

**THE LIFE OF DAVID**  
**THE LIFE OF DAVID #1**  
**The Anointing of David, a Man after God's Own Heart**

We begin today a study of the life of David. He was a man so important it takes sixty-six chapters from the Old Testament to tell the story of his life. In addition there are his many Psalms. His name is mentioned fifty-nine times in the New Testament. He is the only person in the Bible called "a man after God's own heart."

After Saul had been rejected by God Samuel a Judge, prophet and priest said to Saul, "But now your kingdom shall not endure. The Lord has sought out for Himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has appointed him as ruler over His people." We will see that the chapters on David's life do not focus so much on his history as on David's heart.

What does it mean to be "a man after God's own heart"? It means that one's heart is in harmony with the heart of God. It means that David felt as God felt. His character was very much (not perfectly) like God's heart. David did some evil things in his life but whether good or bad his allegiance was always to the Lord.

His spiritual compass was often shaken but when the tumult was over, David's spiritual compass was always pointing toward God. This did not happen overnight after facing the giant. It started when he was a boy when he began to believe in God knowing God would always walk with him.

To understand David's background we must go to the little book of Ruth. Ruth was as a Moabitess whose husband died. Her mother-in-law Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem. Ruth insisted in returning with her to Bethlehem. We learn that Ruth married Boaz. They had a son named Obed. He would become the father of Jesse, the father of David.

In fact David could trace his lineage back to his fourth great grandmother Rahab the Harlot. David was the youngest of ten children—eight boys and two girls. The name David means "beloved," but seemingly not to his family. David was assigned to the dull, dirty, and lonely duty of caring for a few sheep. At times, shepherding could be a dangerous job. We know he had to fight wild animals. He said a Lion and a bear each took one of his lambs. David attacked them and rescued his lambs. He killed both beasts.

David would have been looked upon as a nobody since he was a shepherd. But what wonderful spiritual lessons he learned out in the rocky fields caring for his sheep. It was here that David began to walk with God. We do not know all the factors that influenced David to commit his life to the Lord at an early age. He would have heard the beautiful story of his genealogy which demonstrated the providence of God.

We would not consider David an educated man but when we read his Psalms some of which were probably written during in his youth as a shepherd he amazes us that he was so mature toward God and spiritual matters. God looked for someone who knew how to work, someone who knew what responsibility was, and someone who would do the job no matter what the cost would be. These were the lessons David learned in those lonely pastures.

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David learned how to skillfully shepherd the people of Israel by first learning how to shepherd sheep. God did not select someone who was highly educated, or someone of royalty. Most importantly God chose a man after his own heart. Saul's reign as king began to go sour. On one occasion he had fear he might lose his troops. He then offered a burnt offering, instead of waiting for Samuel as the Lord had commanded (1 Samuel 13:13). He was severely rebuked by Samuel indicating he would lose his kingdom to another.

Later God instructed him to destroy the Amalekites. He spared the king and the best of the animals. God told Samuel "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me, and has not carried out My commands." Samuel was broken hearted over this. He had to tell Saul, "The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today." A new king will now be anointed to replace Saul and Samuel will take part in it. He was to fill his horn with oil, and go to the house of Jesse and select a king from his sons.

Samuel was fearful of Saul. "How can I go?" he asked the Lord. If Saul should hear Samuel would anoint a new king he would kill both. God told him to take a red Heifer and say he was going to offer a sacrifice. God further told Samuel, "And you shall invite Jesse to the sacrifice."

At this time Samuel still functioned as a judge and a priest. There would be nothing suspicious about his actions. He told the people at Bethlehem to consecrate themselves for the offerings. At the same time he told them to invite Jesse. As they walked one by one before Samuel from the oldest Eliab to the next to the youngest the Lord rejected each one.

The Lord told Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." It was true then as today. We so often judge by the appearance. Jesus once said, "Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

After viewing the first seven boys all had been rejected by God. Samuel was perplexed. He asked, "Are these all the children?" Jesse too must have been amazed. He answered, "There remains yet the youngest and behold, he is tending the sheep." Why had David not been invited too?

David looked different. He was "ruddy" which can mean he had red hair or that his complexion was fair and probably freckle-faced. He did not fit the standard mold of a Jewish man. He also acted different. He wrote poetry, played a harp. He certainly would have looked different. He arrived dusty, sweating, still in his shepherd's garb, smelling like sheep.

Later he wrote, "For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me up" (Psa. 27:10). Why would he write such words if, he had not felt forsaken to some extent as a boy? But he was the one after God's own heart.

Samuel must have been one unhappy judge! Samuel had David to kneel before him. He raised the horn of oil over David's wind-blown hair until it ran down his cheeks. We are told, "The Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward" (16:13). The anointing was done before his brothers and father.

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What they were thinking? What did David do? There was no bragging no boasting. He went back to his sheep. Saul began to have deep depression. It was recommended he hear some soothing music. Someone recommended David who played the harp well. It worked well.

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #2 David's Battle with Goliath (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 17)

In 1 Samuel chapter 17 we learn that the Philistines had gathered their armies to battle Saul and his Israelite army. Saul and his army had lined up on one mountain while the Philistines had gather on a mountain opposite from Saul and his soldiers. Between them was the valley of Elah. Every morning each army put on their armor and gave a great war cry.

