awaited promise of God to David had finally been fulfilled. He had become king over all Israel. The first thing he did was to establish a capital, not just as a seat of government, but also as a religious centre for the kingdom of God (the theocracy). We shall first look at the earthly Jerusalem, and then the spiritual reality to which it points.

### **(1) The old Jerusalem**

1. First, David had to capture Jerusalem from the Jebusites (2 Samuel 5:6-10).

Neither Judah nor Benjamin had been able to completely dislodge the Jebusites (see Joshua 15:63, Judges 1:8,21). Their citadel was on the mountain peak of Zion with unapproachable cliffs on three sides. There were good and wise reasons for David to choose Jerusalem as his capital. It was a good site; it was centrally located on the border between Benjamin and Judah; there would be no jealousy as it had not been an Israelite city until this time. David made it his capital by having his house built there (5:11).

2. David brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6).

The ark was to be in the temple, in the holy of holies, as the great symbol of God's presence. It had earlier been captured by the Philistines (1 Samuel 4), and was brought back to Israel by the men of Kiriath-Jearim (= Baale-Judah) (1 Samuel 7:1-2). The presence of the ark showed that the Lord, not David, was the true King of Israel. Israel was a theocracy, where God ruled, and David was only blessed as he lived in dependence upon the Lord.

3. David desired to build a temple (2 Samuel 7:1-2).

The temple was to house the ark of God as David already had his beautiful palace. However, the project was left to David's son Solomon. But David did make provision of the materials needed (1 Chronicles 22), and carefully organized the Levites for their future temple duties, to assist the priests in music, gatekeeping, and the treasury (1 Chronicles 23-26). So David established Jerusalem as the centre of religious activity in Israel. The Lord had centuries before promised that He would choose such a place in which to put His Name, to make His habitation there, as opposed to many places for idol worship (see Deuteronomy 12:2ff.). Jerusalem was the Lord's choice (Psalm 78:68, 87:2, 1 Kings 14:21). All males were to come to worship here three times a year (Deuteronomy 16:16).

#### 4. What was the significance of Jerusalem for the Old Testament people of God?

It was both their political and religious centre, both being under the direction of the Lord, Israel's King. It was the dwelling place of God is symbolized by the earthly king reigning there (1 Chronicles 23:25, Psalm 135:21), and by the temple with its priesthood and elaborate ritual. The purpose was for the Lord to reveal Himself there in these things in order to show what He expected of His people in their conduct and worship.

### **(2) The new Jerusalem**

#### 1. In Old Testament prophecy.

The earthly and geographical Jerusalem never lived up to its exalted purpose, for example in Manasseh's reign (2 Chronicles 33:4). So God threatened to destroy Jerusalem (2 Kings 23:27). As a result, there developed an expectation of a new Jerusalem, redeemed and renewed, that would truly reveal the name of God. It would be a place of holiness where He would dwell (Isaiah 4:2-6). God's word would be truly taught so that the nations would come and hear and obey (Isaiah 2:2-3).

#### 2. In New Testament fulfilment.

God's people make up the inhabitants of the new Jerusalem. She is the bride of Christ, God's special dwelling place (Revelation 21:2-3,9-10,22-23). This is not just future, because believers have already come to the city (Hebrews 12:22), as opposed to Sinai (v. 18). But there will be a full revelation in the future.

#### 3. What this symbolism tells us about the Church

The 'Church' is not to be identified with any denomination, but is all those Christ has loved and died for, the redeemed.

★ The church is chosen of God as His special dwelling place, where He reveals Himself as believers gather together (Matthew 18:20, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 1 Timothy 3:15). What a privilege to dwell in the church where the Lord reveals Himself in His grace as nowhere else. And what a frightening thing it is to do anything against that church. It is holy, belonging to God, for which he is greatly jealous (Zechariah 8:2-3).

★ Christ is head of the church (Colossians 1:18), as David was king in Jerusalem. As the Head, His word directs all things in the church – worship, organization, singing, evangelism, preaching. Remember the very detailed arrangements that David made for the temple and its worship. Are you so dependent upon Christ's word that you are committed to doing whatever He says? Yes, we are free as Christians, but free in order to fully serve our Lord, but not to please ourselves individually or as an assembly of God's people.

★ Rejoice that God's people for ever dwell in a 'city'. What does a city make you think of? Of permanence, of companions, of safety and protection, of riches and beauty. Consider the description in Revelation 21.

★ The church must be the chief desire of Christians and the centre of their activities, just as David's Jerusalem was. Absence ought to make the heart grow fonder (Psalm 137:5-6). We are to give the Lord no rest until Jerusalem is a praise in the all the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7). What place does the church, your local church, have in your life? What place does it have in your learning of and obeying God's law, in your prayers, in your daily activities, in your friendships, in your service for the Lord? Would you rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked (Psalm 84:10)? Think of what the church is, although it is not yet perfect. It is that for which Christ died. It is the people amongst whom God delights to dwell in the most special way. It is those who will dwell with God in eternal glory. Does your

life give evidence that you are truly a citizen of this new Jerusalem? Repent of your neglect, even your despising. Have you ever said or thought that 'church is boring'? Your attitude to the church is your attitude to Christ, for it is His church.

**Question: What are we to say about modern-day Jerusalem?** Some Christians think it remains a special city and they believe another Jewish temple will be built there. Of course, it is possible it will be built but it would not be in fulfilment of anything in Biblical prophecy. The only way to have true understanding is to consider the New Testament interpretation. Paul contrasts the present Jerusalem with the Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:25-26). He makes the present Jerusalem to correspond with Sinai and the law which brought the people into slavery. The Jerusalem above, to which Christians belong, brings freedom (see also Galatians 5:1). Christians are already part of that heavenly Jerusalem (Hebrews 12:22). Spiritually, we have nothing to do with the present Jerusalem, it is a city like any other, except for its great historical interest. That Jerusalem above is going to come down from heaven and describes the eternal state of the people of God (see Revelation 3:12, 21:2,10-27).

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## 8. THE HOLY LORD DEMANDS HOLY WORSHIP (2 Samuel 6)

David loved the Lord with all his heart, and his great priority was his worship of his God. Saul, on the other hand, had neglected the ark of God for decades, the symbol of His presence with His people (1 Chronicles 13:3). Perhaps this is why Michal, David's wife and Saul's daughter, could not understand why David was making such a big thing about bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Yet, David himself had humbling lessons to learn, which also give us serious instruction today.

### (1) Bringing the ark to Jerusalem

1. *David's carelessness.* How joyful David was at the thought of the ark of God's presence finally coming to its rightful place in Jerusalem (v. 5). But in his enthusiasm he neglected to fulfil the specific instructions of the law of God concerning how the ark must be transported. It may be noteworthy that there is no mention of him consulting the Lord.