They hurled insults back and forth, but it seems nobody was willing to move against the other. Part of this was because the Philistines had a giant named Goliath. He was about nine and one-half feet tall. If he was proportioned as most men he would have weighed 600 to 700 pounds! Furthermore he had been a soldier from his youth. In other words he was a veteran.

His armor consisted of a bronze helmet and scale armor weighing 125 to 150 pounds. He carried a spear in his hand, with a javelin slung to his back. Just the shaft of the spear was like a weaver's beam with the head of the spear weighing 15 to 20 pounds. His shield was so large it took a soldier to carry it for him. Can you imagine going into hand to hand combat with such a giant? No wonder Israel did not advance.

He would go down into the valley twice each day and shouted to the Israelites, challenging them to come out to battle. The giant made a special offer. "Chose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us."

Upon hearing this Saul and his men were terrified and no one was willing to meet this giant. But who was head and shoulders above everyone else and nearest the giant's size among those in the army of Israel. It was none other than Saul himself for he was a large man himself but he like the others was afraid to face the giant.

Jesse's three oldest sons were in Saul's army. He had not heard from them for some time but the giant's challenge was heard for 40 days, twice each day. Jesse gathered some food and instructed David to take it to his brothers. David left early in the morning bearing the food no doubt anxious to witness any battle that was taking place. He greeted his brother at the battle line. As he was talking with them he heard the giant challenge someone to fight him. The Israelites began to run from him.

Saul makes an offer if anyone will fight the giant he will give them his daughter to be married to, and set him free of paying any taxes. David seems to be shocked that no one was willing to stop this giant from his slurs and defiance. He wants someone to stop this disgrace that the giant was bringing on Israel.

When his brothers heard him Eliab was angry at David for showing up. He rebukes him wanting to know why he came and who was watching the sheep. He accuses David of being conceited and wicked, and that he only came to watch the battle.

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David was extremely angry with the giant. This was reported to Saul. Saul sends for David for by now he knew him well for his music. David told Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him." Saul no doubt was very fond of David. He told him he was only a boy and could not fight this giant. It is then that David tells Saul how he had killed both a lion and bear. Then David reveals how he was able to do this.

He said, "The Lord who delivered me from the jaw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." Saul gave him permission to go but first put his armor on David. David said he could not go with such armor. It was a too cumbersome and heavy for David. He preferred to fight him on his own terms. Taking his staff, he gathered five smooth stones from a stream and put them in his shepherd's bag. With sling in hand he approached the giant. Goliath looked David over.

The scripture says David was ruddy and handsome. You wonder why this statement appears at this point of David's confrontation with the giant. The giant begin to taunt David. "Am I a dog that you come at me with sticks? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods." When Goliath cursed David by his gods—Dagon, Baal, and others, he made a major mistake. He turned a military encounter into a theological contest! It was now going to be God vs. the gods of the Philistines.

David answered the giant, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head."

Just before the battle took place David said to Goliath, "the Lord does not deliver by sword or by spear; for the battle is the Lord's and He will give you into our hands" (17:47). David took but one stone from his bag, slung it at such a velocity that it sank into the forehead of the giant and he fell to the ground. David then took the giant's sword and cut off his head.

The Philistine began to run away. The army of Israel pursued them to the entrance of the city of Gath and Ekron. How did this teenager develop a faith in God the men in Saul's army did not have? He developed his faith by meditating on God and His Word—and on all the victories God had given him.

Roy Osburne tells the story that while visiting Palestine he came upon a young goat herder sitting on a hillside in the shade. His goats were strung out a hundred or so yards away. The boy was tending the flock with his sling. If a goat started to wander off, the boy would toss a stone in front of the goat to frighten it back.

He approached the boy and pointed to a fig tree some distance away, and asked if he could hit it. The boy put a stone in his sling, and then whirled the sling faster and faster until it was a blur. The boy let go---and the stone buried itself in the middle of the trunk of the tree.

David took the Philistine's head and brought it to Jerusalem that all might know the man most feared by the Jewish soldiers had been defeated and was dead. He left the head in Jerusalem but he took home the weapons of Goliath. What a museum this must have become.

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As Saul witnessed the battle between David and the giant he later asked the commander of his army, Abner, "Whose son is that young man?" Later David was summoned and stood before Saul with the head of the Giant. The reason for Saul's question was probably he wanted to send word to Jesse that he wanted David in his army. It is said, "And Saul took David that day and did not let him return to his father's house."

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #3 Jonathan, A True Friend

The day that David killed the giant Goliath the entire future of Saul and his kingdom would be changed. As David stood before Saul, a young man was standing by the king's side, listening. His name was Jonathan the oldest son of Saul and heir to the throne. He was a brave military leader who had proven himself a warrior in many battles.

As Jonathan watched David face the giant, and then heard David's conversation with his father, he obviously was greatly impressed with this young man. Saul asked who David's father was. This was probably so he might ask Jesse to let David serve in his army. It is said, "And Saul took him that day and did not let him return to his father's house." You can't help but wonder what the brothers of David thought now, especially Eliab.

As Saul's son, Jonathan, observed David's conduct as he spoke to his father. We are told "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David" (18:1). The Hebrew word "knit" means "to be knotted to." It was an unlikely friendship. **First**, there was at least a twenty-year difference in their ages. Jonathan was already a seasoned warrior when David was born.