- David had the ark carried on a new cart pulled by oxen, just as the Philistines did when they returned the ark to Israel (see 1 Samuel 6:7). To carry the ark in this way was to make God like an exhibit, or like a lucky charm, instead of a king ruling over and guiding His subjects. The Lord did not want to enter Jerusalem in a heathen way, but as in Moses' day.
- But the law commanded that the ark be carried by the Kohathites, the family of Levites who were put in charge of carrying the holy things out of the tent of meeting (Numbers 4:5-6, 7:7-9). There was the specific warning not to touch such holy things lest they die.

2. *Uzzah's sin.* Neglect invariably leads to sin. Because the ark was on a cart there was always the possibility of it falling. What was Uzzah to do if he saw the oxen stumbling and the ark likely to be dashed to the ground? To us Uzzah's immediate death seems a very harsh punishment, as he only had a good motive of seeking to protect God's ark. But death is what the law pronounced (Numbers 4:15). To touch the ark was to forget the Lord's holiness, His exalted majesty. God is God and not man, and so we cannot deal with the holiness of God as with the things of daily life. The very same lesson had to be learned by the men of Beth-shemesh (1 Samuel 6:19).

3. *David's repentance.* First he was angry and wanted nothing more to do with the ark, for he was afraid of God's holiness. Of course, it is wrong to be angered by any of the Lord's doings.



However, when he heard of the blessing on Obed-edom's house, where the ark rested, he realized he had no need to fear God's holiness so long as God's holy will was followed (1 Chronicles 15:2,13,15). The process of bringing the ark to Jerusalem was repeated, this time in God's way. When there was success after the first 6 paces, sacrifice for past sins was made, with great thanksgiving. David did this with humility as seen in his laying aside his kingly robes, and dressing like a Levite, so showing his thankful dependence upon the Lord as any other believer.

## **(2) The holiness of God**

1. *The God we worship is great in holiness.* Mark the need for great reverence before God! God is not an object to be gazed at, or to be displayed as a trophy, or something that is ours that we boast in. Especially when coming to worship remember that God is the One who is high above all. "Exalt the Lord our God; worship at His footstool! Holy is He!" (Psalm 99:5). This is the only true posture. Remember the following:

- Moses was told to remove his shoes in God's presence (Exodus 3:5).
- Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up with even the holy seraphim covering their faces, and thought himself to be undone (Isaiah 6:1-5).
- Peter fell at Jesus' knees when he began to realize how great Jesus was, and even told Him to depart from him (Luke 5:8).

Do you have any fear of God like this? How careful are you in worship, remembering that you come to worship God Himself? Does it make you rejoice in Christ through who you can come to God with boldness? If the ark that represents God is so sacred, then what about the blood of the covenant (Hebrews 10:29)?

2. *God must be worshipped as He has commanded.* God's holiness demands strict obedience. This is where Uzzah failed, as did Nadab and Abihu before him (Leviticus 10:1-3). Yes, David was doing a noble thing in bringing the ark to Jerusalem, the city that God has chosen. Yes, Uzzah was only trying to help. But they were doing it in a way that God had not commanded, and they paid the price for their disobedience. It is clear that God requires obedience in all things, not just some things, things seemingly small (to us) as well as those that are great. Zeal before the Lord is good as far as it goes, but it must be expressed according to God's will. This is where Jews of Paul's day failed (so Romans 10:2). All that we do in worship must have Scriptural authority. It is not acceptable to do something out of expediency by giving such reasons as, 'Others do it', or 'It has always been done this way', or 'It works'. So drama gets introduced into worship, a physical response is demanded (such as the so-called 'altar call'), or the whole assembly prays out loud their own personal prayer all at the same time. Where are such things sanctioned by the Scriptures? It has gone further when what Scripture clearly commands or prohibits is ignored or even changed. It is so clearly stated in 1 Timothy 2:12, "I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man" (the context is in church, 3:15). Yet countless women have taken up this role! Timothy is commanded to devote himself "to the public reading of Scripture" (1 Timothy 4:13), yet many are the services when there is no such public reading! Are you committed to following the Scriptural patterns, without apology, because you fear the Lord? Brethren, how can we expect God's blessing unless we seek to do everything God's way?

3. *Rejoicing in worship must be joined with reverence.* Are you thinking, 'If these things are so then true worship must be a very miserable thing'? This is so far from the truth. David was able to rejoice with great joy (see 6:14-16,21). What joy there is to know that I can approach God without being struck down, as David found out after 6 paces. This is the most

deep-seated joy, which of necessity is joined with reverence. An obvious example is when you wish to see a person high-up in Government. When you finally get the opportunity you rejoice but you enter into the office with great respect. Do not seek joy for joy's sake, for then it is no more than light-hearted froth, mere entertainment. Remember the absolute greatness of the One to whom you are coming in worship, and that you are totally unworthy first as a creature, and then as a sinful and rebellious one. So remember that you deserve to be expelled from His presence, with no inherent right to come to Him. There is no just claim you can give for Him to receive you. Your only hope is that God accepts you through the sacrifice of His Son that He Himself has provided. If that causes you to rejoice as you humble yourself at His feet, then rejoice indeed! It would be wrong NOT to so rejoice in the Lord for His grace in Christ that takes away all fear of judgement.

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## **9. GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID (2 Samuel 7)**

We now reach the high-point of David's amazing life, the great purpose for which God had raised David up to be king over His people. David is entering a period of rest from the enemy nations around him (verse 1). It is the opportunity to think of building projects. Jerusalem is considered safe enough for the erection of the temple. That is David's purpose. But it is at this time that the Lord reveals **His** purpose for David.

### **(1) The covenant with David**

God refuses David's desire to build a house for Him. David's contribution to the kingdom of God is not going to be a magnificent temple. Three reasons are given (verses 5-7).

- ★ God has always identified Himself with His wandering people.
- ★ God has never commanded that such a house be built, although the desire might be good (1 Kings 8:18). This yet another clear illustration that God is to be worshipped **ONLY** as He has commanded.
- ★ David has been a man of war, and it is not fitting for him to build a house that symbolizes peace between God and men. First peace is to be attained and the kingdom established, as it came to be under Solomon. See 1 Chronicles 22:7-9, 23:2-3.

God makes it clear through the prophet Nathan that this refusal to build the house for Him is not a rejection of David himself. David is reminded of God's past blessings towards him (verses 8-9), and he is told that there will be rest for Israel (verses 10-11). Then God gives these incredible promises to David, making the building of an earthly house for God something irrelevant.

- ★ God will make David "a house" (verse 11). Clearly there is a play on words here. What David is not allowed to do for God, God will do for David. "House" here means 'descendants', one particular son whose descendants will rule David's kingdom. David already had children (see 2 Samuel 3:2-5) so this was going to be a son of promise.
- ★ David's son will build a house for God's name (verses 12-13).
- ★ David's throne will be established forever (verse 13-16). This is opposed to Saul whose sons were never established on his throne. Sin would bring God's chastisement upon the individual king, but the covenant itself would not be terminated. There will always be a king of David's line upon the Lord's throne, as it is called in 1 Chronicles 29:23. This is the heart of God's wonderful and gracious promise in this covenant with David.

## (2) The relationship of the covenant with David to earlier covenants

This promise of God is not called a covenant in 2 Samuel 7. Why then do we describe it as a covenant? David calls it a covenant in his last words (2 Samuel 23:5). In Psalm 89 Ethan reflects on the promise to David as a covenant (verses 3,28,34,39), and questions why God seems to have broken it.

This illustrates that an idea may be present although the word is not used (word-concept fallacy). For example, the word 'covenant' is again not used in Genesis 2:16-17, but all the features of a covenant are present as God dealt with Adam. It is most probably called a covenant in Hosea 6:7.

Earlier God had made a covenant with Abraham, and reiterated it with his son Isaac, and then his son Jacob (Genesis 17). God established a covenant with Israel through Moses as mediator (Exodus 24). What is a covenant between God and man? It is a special relationship with God that He sovereignly establishes, 'I am your God, you are my people'. So it is not an agreement. God did not call David for a discussion to negotiate. David had ideas of what he wanted but God said no and gave him something far better, way beyond his greatest dreams. In these successive covenants God is not casting the first aside and replacing it with the next one. Rather, God is adding details to His administration of the promised salvation. The earlier covenants continue in force. In David's kingdom the law of Moses continued to be the standard of obedience (1 Kings 2:3). And as the descendants of Abraham they continued to live in the land that had been promised to him (1 Chronicles 16:15-18). In two ways this covenant with David advances God's redeeming promises. (1) It defines the ancestors of Christ more closely, not just a descendant of Abraham, but of the tribe of Judah to which David belongs. (2) It reveals that the Christ will sit on the throne of David as God's King.

## (3) The fulfilment of the covenant promises to David

1. **Solomon.** David's son Solomon was the first part of the fulfilment of God's covenant promise. Solomon himself makes this very clear at the dedication of the temple (1 Kings 8:15-20). He is the one who built the house for the Lord.

2. **Kings of Judah.** They were all descendants of David. Some of them were wicked but God did not visit the deserved judgement upon them because of his covenant with David. Solomon's idolatry aroused God's anger, yet He left his successor one tribe to rule over (Judah) for David's sake (1 Kings 11:12-13). Jehoram was just like the wicked kings of Israel to the north, yet God would not destroy Judah for David's sake (2 Kings 8:18-19). The Assyrians under Sennacherib had destroyed Israel, but when they threatened Jerusalem they would not be able to take it because of David, God's servant (2 Kings 19:34).

When God did finally destroy Jerusalem and remove the kings this brought a great problem to the faithful. It looked as if God had at last abandoned the covenant. As the Psalmist thinks about the covenant, this is his conclusion, that God "has renounced the covenant" for the king and his city Jerusalem are no more (Psalm 89:38-45). We should remember that the kings of Judah were only a type or shadow of God's throne, so that their failure does not mean the failure of God's promise, for God is still on the throne. So the prophets looked beyond David and the kings of Judah to a still greater King to come to sit on the throne of David (Isaiah 9:6-7). Jeremiah specifically says that it is impossible that the covenant with David can be broken (33:19-22). He will cause to spring up a "righteous Branch" for David (verses 14-15).

3. **Jesus.** Jesus has come as this righteous Branch to sit on David's throne. The angel Gabriel specifically tells Mary, "And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). These words mirror the covenant God made with David. On the Day of Pentecost

Peter declares that in Psalm 16:8-11, that he quotes, the reference is not to his but to Jesus' resurrection because he knew "that God had sworn with an oath that He would set one of his descendants on his throne" (Acts 2:30-31). Jesus is not only a future King. He is King *now*, sitting on David's throne, which in reality is God's throne. And he reigns for ever and ever.

### Application

Why is this covenant of God with David so important? It shows at least three things.

★ God's sovereign grace. It is God who takes the initiative in the covenant. David himself asks, Why me? (2 Samuel 7:18). There was no specific reason in David why the covenant was made with him and not someone else. It is God who chose him in the first place, to the surprise of everyone, the youngest and therefore most insignificant of the sons of Jesse (1 Samuel 16). Noah was rescued from the flood because he "found favour in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). God loved Israel because He loved them, and not because they were a mighty people (Deuteronomy 7:7-8). This is always the pattern of God's dealings. God takes the initiative because He wants to, and we are the ones who respond to His overtures of grace. If you are in a covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ the mediator, then it is because He chose to do so and not because of anything in you. This is a cause for adoring wonder and constant and copious thanksgiving.

★ God's faithfulness. There is much stress on the certainty of the fulfilment of the covenant with David. Yet the persistent sins of the kings, and then the exile from the land, made it seem impossible to fulfil. Remember the godly man's perplexity in Psalm 89. We learn that despite human sin, and despite centuries elapsing, God will not deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13). He will fulfil all that He has promised. Christ has come and is reigning at the right hand of God in fulfilment of the covenant. In the new covenant God promises, "I will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). How can we be sure? First, it is because God has promised. Second, it is because God has provided the mediator, Jesus Christ, who establishes the covenant by the sacrifice of Himself.

★ The present position of Christ. He will not begin to reign when He returns, and certainly not in some supposed future earthly Messianic Kingdom. He is right NOW the Davidic King sitting on the throne! Do you now see Him with the eye of faith as dying Stephen did? "Standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55-56). Do you shout your 'Hallelujah' as you bow the knee before Him knowing that His reign is the certainty that there is an eternal salvation in Him?

### **(4) David's response to the covenant**

As he responds in prayer David is overwhelmed (verses 18-29). It is because God has made the promise about his house that he has the courage to pray to God that it might be so. We are recipients of this promise because it concerns Christ our glorious Lord. How ought we to respond to what God has done in Christ?

1. Confess your unworthiness (verses 18-20). David asks, "Who am I?" In the eyes of people he is surely great. He defeated Goliath. He unified Israel. He asks, "What is my house?" He is of the great tribe of Judah. However, he knows that before God he is totally unworthy. If he has become something, it is only God who has done it (see verses 8-9). Consider from where you have come, and then all that God has given you in Christ. When you do this your prayers will be gripped by a sense of your total unworthiness. This is Jacob's thinking as he returned home (Genesis 32:10-12). This is Moses' objection when appointed by God (Exodus

3:10-11). This is the one to whom God gives ear as he prays, the one who has “a contrite and lowly spirit” (Isaiah 57:15, 66:2).

2. Continue to depend on God’s grace (verse 21). If you are unworthy, then whatever you have from God is only through His grace. At this point David is lost for words. It is enough that his thankful heart is open to God’s omniscient gaze. David emphasizes that it is God’s doing and not his own – “*your* promise” and “according to *your* own heart”. The covenant is according to what God has willed, according to His own good pleasure. Have you begun to be amazed that you are a Christian? You ask, ‘Why **me**?’ That is the person who understands grace. Does this amazement ever express itself in prayer as you begin to think of God’s grace to you in Christ?