**Second**, there was the difference in their social status. Jonathan was next in line for the throne, while David was the son of a poor farmer. But now notice the commitment Jonathan and David made to each other. "Then Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself" (18:3). Little did Jonathan realize that this covenant of friendship would place him in a most awkward situation between himself and his father.

After Jonathan made this covenant with David, "Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was on him and gave it to David, with his armor, including his sword and his bow and his belt." Why did Jonathan do this? Certainly Jonathan recognized that David needed clothing and weapons since he had not been allowed to return home. It may have been more than this. Why didn't Jonathan face the giant? Was he fearful too as his father and the rest of the soldiers?

Could it be that Jonathan had lost respect for his father; that he had no hope of replacing his father on the throne; that he had in fact lost hope in the future of the Israelite nation and was full of despair. He must have known of the rebuke Samuel had given to Saul that the kingdom would be taken away from him and his descendents. Could he see that David was the hope for the future of Israel, that here was a man more worthy of the throne?

Could Jonathan be saying in effect in a symbolical way "I relinquish my right to the throne and pledge my support to your cause." Unselfishness is a natural part of true friendship. Maybe Jonathan could already see David sitting in his place on the throne. He certainly knew of his father's future.

It would not be long until their friendship would be tested. At first David was most welcome in the palace of Saul but it would soon become sour. David was being praised by the people.

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Saul became jealous and fearful he would lose his kingdom. One day returning from a military victory the women began to sing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." This was more than Saul could take. He ordered that David be killed (19:1). He begins to concoct a series of plots to have David killed, but his plots backfired on him. [Can you imagine how Jonathan felt?](#)

He warned David and told him to hide. Jonathan resolved to defend his friend from his father's attempts to kill him. In so doing, Jonathan would be taking a big risk. However, His father listened to his plea for David and vowed he would not put David to death. David was allowed to return to the palace and eat at the king's table.

After David returned to the palace, it was not long until Saul broke his vow not to kill David. He tried to kill David with a spear as he had done before. With the help of Michal David fled. First, he went to see Samuel who had anointed him king. He and Samuel went to Naioth a city of priests. Again Saul came looking for him. As David fled, Saul was sprawled on the floor, mumbling incoherent phrases as if he were prophesying. David next met with Jonathan. He poured out his heart to his friend.

[Would Saul try again to kill him?](#) He was certain he would. They set up a plan that if Saul missed David at the table, tell Saul he has gone to Bethlehem because of a yearly sacrifice. If Saul says, "It is good." Then David will know he is safe. If Saul still had bad feelings toward David then David will know it is still not safe to be close to Saul. Jonathan vows to inform David.

Jonathan now opens his heart to David. He pleads that when David becomes king; please show the loving kindness of the Lord to his house. As far as we know this is the only request Jonathan ever made of David. [Now how would David know if the intentions of Saul were favorable?](#) David was to hide in the field. Jonathan would come to a spot for target practice. The way his arrows would fall would tell David the answer. The answer was not good.

Saul went into a rage, lost control, and hurled his spear at his own son (20:33). The next day Jonathan shot some arrows allowing David to know Saul would still try to have him killed. David rose from his hiding place. We are told that they wept together, but David even more.

David had to leave but reluctantly. They would not see each other again. Jonathan must remain loyal to the kingdom and his father who ruled the kingdom. David surrounded himself with a band of malcontents who disliked Saul. Saul pursues David relentlessly. Thus, David and his men were forced to hide from Saul. Jonathan had his own spy system it seems to keep David informed.

If Saul had found out he would have probably killed Jonathan. Jonathan was in great danger by doing this. [Why did he go to David?](#) It was because of the close bond between the two. Also he would have had information that David needed. He shared what he had believed for a long time. It was his conviction that God would cause David to triumph, and that his father's efforts were doomed to failure. David was greatly encouraged and was strengthened as a result of Jonathan's faith in him.

Later David receives disastrous news. In a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines, Israel had suffered great losses. David asked, "How did things go?" The reply was like a knife in David's heart: "Many of the people have fallen and are dead: and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also." David did not want to believe it.

However, when the man gave David an eyewitness account, he knew his friend was gone. It is said, "Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and also did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and his son Jonathan and for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword (2 Samuel 1:11, 12).

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Former emotions for Saul still resided in their hearts. It was an emotional response. David then wrote a beautiful memorial song. He called it "The Song of the bow." A part of it reads, "How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan: You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen" (2 Samuel 1:25-27).

David and Jonathan demonstrate what true friendship is. It consists of many things such as; commitment, unselfishness, unrelenting loyalty, openness, steadfastness, encouragement, sorrow and pain.

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #4 Surviving In Bad Times

The theme of this lesson is that even when we are doing our best as Christians, bad times and things can happen to us. Don't think God has deserted or forgotten you. There is no greater example of this than David, a man after God's own heart. After David killed Goliath he became a part of Saul's house-hold.

He still played the harp for Saul. He became Saul's armor bearer and personal bodyguard. David was popular and well known. But when the women started singing "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands" Saul became jealous.

We are told he became angry and was suspicious that David might take over his kingdom. In fact Saul became a maniac, filled with unrealistic fear of David. Twice Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear as David played the harp for him. He raised David's rank in the army pretending to honor him, but hoping he would be killed in battle.