3. Thank God for past mercies (verses 22-24). These are not mercies just for David, because he recognizes himself as just one of God’s people. God has not dealt with any other nation in this way, entering into a covenant relationship with them as “His people”. So Jesus teaches us to pray “our” Father in heaven. In Christ we are brought into the large fellowship of all the people of God and share in the same blessings through the same Saviour and by the same Spirit. Do you only thank God for what He has done for you, or do you all the more thank Him for choosing and saving a people, “a great multitude that no one could number”?

4. Petition God on the basis of His word (verses 25-29). Note that it is not until verse 25 that David begins to petition God. This is the pattern of the Lord’s Prayer. Humble adoration of the Lord must always precede our own requests. It is the recognition of the centrality of God’s person. There are two reasons for any petition to be Biblical:

- It must be according to God’s revealed word. David says he has gathered courage to ask only because God has first spoken. Have you ever thought how wrong it is to insist for something from God when it is not His revealed will? Faith in prayer is not trying to persuade God to do what *you* want, but to want God to do what *He* has promised to do. May God do what He has promised to do! This is the strength of a child’s pleading with his father – ‘But Daddy, you promised!’ The Psalmist asks God to do “according to His word” or “promise” (Psalm 119:25,28,41,49,58). This is how our Lord prayed in Gethsemane, “not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42, see also I John 5:14). So we can confidently pray for forgiveness (1 John 1:9), for wisdom (James 1:5), against temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13, for our needs (Philippians 4:19), for example. We humbly petition the Lord, ‘Please do as you have said’.
- It must be for God’s glory. David is convinced that when God does what He has promised, His name “will be magnified for ever”. This is surely the strongest plea before God in prayer. ‘Lord reveal yourself as you really are so that people may praise you!’ Again, this is the example that Jesus left us to follow (read John 12:27, 17:1). Learn to put the honour of your Lord before your own personal desires. This is what it means to be a Christian, to love Christ above all others (Matthew 10:37. Luke 14:26).

How you pray is one of the most clear indications of your spiritual health. The four things above are characteristic of the Christian from the start to the finish of the Christian life. If you have never prayed like this then probably you are not a Christian. The Christian is one who comes before God as totally unworthy, as dependent alone on the grace of God, as thankful for the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, and wanting God’s will to be done for His glory.

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## 10. THE KINGDOM OF DAVID (2 Samuel 8)

The Lord had elevated David to the throne over His people Israel. This was according to His gracious promise, and by His powerful preserving. It is on this very throne that the Christ was to come and sit for ever (Isaiah 9:7, Luke 1:32-33). Therefore, all that happened to David in establishing this kingdom points forward to Christ Himself, who came to establish the kingdom of God. Right from the beginning of his ascension to the throne David faced the most hostile and general opposition from the heathen nations surrounding Israel. 2 Samuel 8 gives a detailed summary. We shall call them 'the wars of the Lord', for it is the LORD Himself who "gave victory to David wherever he went" (8:6,14).

### (1) The wars of the Lord

#### 1. Their Course

David was not the aggressor seeking to build a vast empire for himself. It was the nations that attacked Israel, stirred up by their hatred of the Lord and His people. They did not want to see a united Israel becoming strong. It was the Philistines who immediately attacked David when he was anointed as king over all Israel and Judah (5:17). Twice David defeated them. Chapter 8 is a summary of David's many military victories.

- The Philistines to the west (8:1). By subduing the Philistines David achieved what Saul only started to do (1 Samuel 9:16, 2 Samuel 3:18).
- Moab to the east (8:2) became servants to David and paid tribute.
- Zobah and Syria to the north (8:3-8) were likewise defeated.
- Hamath further to the north (8:9-12) gave gifts and so came under David's protection.
- Amalek to the south (8:12) was subdued and the spoil, together with that from other defeated enemies, was devoted to the LORD.
- Edom to the south-east (8:12-14) became subservient to David.
- The Ammonites to the east (ch. 10) became subject to David.

#### 2. Their Results

The wealth of the nations came to the Lord's people in preparation for the building of the house of the Lord (8:11-12).

David's kingdom came to include all of the land originally allotted to the 12 tribes. David ruled from the Gulf of Aqaba (south-east) and the river of Egypt (south-west) to the Euphrates river in the far north. This was what God promised Abraham, "from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates" (Genesis 15:18-21). The promise was repeated to Israel through Moses (Exodus 23:31, see also Deuteronomy 11:24, Joshua 1:3-4). It is this land that David's son Solomon inherited from his father: "Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines and to the border of Egypt (1 Kings 4:24).

David ascribes this victory wholly to the power of the Lord (see 2 Samuel 22 and Psalm 18). The Lord has faithfully fulfilled His promise made in the covenant, that "I will give you rest from all your enemies" (2 Samuel 7:11). In David and his kingdom God was revealing what would be the pattern for Christ's kingdom.

## (2) Christ's kingdom

Why is this recorded in such detail? Is it no more than interesting (perhaps) historical information? It is much, much more. God is setting up an eternal kingdom over which His own Son rules. In the Old Testament kings, and in David in particular, God is prefiguring, or giving a shadow (type) of that kingdom to come. He shows so clearly that no earthly king, however great, can fulfil that role. All failed, to one degree or another. The great need is for the Messiah, His Son from heaven, to come and rule.

1. Christ's Kingdom in the **Psalms**. The Psalmists speak of the dominion of the king in far wider language than was true of David, something only true of Christ the King. God speaks to the Son and tells Him, "I will make the *nations* your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession" (2:8). David writes that God made him the head of the *nations* (Psalm 18:43). Paul quotes from this Psalm 18 (verse 49) to the effect that these nations = Gentiles must praise the Lord for in Christ Jew and Gentile have been united (Romans 15:11). Psalm 22 describes the suffering of the king in language Jesus used (verse 1 in Matthew 27:46), and at the end declares, "All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the *nations* shall worship before you" (verse 27). In the great psalm of Solomon the king is to have "dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of earth" (verse 8), true of Jesus the greater than Solomon but not of Solomon himself. So Psalms look forward to that time when the kingdom of God will encompass the whole world!

2. Christ's Kingdom in the **New Testament**. The great theme of Christ's teaching was about the kingdom of God. It is how He started His public ministry, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17). He taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come" (Matthew 6:10). He said the kingdom had already come with Him, as evidenced by His casting out of demons (Matthew 12:28). His power over demons, over all manner of sickness and even death, showed the kingdom had come. But now He is exalted at the right hand of God that kingdom is continuing to come ever more gloriously. He is now ruling over absolutely everything for the sake of the people of God (Ephesians 1:20-22). On the last day every knee will bow before Him as the Lord, the King (Philippians 2:9-11). What the victories of David over all his enemies foreshadowed, Christ will accomplish at the last day.