Saul concocted several plots regarding the promise he had made to give his daughter in marriage to the man who killed Goliath. He first offered his oldest daughter, Merab. David modestly said he was not worthy of the offer. Saul learned his younger daughter Michal, loved David. He thought, "I will give her to him that she may become a snare to him." David replied, "I am a poor man." In other words he could not pay the bride-price.

Saul told David he did not want money that all he wanted was proof he had killed one hundred Philistines. David not only killed a hundred he killed two hundred. So Saul had no choice but to give Michal to David. David now has a father-in-law who wants to kill him. Again Saul threw his spear at David. David fled for his life. For the next ten years "fleeing" and "escaping" summarize David's life. David had done his best but hard times will now come upon him.

David told Michal what had happened. She let him down out of a window. David would never return to his home and Michal's love. To gain time for David she put a large idol in his bed covering its head with goat's hair and covered its body with bed clothes. She told Saul's messengers David was sick. By the time they discovered the deception David arrived at the home of Samuel. Samuel took David to a city of priests where he could find sanctuary.

When Saul heard of this he sent a group of assassins. When they arrived they suddenly began to prophesy. Saul sent two more groups with the same results. Saul went himself and when he arrived God rendered him helpless by sending His Spirit to deter him. Saul ends up lying naked all day and night prophesying (19:24).

David fled immediately and would never again see Samuel. David now fled to Jonathan. He cried out, "What have I done to deserve this?" We know he had done nothing. This was a low point in David's life. Saul then tried to kill his own son Jonathan because of his friendship with David.

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The Lord was with David but still bad times had come to David. This is true of all Christians. Our logic says if I am a child of God, a good Christian then God will protect me from any harm. If it happened to a man after God's own heart, it can happen to us. You can be an elder, a deacon, a preacher, a song leader; a Bible class teacher—and your children can get on drugs and break your heart.

You can be a loving Christian wife or husband, doing all you can to make your marriage work, and your mate can leave you for someone else. You can be busy engaging in good works. You can be a faithful Christian, attend every service and the doctor can tell you, "You have about three months to live." Being a good Christian has its rewards but even faithful children are not immune from bad and difficult times. We should not be surprised when bad times come. This is a part of life for all Christians.

Think about David for a moment. [Why did David flee?](#) He had stood up to a lion and a bear. He had faced Goliath with great faith and courage. He had won many battles against the Philistines; in fact he was a military hero. [Why then didn't he stand up to Saul instead of running away from him?](#)

For the first time in his life David did not know how to handle the situation. Before He had killed many because he was skilled warrior. Saul however, was God's anointed king. David refused to kill God's anointed. Since he could not kill Saul, so the only thing he could do was to run from Saul

He headed south to Nob where the Tabernacle had been located. It had become a town of priests. When he got there the first one he ran into was the high Priest Ahimelech who had strong ties to Saul. David claimed Saul had sent him on a special secret mission. The priest gave him what consecrated bread was available and the sword of Goliath which had been on display there.

David is now beginning to act like Saul by lying to the priest. While there he noticed Doeg, Saul's chief shepherd. We will run into him again. Of all places David went to Gath the home of Goliath. There was no mistaking his red hair! They seized David and he panicked. He disguised himself by acting like was insane. He scrabbled on the doors of the gate, slobbered so that it ran down onto his beard. Here is the man after God's own heart acting like a lunatic. They let him go thinking he was crazy.

David now runs to the cave of Adulla located in a desolate area. There were many caves in the area with hundreds of tunnels that extended for miles. It was a dangerous place because what lived there. It was filled with water and many venomous snakes lived there plus other creatures. It is thought the [142<sup>nd</sup> Psalm](#) was composed there. This may have been the lowest point in his life. [How could it get worse?](#)

Suddenly David receives emotional and physical support. His family came first. He was then joined with about 400 men discontent with Saul and his kingdom. Many had been wronged and mistreated were eager to join with David. They were not battle trained men. David had to take this malcontent group and train them to be a fighting force.

Later when David became king he had trained these men so that they could fill cabinet level positions and other important positions. God also gave David spiritual support by sending him the prophet Gad who became one of his advisers. Doeg who had seen David at Nob told Saul. Saul went beserk. He sent for Ahimelech and the other priests and had them killed and the entire city destroyed. Abithar, a son of Ahimelech escaped and came to David telling him the news.

David was brokenhearted placing the blame on himself. Abithar brought with him the high priest's ephod ([23:6, 8](#)) a sleeveless vest that was worn by the priest. This was of great value in that the ephod was often used it to determine what the Lord wanted them to do.

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David learned that Keilah was invaded by the Philistines who slaughtered many of the inhabitants. The ephod was used and David was informed to attack the Philistines. By then his ranks had increased to 600 men. After a great victory the people of this city informed Saul of David's position. Think about it. David and his men had rescued this city. David and his men camped at Keilah, thinking they could make it their headquarters.

David inquired of the Lord, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" The Lord's answer was "They will surrender you" This really hurt. David and his men had put their lives on the line to save them and they show no appreciation. David had to hide again. Soon Saul was on David's trail again trying to surround him from both sides. God steps in.