### 3. Applications.

- The reign of Christ always faces *opposition*. The history of the world is one of the constant opposition of the offspring of the serpent (devil, Revelation 12:9) and the offspring of the woman (Genesis 3:15). As Stephen surveyed the history of Israel as recorded in Acts 7, he concluded that persecution has always been there, and it finally showed itself in killing "the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered" (verse 52). Think of how the devil and the hosts of evil spirits did their utmost to defeat our Saviour. From the beginning he tempted Jesus for 40 days in the wilderness. He thought that getting rid of Him through putting Him to death was the answer. Failing to defeat our Lord the devil now goes after the church (see Revelation 12:13-17).
- The reign of Christ shall certainly *triumph* against all opposition. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it (the church)" (Matthew 16:8). All the enemies even if gathered together can only succeed "to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4:28). It is this very thing that Daniel foresaw as he interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream: "... the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever" (2:44). Many a time in history the enemies of God

have wanted to totally destroy the people of God, the subjects of the kingdom. First it was the Roman Empire, then Islam, then the Inquisition, and most recently Communism. But, 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church'. Spill the blood of Christians, and it only seems to result in there being more Christians! The final victory has been so clearly recorded beforehand for our encouragement. This is what the Revelation is all about, the casting of all enemies into the lake of fire. What an encouragement this is to holy living without which we shall not see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14) and participate in the final victory. It is a strong motive to fearless witnessing for the Lord, for who can be ashamed to be on the victory side?

- The reign of Christ is *universal*. It will include everyone, including everyone who reads these words. Now, through the preaching of the gospel to all the nations, those who willingly and believingly submit to Jesus as Saviour and Lord will enter the kingdom. But at the end none will be left defiant, refusing to submit to the King. Every knee will bow. If you will not do it willingly now, you will be forced on that day when he comes in all His glory. Hear these awful words: "Then the kings of the earth, the important people, the generals, the rich, the powerful, and all the slaves and free people hid themselves in caves and among the rocks in the mountains. They said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us, and hide us from the face of the one who sits on the throne and from the anger of the lamb, because the frightening day of their anger has come, and who is able to endure it?'" (Revelation 6:15-17). This is the King we proclaim to you with urgency. Today He holds out mercy to you if you will but bow the knee to Him, laying down your arms of rebellion, and suing for peace because He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He promises to be a true King to you, providing for you and protecting you from all enemies to the end. But, my friend, if you refuse, one day His patience and grace will come to an end, and he will break you as with a rod or iron and as easily as a potter's vessel. He is King. Willingly acknowledge it!

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## **11. DAVID'S SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT (2 Samuel 11-18)**

We now come to consider David's greatest failure, that one sin in his life that is forever a blot on his character (see 1 Kings 15:5). May we not only be revolted at his sin, but may the Lord open our eyes to see the reality of evil that dwells in the best of us. We shall start by noting the downward path, and thanking God that he did not descend right down into hell but was brought up to a true confession of sin.

### **(1) David's sin**

1. The occasion (11:1). David had enjoyed unparalleled success as King. He no longer had need to be in active combat with Joab as a capable leader. Yet it was this failure to follow the path of duty that turned to be his undoing. No one can expect God's protection if he turns aside from the way of duty. It is not only important to know the will of God, but also to do it!

2. The fall (11:2-5). The temptation no doubt took him by surprise as, due to idleness and inactivity, he was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Note the sequence recorded – David saw (2), inquired (3), and sinned (5). This is the way it is so often. Eve was tempted to question God's prohibition, she saw and she ate (Genesis 3:6). In the same way Achan saw, coveted and sinned (Joshua 7:21). This is how you fall into temptation. You see, hear or think, and instead of putting it away as illicit you desire it, and so you are trapped into sin (so James 1:14-15). David's fall was very, very serious because it was *not* one of ignorance. He had found out who the woman was, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite"; he himself was already a



married man; and at that very moment Uriah was on the battlefield risking his life for the King.

3. The results (11:6-27). Rather than humble confession David tried to cover up what he had done. How familiar this is! Through a process of deceit and evil he planned to make the resulting conception look perfectly natural.

- He called Uriah back from the war and sent him home to his wife with gifts. But being the righteous man that he was he refused to be with his wife (verses 6-12).
- He arranged to get Uriah drunk to be sure he would go home. He still did not go down to his house (verses 12-13). Didn't David begin to see that God's providences were working against him?
- His love for his own reputation now made him actually plan Uriah's death (= murder). Instead of turning to the Lord to get him out of trouble he turns to Joab (verses 14-25). What a great change from the days when he was chased by Saul. Such is the fruit of turning from God.

With Uriah dead, David now thought his sin was completely covered up. Perhaps only he and Bathsheba herself knew, but it could not be hidden from the Lord (11:27).

4. The confession (12:1-15). The Lord left David for about a year, not in the joy of having Bathsheba as another wife, but in the misery of unconfessed sin (so Psalm 32:3-4). Many may have seen what David did as quite normal for a monarch. After all, Uriah her husband was dead. But in His grace God sent Nathan the prophet after the child was born. What a blessing He did not send to David enemies to invade the land, or to messengers of death. Nathan used an appropriate parable about sheep to reveal David's sin and make David condemn himself. With his knowledge of the law of God how easily David could see sin in others. Nathan boldly reproves David who confesses his sin (verse 13). It is a genuine confession for David makes no excuses. There is no lessening of the sin committed, no pleading human weakness, no blaming of others (Psalm 51:3-5). Nathan finally has the privilege of bringing the message of God's forgiveness.

## **(2) Sin's punishment**

Although David had been graciously and completely pardoned, he must still have to bear the consequences of his sin in life. Things were not going to be the same again as if nothing had happened. May God grant us to hate sin by seeing its evil effects in our lives, the lives of others, and especially because by sin God Himself is despised (12:10,14). What a terrible price David had to pay. He had not bargained for this when he sinned, but there was no going back.

1. Punishment predicted (12:7-14). See how each aspect of the punishment is closely connected with the sin.

- The sword would not depart from David's house because of the murder of Uriah (verse 10). Death and murder would now be a part of David's family life. God's word concerning murder had been despised (verse 9).
- David's own wives will be immorally treated because he wrongfully took Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, and he already had many wives (verses 11-12). What he did in secret would be done openly.
- The child born of adultery would die (verse 14). Because of David's exalted position God clearly shows to all His great displeasure at his sins (verse 7).

2. Punishment fulfilled (chs. 13-18).

- The child dies (12:15-23). When sick, David fasts and prays because there was hope (verses 22-23). When dead, David worships the Lord, having no bitterness, surely accepting that

this was small punishment considering the greatness of the sin he had committed. Such submissiveness to God's providence is a good sign of genuine confession.