A messenger suddenly appears telling Saul "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid on the land." Saul departed immediately. David and his men had to move to the desert of Ziph. The Ziphites were from the tribe of Judah, David's tribe, but they betrayed him. Only by divine intervention did David escape. Later they would betray him again. Life for David involved many hard years.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID #5 Dealing with Revenge

Most of us have had to deal with revenge at different times in our lives. Each of us has been hurt by someone. It may have been years ago or it may have been as recent as yesterday. Perhaps it was a friend, a neighbor, a member of the family, or a fellow Christian. The most common reaction is "to get even." Sometimes we say, "Just consider the source," or "give him a taste of his own medicine," or someone says, "It's not worth worrying about."

However, not many are willing to turn the other cheek. 1 Samuel chapters 24 and 26 involve how David had been wronged and could have easily sought revenge. Consider David's situation. His misery was brought on by his own mentally deranged father-in-law who was his own worst enemy. In our last lesson when David and his men narrowly escaped capture by Saul's army, David then went to a desolate area where he and his men stayed in the strongholds of En Gedi (1 Samuel 23:29).

En Gedi is about halfway down the western shore of the Dead Sea. It is a very beautiful place. There is a fountain six hundred feet above the sea from which flows a sparkling stream that tumbles down to the desert floor forming pools of crystal clear water. It is surrounded by beautiful foliage and colorful flowers. The area is also surrounded by many caves.

Chapter 24 begins: "Now it came about when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, saying, 'Behold David is in the wilderness of En Gedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men—and he came to the sheepfold where there was a cave; and Saul went in to relieve himself'"

What Saul did not know was that David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave hiding. David's men felt this was the providence of God giving David an opportunity to kill Saul. But what did David do? In the darkness of the cave slipped off and without being heard or detected with a knife in his hand he cut off a piece of Saul's robe.

Saul must have taken off his outer robe and laid it aside. It took a lot of nerve and stealth to do this. But why didn't David kill Saul? He had the perfect chance. Certainly it must have been a temptation, but he didn't.

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It seems his conscience bothered him that he had cut off an edge of Saul's robe. He said to his men, "Far be it from me because of the Lord that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed."

David's conscience accused him for what he had done, not what he thought about doing at the urging of his men. David's argument was Saul was God's anointed. The Hebrew word for "anointed" is "Messiah" and the Greek equivalent is "Christ." David knew Saul was to be respected, not because of who he was, but because of what he was -- "God's Messiah"! His men were very upset. David had to talk his men out of slaying Saul.

When Saul came out of the cave David waited until he was some distance away. David called out "My Lord the king!" When Saul turned, David bowed and made an impassioned speech. We need to read the entire speech (24:10-15). David demonstrated in a most noble way how to confront someone who hurts you. He was not mean or ugly; neither did he gloss over how he had been hurt.

David said, "The Lord had given you today into my hand in the cave." While he could have killed him he spared his life to prove to Saul that he was not Saul's enemy. Saul admits that David will become king. The evidence was too obvious.

Chapter 25 is somewhat an unusual story. It is tucked between chapters 24 and 26. David now moves to the wilderness of Paran. As this was sheep shearing time David and his men protected the sheep that surrounded them. One whose flock was guarded was that of a rich man named Nabal. He was very rich, owning three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. He was harsh and evil in his dealings with others and he also had a drinking problem.

David and his men were at the point of starvation. David sent ten men to Nabal reminding him that since his men had protected his sheep he asked for whatever food he might have for his men. Nabal began to insult them saying he had never heard of David or had any knowledge of services rendered. It looks as if David overreacted.

He told his men to put on their swords. He started toward the man's house with all 400 of his men. What David was about to do was to kill the man even though the man had broken no law. What a change in David who spared Saul. Now he was about to show deathly revenge.

The man's wife Abigail was intelligent and beautiful. She realized how foolish her husband had acted. She quickly devised a plan to save the life of her husband. She gathers as much food as she could find and loaded it on a donkey. She intercepted David and his men, then threw herself in the pathway. Kneeling before David she delivered one of the most eloquent appeals found in Scripture.

She took full responsibility for the misconduct of her husband urging David to accept her food. She reminds David that when he becomes king he does not want to have the killing of people to be on his conscience. David accepted her plea. "Blessed be the God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me, and blessed be your discernment, and blessed be you, who have kept me this day from bloodshed, and from avenging myself by my own hand (25:32, 33).

When she returned home Nabal was having a party and was drunk. The next morning she told him what had happened, and he had a deadly stroke. Later David sent servants to her with a proposal of marriage which she accepted. Most unusual?

Again Saul sought after David to kill him. His army camped on a spot where David was last seen. David advanced toward his camp. Because of the bright moonlight he could see where Saul was sleeping. David decided to make one more effort that he meant Saul no harm. Abishai a nephew went with him. Saul and his army were sound asleep. No sentries were guarding the camp.

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The two men carefully stepped over bodies until they reached where Saul lay sleeping. His spear was stuck in the ground near his head with his water jug nearby. Abishai saw this as proof that the Lord was giving David the chance to kill Saul. But David refused. He said, "As the Lord lives, surely the Lord will strike him or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down in battle and perish," David told Abishai to, "Take the spear that is at his head and the jug of water, and let us go"

They silently made their way to the top of a nearby mountain. There David called unto Abner, Saul's commander. "Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king?.....And now, see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was at his head" (26:15, 16). David's point was that he had been better to Saul than his own army. Again David gives another impassioned plea to Saul declaring his innocence, using the spear and jug as proof that he was not Saul's enemy.

Saul appeared to be touched. He said, "I have played the fool." He begged David to return and that he would not harm him. He kept calling David his "son." But David did not call him "my father." He knew Saul had given his wife, Michal, to another man. Saul was no longer his father-in-law; David no longer had a place in Saul's household.

One can learn no more important lesson regarding revenge than that learned by David: "Leave it in the hands of the Lord." The most profound demonstration of this truth is found in the death of Christ. He sought no revenge for hanging on the cross, He prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID #6 David Gives Up

Have you ever felt like giving up? Why should I keep on? I am not doing any good? Why should I have to endure all this when I could find something better to do? We wonder if this was what David felt at a critical time in his life. It seems that he did feel this way after his last encounter with Saul. Paul told the Galatians "Do not be weary in well doing." David had been actively pursued for over seven years by Saul.

He remarked one day, "Now I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than to escape to the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand". David had been running from Saul for seven years. Then there was the small army of David which had increased from 400 to 600 men. However, each man had a family.

It has been estimated that in all there may have been as many as 2,000 in all. Finding food and a place where they would be safe must have been a great burden he had to deal with. Probably depression had set in.

David had every reason to stay in the land and continue to trust God's protection and provisions for his men and their families. He had been anointed to be king over Israel and knew that eventually God would give the throne to him. Abigail his wife assured him of this. Even Saul had admitted that David would ultimately triumph.

Psalm 13:1-2 probably was written at this period. "How long, O Lord? How long will you hide your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?" Without realizing it God was using the difficulties primarily for David's own safety and comfort. God was using the difficulties in David's life to make him a mature man of God and to prepare him for the throne.

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There would be difficulties later on that would require a king of courage and determination which would not be related to Saul. Moses was discouraged over his heavy workload and wanted to die (**Numbers 11:15**). Elijah ran from his place of duty because of fear and discouragement (**1 Kings 19**).

When we start to look at God through our circumstances instead of looking at our circumstances through God's eyes, we will lose faith, patience, and courage, and the enemy will triumph. **"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not to your own understanding"** (**Proverbs 3:5**). Satan uses discouragement and depression as weapons against our faith. He is most often victorious.

David fled to Gath a Philistine city and of all places it was the Gath that had been the home of Goliath the giant! The Philistines and the Jews had been enemies for many years waging war against each other. Since David and his men were opposed to Saul, the leaders of Gath no doubt welcomed them as they could use them against Saul.

However, David did not want to stay in Gath as the Philistines would be watching every move of David and his army made. David requested that he be given a smaller city. He skillfully acted out great humility. He said, **"I am not worthy to live in a royal city"** (**1 Samuel 27:5**). He assures Achish that his services were always available. Achish quickly accepted his request. He gave David and his men Ziklag, which was 25 miles south west of Gath. The man after God's own heart has now become a deceiver and a liar.

David began to attack the cities and camps which were allies of Achish. David was wiping out the people that Joshua and his successors had failed to exterminate when the Israelites invaded the land after their 40 years in the wilderness. David would send false reports to Achish who believed him. Because of suspicions by the Philistine leaders from other cities David was requested to return from his raids to Ziklag which put him far from the battles the Philistines were having with the Hebrews.

David appears to be deeply hurt that he could fight alongside the Philistines. David and his men got up early the next morning. They reached Ziklag on the third day. To their horror they find that the Amalekites had raided Ziklag and burned it. Not only that, but they had taken captive all the women including the children, but had not killed any of them. Among those taken were David's two wives. David and his men wept loudly.

Anger toward David suddenly overtook them. **"They talked of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters."** We are told that, **"David found strength in the Lord his God."** He called for the ephod. He inquired of the Lord, **"Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?"** God's answer was, **"Pursue them."** Apparently this was the first time that David called upon the Lord since before going into the land of the Philistines.

So David and his men pursued them. Two hundred became so exhausted they had to drop out. They found an Egyptian in a field who led them to the location of the Amalekites. The Amalekites left themselves vulnerable. They had partied all night. David and his men rested all night. The next morning as the enemy lay in a stupor, they swept down upon them.

Although the Amalekites far outnumbered them, they were an easy prey for the bitter men were set on rescuing their families. It is said, **"So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives."** This would have included all the other women and children. God was there when David needed him.

No doubt the Lord was disappointed when David took his men into Philistine country but our God is a God of a second chance. The story of the prodigal son illustrates this point. A second chance depends upon the one who has left God. The prodigal son **"came to his senses"** and returned to his father. He demonstrated true repentance.

By Jimmy Eaton

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The Father awaited him with open arms and he will do the same today. There is always rejoicing in heaven when one returns to the fold. It was time for David and his men to go home and be with his people, the tribe of Judah, where he was the king. It will be seven years before he becomes king over all of Israel

David and his people returned to Ziklag to salvage what they might find in the rubble after the Amalekites had sacked the city taking its women and children captive. On the third day, an Amalekite stumbled into their camp. He said that he had come from the battlefield and that Saul and Jonathan were dead. Some might think this was good news for David and his men but it wasn't. David and his men were heartbroken.

David wrote a lament for Saul and Jonathan, with theme "How have the mighty fallen." Since the Amalekite come from the north, he would not know of David's recent battle with his people. He claimed to have killed Saul at Saul's request, after the king had been wounded. However we know Saul fell on his sword himself.