- Amnon's incest (ch. 13). He committed immorality with his half-sister, Tamar, by deceit and force. Amnon pretended to be sick and it was David himself who sent Tamar to him! Although David knew what had happened and was very angry he did nothing (13:21). Was it his guilty conscience? Absalom, Tamar's real brother got revenge by killing Amnon, thus also making himself next in line to the throne – Amnon (1), Chiliab (2) never heard of again, Absalom (3), see 2 Samuel 3:2-4. So the sword began to devour in the family.
- Absalom's rebellion (chs. 14-18). David had a real soft spot for Absalom (13:39) which overcame his better judgement. He ought to have been angry at his sin and rejection of the Lord. Eventually David gives in and allows Absalom back into Jerusalem, but no meeting between them takes place for two long years. But then without any confession of sin there is reconciliation (14:33). Now Absalom can openly fulfil his desire to wrest the throne from his father. It is possible that this was a time when David was laid aside with much sickness (as in Psalms 39, 41, 55). He seeks to woo the people of Israel by his vanity (15:1ff., cf. 14:25-26). He actually stages his rebellion under the pretext of worshipping the Lord (15:7ff.). In these four years of Absalom's activity David did nothing (15:7); perhaps awareness of his guilt made him weak in dealing with his sons. Finally David was forced to flee Jerusalem (15:13ff.), but when there was a battle Absalom was slain by Joab against David's express command (ch. 18). Great was his weeping over his beloved Absalom (18:33-19:8) to the disgust of Israel.
- Adonijah's rebellion (2 Kings 1:5-27, 41-43, 2:13-25). He is David's fourth son, and now the next in line. He exalts himself as King, then asks to marry David's last 'wife', which Solomon interprets as a continuing desire for the throne (1:3, 2:22). So he is executed (2:25).

### **(3) Vital truths about sin**

1. *Sin in the believer.* David was a man after God's own heart, yet look at the sin that still dwelt in him – adultery and murder, with the deceit that sought to cover it up. Let every believer tremble and fear for, but by God's grace, anyone is capable of such sin. It is a warning to those of us who have been Christians for a long time, and especially after times of spiritual success. Remember Proverbs 4:23 and 1 Corinthians 10:13. A profession of salvation is not an immunization against sin, like having the covid-19 jab. So give no opportunity to sin, for it is like walking through fire thinking you will not get burned. Be careful what you read, hear, and see and where you go. In everyday life you do not deliberately put yourself into physical danger. For example, you are more careful at night because of unseen dangers. We have had to 'socially distance' so as not to catch the virus. If you are a young person reading this, we do not write to stop you from enjoying life. But we do know "there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Proverbs 16:25). Many of us have learned the bitterness of sin, as David did, once the initial joy has passed (so Moses, Hebrews 11:25-26). Don't say it will not happen to you. Who would have believed David would have sinned like this, or that Peter would have denied his Lord?

2. *The folly of hiding sin.* What happened when David determined to cover up his sin? He was trapped into more and more sin. Just see what he did to loyal Uriah. A refusal to put one serious wrong right leads to yet worse wrongs. The way of sin is always hard, for God will often allow His people to indulge in their lusts, but not to remain content in their sin (Proverbs 28:13). What about you? Are there sins you are seeking to hide? Is there immorality, adultery that you excuse as 'friendship'? Is there stealing that you call 'diverting funds'? What does

your conscience testify? Remember that God is displeased with it. If you are indeed a true Christian then such things surely bother you deep down. You cannot live as if nothing has happened. The only solution is for you to humble yourself and confess them to God, and to others where necessary.

3. *God forgives sin.* If David's sin puts on guard those who have not yet fallen, the reality of God's forgiveness saves from despair those who have already fallen. On two counts David deserved to die – adultery and murder. But the punishment was graciously cancelled. David's experience shows the blessing of free forgiveness (Psalm 32:5). Whatever your sin, there is no greater encouragement to confession than to know that God is willing to receive it because He is gracious. The final proof of this is Jesus Himself. It does not matter for how long you have hidden it, or how many times you have done it. Humble yourself that the Lord may cleanse your evil conscience and set you free. Such an unspeakable blessing is yours right now in Christ.

4. *The consequences of sin.* Even when as Christians our sin is forgiven, we are still liable to feel God's rod of chastisement. God forbid that we should be thinking all that needs to be done afterwards is to confess and everything will return to what it was before. This would be to turn God's grace into licence. What awful consequences David had to live with for the remainder of his life. You know some of the bitter fruits of immorality – AIDS, venereal diseases, unwanted children and abortion, the start of a life of immorality, marrying a careless man or even no husband. God may very well appoint some such things to remind you so as to be humble the rest of your life. Are you a young person reading this? Possibly you have many years ahead of you, but listen to David whose life experience is shouting at you this warning. Don't be controlled by your desires but by the Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 13:14).

5. *Family discipline.* David only had anger against Amnon, no concrete action (13:21). He wrongly reconciled with him when there was no confession of wrong doing (13:37, 14:33). He did not ask Adonijah any question about his self-exaltation (1 Kings 1:6). How important is the consistent use of reproof and the rod to bring children under a sweet subjection to the will of God and to honour the parents (Proverbs 22:15, 29:15).

6. *God's true Messiah.* There is something deeper here.

- David, as great as he was, could not be the Messiah, for he had sin of his own. He points forward to One who would come who, although tempted in every point as we are, yet is without sin. He alone is fit to be our Saviour (Hebrews 7:26-28).
- Israel rejected the Lord's choice of David as their king. The people rather chose Absalom the proud, instead of the humble David. People have always rejected God's deliverer, even as the Jews rejected Christ (Matthew 22:33ff., Luke 13:34, Acts 7:51-53). Did they think David was too humble, too dependent upon the Lord? So they despised Jesus. Yes, it is too humbling to be identified with Him, One who was crucified as a criminal. You must be crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20), as the only way your sins can be dealt with.

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## **12. DAVID'S SIN OF NUMBERING THE PEOPLE (2 Samuel 24)**

In this last major event to be recorded of David's life we see him again overtaken by sin. Don't shut your eyes, thinking this is mere repetition. These lessons about sin, its punishment and forgiveness, need repetition, for we are so slow to learn, and too quick to forget. This is why they are recorded in Scripture. Consider that this is not David in the flush of youth but one with long-standing and mature in the faith.