The Amalekite probably thought he would receive a reward from David when he heard the news of Saul's death. He may have been a scavenger who came along after the battle and stole items from dead bodies, maybe even Saul's body. David had him executed for "killing the Lord's anointed." The Amalekite's lie brought death instead of reward.

David learned some hard lessons. It was never really necessary to move his men to the land of Philistines. He was impatient with God's time table. He fought needless battles. God had promised him that he would be the next king. That should have been enough.

David and his men lived in Philistine country for a year and four months the amount of time before the death of Saul. Saul was thirty years old when he began his reign of 42 years. This would have made him 72 years old when he died. He must have still been a strong man to go out and fight in a battle at the age of 72.

### LIFE OF DAVID #7 David Becomes King of Israel

Saul's death opens the way to the throne for David. However, it is easy for us to fail to see the devastating effects of Saul's reign on the country politically, economically, and spiritually. He had neglected national interest in his psychotic pursuit of David. He had killed many priests, forcing the high priest to flee to David for protection. His army was being constantly defeated by the Philistines.

Many Jews had to flee the cities they lived in. The Philistines came and occupied them. It is difficult for us to imagine the situation Israel was in. It would be like a foreign country occupying part of our country and our army unable to stop them. If a nation ever needed leadership it was Israel.

David will face serious challenges as king. While Israel needed leadership they did not need just any leader. It takes a man with special talents to lead a nation. Leadership does not start with what the leader may do; it starts with what he is. We have already seen David mourn over Saul's death, even composing a lament over Saul's death. He was big enough not to continue to hold grudges.

The first thing David did was to inquire of the Lord whether he should return to the cities of Judah. He looks for God's guidance. God told David to move to Hebron. Hebron was inside the territory of the tribe of Judah. It was near the plot of ground Abraham purchased to bury Sarah. At this time it was the only tribe that acknowledged David as king. For the next seven and one half years David would rule only Judah. It would not be easy to gain the confidence of the other 11 tribes.

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The men of Judah told him **"It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul."** When the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and Jonathan they cut off their heads and impaled their bodies to the wall of Beth-shan located in north-central Palestine. To make things worse they were flaunting their success inside Israelite territory.

At great risk the men of Jabesh-gilead marched to Beth-shan and, under cover of darkness, removed their impaled bodies and took them back to Jabesh-gilead to give them an honorable burial. David could have resisted doing anything favorable toward Saul due to the fact Saul had hunted David down for many years with the purpose of killing him. His first official acts as king was to send appreciation for their brave deed to give Saul and Jonathan an honorable burial.

Unity became a priority with David although not everyone wanted unity. His primary obstacle to unity was Abner the commander-in-chief of Saul's forces. Abner seems to have his own agenda. He may have had selfish ambitions. Abner had been making himself strong in the house of Saul. He was also related to Saul. Perhaps he hoped to sit on Saul's throne. He was responsible for a bloody civil war that went on for years, as he provoked a running battle with the armies of Judah.

In **2 Samuel 2:12-32** we read about one of the battles. Abner and his men met Joab and his troops at the beautiful pool of Gibeon, a short distance north of Jerusalem. Present with Joab were his two brothers, Abishai and Asahel; all of them were nephews of David. Rather than having an all out battle, Abner suggested that twelve of his men meet twelve of Joab's men in hand-to-hand combat—something similar to the contest of David and Goliath.

Instead a full-scale battle erupted. Joab and his troops won a decisive victory. As Abner fled Joab's brother Asahel, a very athletic man, swift as a gazelle, pursued Abner. Abner did not want to kill him and begged him to stop, but he would not. Finally Abner thrust his spear back, and Asahel was impaled on it. When Joab and the others caught up with Abner, he convinced Joab there was no need for further bloodshed, and both sides returned home.

Abner failed to bring Judah under his domination because the Lord was with David. We read in **2 Samuel 3:1** **"Now there was a long war between the house of David; and David grew steadily stronger, but the house of Saul grew weaker continually."**

After five and one-half years, Abner tried a new approach. He set one of Saul's sons on the throne over the northern tribes. Saul's son, Ish-bosheth sat on the throne for two years as a puppet ruler with Abner having the real power. Suddenly there was a dramatic turnabout that occurred. Ish-bosheth accused Abner of going in to one of his father's concubines. This was the same as accusing him of treason.

Abner was infuriated. He threatened to take the kingdom away from him. He now decides to go over to the side of David. Imagine how surprised David must have been. David responded to Abner's proposal with caution. Abner came to Hebron. The air must have been thick with tension as David and Abner came face to face after years of hostility. He asked David to allow him to bring his soldiers over to David to make a covenant with David so David could be over the entire army of Abner.

After Abner left, Joab arrived. Realizing what had happened he was beside himself. He said Abner's motives were deceptive, that he was a spy. He immediately followed Joab to catch up with him. It took over seven years to reach this point of unity and in less than an hour Joab destroys that progress. He sent word that David wished for Abner to return so Abner started to return. Joab met him and took him aside **"to speak with him privately"** (2 Samuel 3:27).

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Joab thrust his weapon deep into his stomach, and Abner died. The situation now is worse than before David and Joab met. David immediately let it be known he was not involved. He relieved Joab of his command of the army, and placed a curse on his household. David then proclaimed a national day of mourning and buried Abner with full honors at Hebron. David walked in sackcloth to Abner's grave. He refused to eat any food that day. David was literally overcome with sorrow.