### **(1) Sin will not go unpunished (24:1)**

The nation of Israel had sinned but that sin had not yet been punished. God's anger was therefore aroused, probably as the result of the two rebellions against David as the Lord's anointed, that of Absalom (ch. 15), and Sheba (ch. 20). Why did God not immediately rain down judgement? It is obviously not because He did not know, or because He was unable. It is rather an evidence of the riches of God's kindness and patience so bring sinners to repentance (so Romans 2:4). How many people use God's patience as if He will never judge so that it becomes a reason to 'enjoy' sin as they put God from their mind (Psalm 50:21-22, Ecclesiastes 8:11). Have you considered that in the delay God is actually storing up wrath, and that one day it will fall on you if you do not repent (Romans 2:5)? God has full knowledge, a perfect memory, and is a righteous judge (Romans 2:6). Do not be like Noah's generation who scoffed and ultimately perished (see 2 Peter 3:3-7). We warn our children not to play near the dam where many have drowned. So don't play with the judgement of God from which there is no appeal. Flee from sin as from sure destruction.

### **(2) The special danger of the sin of trust in man (24:2-9)**

It may seem strange, but God punished Israel through a serious failure on David's part. Note that *both* the Lord and Satan were involved in David's failure (see the parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21:1ff.). It was Satan who tempted David to sin, for God never tempts anyone. God permitted it to fulfil His holy and wise plan, just as Satan accused Job and was allowed to tempt him (Job chapters 1 & 2). Satan is indeed a roaring lion, but on a leash! Don't be afraid, for he cannot destroy you. But the Lord does use him and we must beware of his tricks.

What exactly was David's sin as he commanded for a census to be taken of the people of Israel and Judah? There was nothing wrong with the act of numbering the people itself. This is something Moses had done (Numbers chapters 1 & 26). But unlike for Moses, David had no command from God to do this. Further, no attempt was made to collect ransom money according to the instructions of Exodus 30:11-16. This signified that the people were God's people only through purchase, through redemption.

Why did David number the people? The interest was in the number of "valiant men who drew the sword" (verse 9). We learn that those below 20 years of age were not numbered (1 Chronicles 27:23-24). Obviously the census was taken to assess the military strength of the kingdom. David wanted to know the strength and glory of God's people, and thought it consisted in a numerically strong fighting force! "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the LORD" (Jeremiah 17:5, see also 2 Chronicles 32:7-8, Psalm 20:7, 33:16-17). What a subtle sin this is although there are so many encouragements to trust in the Lord. Remember Gideon who 'army' was whittled down from 32,000 to just 300! In the church how easy it is to think just of numerical strength, financial ability, influential people, when we think of doing what God has commanded. This is the world's way. Let us never forget that our God is able to do what He has promised. This was

surely what was in Joab's mind when he expostulated with the King (verse 3, see 1 Chronicles 27:23). The Lord will always supply what we need when the time arrives.

### **(3) The awful consequences of sin (24:10-17)**

David confessed his sin and sought forgiveness, but still punishment must be poured out on Israel. David has wanted to count Israel, so God determined to reduce their number. Of the three alternatives given by the Lord to David he wisely chose that which came directly from the Lord, knowing the greatness of His mercy (verse 14). "... the mercy of the wicked is cruel" (Proverbs 12:10). So David was bold to please with God that Jerusalem be spared (verse 17). Nevertheless, 70,000 perished. That is how wicked it is to trust in man, for both king and people. If you spend your life trusting man, not the Lord, what consequences do you expect? (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). Will you trust in your own efforts, your supposed goodness, when you have at the same time refused to follow Christ? Meditate not only on the certainty, but also on the awful nature of the punishment.

### **(4) Judgement upon sin is only stopped through sacrifice (24:18-25)**

David's humble confession, and his willingness to suffer instead of Jerusalem (verse 17), was not sufficient. Yes, such prayer must be present, taking *all* the blame, and offering no excuses. There must also be a sacrifice, a substitutionary victim (verse 25). We must seriously consider why David's pleas to God were not enough, and the plague was only stopped when sacrifice was offered. When we have sinned before God, does He have an obligation to accept our repentance? Can repentance, an acknowledgement that we are guilty, make up for the sin committed? In a human court, will a magistrate cancel your punishment if you choose to plead guilty? No. The penalty must be paid. Either you must pay it, or someone else on your behalf. So David must build an altar and offer burnt and peace offerings and only then could the inhabitants of Jerusalem be rescued from the plague.

It was for the very same reason that Christ had to die as the one effective sacrifice for sinners. Do you have such an altar of sacrifice in your life? Better, have you gone to the altar God built on Calvary (see Hebrews 13:10-12), and there by faith placed your hands on the sacrificial Lamb, and cried out, "Lord, accept your Son in my place and stop the judgement that I truly deserve. This is the very sacrifice that you yourself has provided." Without Christ, all your groans of repentance, as necessary as they are, will accomplish nothing. This is why we always urge you to flee to Christ who alone can give you shelter from the storm of God's judgement that you deserve on account of your sins.

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## **13. GOD'S PLAN FOR DAVID**

David is one of the most important people in the Old Testament. His life is recorded at great length in 1 Samuel 15-31 into 2 Samuel 1-24, and then 1 Kings 1-2; and again in 1 Chronicles 11-29. He also wrote many of the Psalms, from which we learn much more about him, especially his inner spiritual life. In this article there are many, many verses for you to look up, and so see the vital importance of David in the Scriptures.

### **(1) What did David's life accomplish?**

1. *David was a model king to whom subsequent kings were compared.*

God made him the example for his son Solomon (1 Kings 3:3,6,14, 9:4).

- Solomon – “His heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 11:4, see verses 6,33,38).
- Abijah – “You have not been like my servant David, who kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart,, doing only that which was right in My eyes” (1 Kings 14:8).
- Abijam – “His heart was not wholly true to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father” (1 Kings 15:3).
- Asa – “And Asa did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, as David his father had done” (1 Kings 15:11).
- Jehoshaphat – “He walked in the earlier ways of his father David” (2 Chronicles 17:3).
- Amaziah – “And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, yet not like David his father” (2 Kings 14:3).
- Ahaz – “And he did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God, as his father David had done” (2 Kings 16:2, see 2 Chronicles 28:1).
- Hezekiah – “And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done” (2 Kings 18:3, 2 Chronicles 29:2).
- Josiah – “And he did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the way of David his father” (2 Kings 22:2, 2 Chronicles 34:2).

2. *The covenant with David determined subsequent history.*

See, The Life of David (9), in Grace & Truth 133. This is what God promised David in the covenant: “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Samuel 7:16). So again and again the southern kingdom of Judah, with David's descendant on the throne, was spared deserved judgement. God kept on saying, I will not do it “for the sake of David”.

- To Solomon – the division of kingdom would not be in his days (1 Kings 11:12-13,32,34).
- To Abijam – his son would sit on his throne (1 Kings 15:4-5).
- To Jehoram – the Lord was not willing to destroy Judah (2 Kings 8:19), the house of David (2 Chronicles 21:7).
- To Hezekiah – Jerusalem would be delivered from the Assyrian army (2 Kings 19:34, 20:6, Isaiah 37:35).

David's line must be preserved for our Lord was to be ‘the Son of David’. The prophets looked forward to One to come from David (Isaiah 9:7, 16:5, Jeremiah 17:25, 22:4, 23:5, 33:15,17,21-22, Amos 9:11 see Acts 15:16), even as if David himself (Jeremiah 30:9, Ezekiel 34:23-24, 37:24-25, Hosea 3:5). The New Testament sees Jesus as the fulfilment of the promises made to David (see Acts 2:29-31, 13:22-23,34). He is the Son of David (Romans 1:3, 2 Timothy 2:8).

3. *David established Jerusalem as his capital.*

God told Moses that when the people came into the land of Canaan, “you shall seek the place that the Lord your God will choose out of all your tribes to put His name and make His habitation there” (Deuteronomy 12:5). When his throne was established, the first thing recorded that David did was to conquer Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-9). God later revealed that this was where the altar and temple was to be built (2 Samuel 24:18-25, see 2 Chronicles 3:1). It became the place associated with the dwelling of God in the Old Testament (Psalm 135:21). Jerusalem (and Zion) came to stand for the people of God. So central is the thought of Jerusalem (as in Psalms 122, 137, for example), that the church of the new covenant is called the new Jerusalem, or the Jerusalem above (Galatians 4:26, Hebrews 12:22). Many

prophecies have Jerusalem as the people of God surrounded by God's enemies in the final days and the subsequent victory of God (Joel 3 and especially verse 16, Zechariah 14, Revelation 20:9). The eternal dwelling of God's people is also pictured as the city of Jerusalem/Zion (Revelation 3:12, 14:1, 21:2,10).

#### *4. David had victory over all his enemies*

When the covenant was made with David, God said, "I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you" (2 Samuel 7:9, see verse 1). Some of these victories are described in 2 Samuel 8 and 10. So his son Solomon inherited a kingdom at rest with the borders including all the land that was promised to Abraham (1 Kings 4:21, see Genesis 15:18-21).

#### *5. David was a man of faith*

We are prepared for this by being told that "The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, ..." (1 Samuel 13:14). David was an example of what the king must be like. He is one who will keep God's commands because he trusts in Him. This is first seen in his defeat of Goliath. David was sure that "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:37). He defied Goliath with these words: "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied" (verse 45). Then, when pursued by the murderous intentions of Saul, David did not take things into his own hands and get revenge when he had the opportunity (1 Samuel 24:1-7, 26:6-20). Above all, he was a man who trusted in the Lord's mercy and steadfast love, the only way he was able to live a life of faith. He was conscious of his sin, especially in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. So we have the Psalm of confession (51), where he traces back his sin to his birth, "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). The blessed man is the one "whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered... against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit" (Psalm 32:1-2, see Romans 4:6-8).

#### *6. David has given us many Psalms*

What a unique contribution the Psalms make to the Scriptures! We can identify with the spiritual longings and struggles of this man of God as they are revealed there. This is the hymn book of the church and should be used in our worship. He has his times of victory and defeat, so his times of rejoicing and anguish before the Lord, and times when he is assured and other times when he is in doubt with serious questions. We have in the Psalms a picture of the godly man in the various seasons of his spiritual pilgrimage.

### **(2) Why did God plan his life this way?**

One good explanation of the word 'history' is that it is 'His story', i.e. God's. Since God "works all things according to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11), this includes the life of David in all its details. Nothing happened by chance, outside the will of God. So to ask God's purpose in the life of David is a necessary question. Why did there have to be someone exactly like David? God planned that he would be an ancestor of our Lord Jesus Christ, one of the purposes of the book of Ruth (4:17-22).

The basic answer to this question above is that, as Israel's great model king, He is a type of Christ. Note the following things:

1. David's lowly origin. When Samuel arrived at Jesse's house to anoint one of his sons as king, David was totally overlooked. To the question are all your sons here, Jesse replied: "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep" (1 Samuel 16:11). He

was dismissed by Saul as a worthy opponent to Goliath with the words, “You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him, for you are but a youth, and he has been a man of war from his youth” (1 Samuel 17:33). Jesus likewise was born of obscure parents, Joseph a carpenter, and Mary probably a young teenager. They lived in Nazareth in Galilee of which it was said, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46). Jesus was born in an overcrowded hotel (inn), and laid in an animal’s feeding trough (manger). His first visitors were despised shepherds. Truly, for our sake “He became poor” (2 Corinthians 8:9). He “made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7).

2. David’s exaltation through suffering. He was anointed as king but it was years before he was actually crowned king over all Israel (2 Samuel 5). During those years he was pursued by Saul “like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains” (1 Samuel 26:20). He waited until God removed Saul from the scene. At first only his own tribe of Judah made him king over them, and it took more than 7 years for him to be crowned by all Israel. Stephen points out that God’s appointed servants were typically rejected – Joseph, Moses, the prophets (Acts 7). [It is interesting that some of his most loyal followers were Gentiles – the Chelethites and Pelethites were Cretans/Philistines (2 Samuel 8:18), Ittai the Gittite (2 Samuel 15:19), Hushai the Archite was a Canaanite (2 Samuel 15:32), Shobi the son of Nahash was an Ammonite (2 Samuel 17:27).] Likewise, Jesus “came to his own, and his own people did not receive him” (John 1:11). Finally, they succeeded in getting Him crucified. This had so often been God’s way, humiliation as a preparation for exaltation. “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him ...” (Philippians 2:8-9). It is also the way that all God’s people must tread (Romans 8:17). A number of Psalms where David speaks of his sufferings are seen in the New Testament as referring to the suffering of Jesus. Jesus used Psalm 22:1 as the darkness was about to finish and to yield up His spirit. There are other words and phrases taken up in the New Testament from Psalm 22. For Psalm 22:7-8 see Luke 23:35-36, and for Psalm 22:18 see John 19:24. Psalm 69 is another Psalm of David in his suffering which points forward to Christ. Just as David was ‘hated without cause’ (verse 4), so this is ultimately true of Jesus (John 15:25). For Psalm 69:9 see John 2:17 and Romans 15:3. For Psalms 69:22-23 see Romans 11:9-10. For Psalm 69:25 see Acts 1:20.

3. David’s kingship. As noted at the beginning, David as king was the one against whom all subsequent kings of Judah were compared. The godly characteristics of his reign with the multiple failures of later kings to be like him gave rise to the expectation of a king like him, the Messiah. David’s reign was characterized by “justice and equity” (2 Samuel 8:15). He was the man ‘after God’s own heart’ who “kept my commandments and followed me with all his heart, doing only that which was right in my eyes” (1 Kings 14:8). Yet he was not the one who could be the Saviour of God’s people, because he failed in the matter of “Uriah the Hittite” (1 Kings 15:5). The king to come, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, will have no such blemish. He will rule with justice and righteousness for ever (see Isaiah 9:7, 11:3-5). He Himself has no sin so is fully qualified to be our eternal Saviour (Hebrews 7:26-28).

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