The people were convinced that he was not responsible for Joab's death. Ish-bosheth, son of Saul was assassinated and his head cut off. David had it buried in Abner's grave as a good jester. After many years, unity was accomplished. **"So all the elders of Israel come to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them before the Lord at Hebron: then they anointed David king over Israel"** 1 Samuel 5:1-3.

David's first act was to capture Jerusalem and make it his royal city, the nation's capital, and the spiritual center for Israel. It was an ancient city built on the highest point in the land. When Joshua had marched into the land, he had killed the king but he could not subdue the city itself. Others had tried but had failed. David and his army marched up to the city.

The Jebusites shouted down insults. They said that even blind and cripple men could keep the Israelites out. David knew of a weak spot in the city's defenses. A water tunnel led from a spring outside the walls to inside the city. David made an offer: **"Whoever strikes down a Jebusite first shall be chief and commander of my army."** Joab plunged into the cold water and led his men into the darkness of the tunnel. Emerging inside the city it was not long until Jerusalem was in the hands of Joab's army.

David's most fearless warrior and also his greatest embarrassment, was reinstated as David's commanding officer. David immediately made Jerusalem his headquarters and began to expand its boundaries. It became known as **"the city of David."** When the Philistines heard David was king they went up to attack David two times. David sought the Lord's advice.

God advised him to go against them and He would give them into his hand. **(2 Samuel 5:19)**. David now has a full army of 300,000 men and defeats the Philistines without any problem. The Jews now will control Jerusalem until the time of the Babylonian captivity.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID #8 Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem

David still in his thirties, had unified the country, established his capital in Jerusalem and demonstrated that he was a fair and impartial king. He became stronger and stronger because the Lord was with him **(2 Samuel 5:10)**. He now proceeds to build a palace. The next verse tells us, **"Then Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David with cedar trees and carpenters and stonemasons; and they built a house for David."**

Tyre was in Phoenicia, north of Israel. His gift is significant because he was the first foreign power to acknowledge David being the king of Israel. Hiram's generosity delighted David. They became friends. Later Hiram will aid David in building the temple.

David's next priority was to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. David announced to the people, **"If it seems good, and if it is from the Lord our God, let us...bring back the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul."** It had rested in The Most Holy Place of the Tabernacle during the time of Moses.

No one was allowed to see it except the High Priest on the Day of Atonement. Only the sons of Kohath of the tribe of Levi only were permitted to transport it.

By Jimmy Eaton

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They moved it by inserting poles through rings attached to the Ark then putting the poles on their shoulders. They were never permitted to touch it. Years before they must have considered the Ark a charm. They wanted to take it into battle against the Philistines thinking it would protect them and give them victory. They lost thirty thousand men and the Ark fell into the hands of the Philistines.

The ark brought them nothing but misery, so much so they tried to send it back to the Israelites. It was put on a "new cart" and sent it out of their land. Cows pulled it to Beth-shemesh, an Israelite city. While the Israelites rejoiced to see it—there was no sense of awe, no sense of being in the presence of the most sacred article in the Tabernacle.

Some of them gathered around the ark and lifted the mercy seat to see what was inside. Immediately, 70 of them were struck dead. No one, not even the priests were to ever touch it. Terrified the people of Beth-shemesh sent it to Kiriath-jearim where it was placed in the house of a man named Abinadab. It would remain there through the last part of Samuel's ministry, the reign of Saul, and the early part of David's reign. It was there for over 70 years.

"Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him...to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim" (2 Samuel 6:1, 2). However, we are surprised to learn they placed the ark on a new cart. Why? Were they completely ignorant of the way it was supposed to be carried?

Uzzah and Ahio looked after the ark with Ahio out front guiding the oxen while Uzzah was walking beside the cart. David and the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments. Suddenly the oxen stumbled. The ark started to fall.

We read, "Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God" (2 Samuel 6:6, 7).

We are shocked by the story of Uzzah. This was a natural reaction. We may even feel sorry for him sometimes. This is because we have an Uzzah-mentality. We assume when it comes to serving the Lord, that good intentions are enough. What Uzzah did was a natural reaction to keep the ark from being damaged. However, God had been very specific as to how the ark was to be transported. Uzzah's sincere action violated God's specific instructions.

God evidently chose to give an object lesson on how His laws pertaining to their worship were to be respected and honored. Where was the High Priest when they prepared to bring the ark to Jerusalem? Was anyone aware of all the instructions given by the Lord to Moses about how articles in the Tabernacle were to be transferred? God expected them to approach them with reverence, awe, and the utmost humility.

When Uzzah fell dead conflicting emotions swept over David. He became angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah. Then he was suddenly filled with fear. "So David was afraid of the Lord that day" (2 Samuel 6:9). He was so overcome with uncertainty he said, "How can the ark of the Lord [ever] come to me.

David left the ark there in the house of Obed-edom which was nearby and returned to Jerusalem. There are many new carts today in worship as evidenced by the burning of incense, lighting of candles, mass for the Lord's Supper, prayers to dead saints, etc, etc.

Three months passed by. This was when David began construction on his palace and fought several decisive battles against the Philistines.



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At the end of three months someone came to David and told him the household of Obed-edom had been greatly blessed "on account of the ark of the ark of God." David concluded God's anger had abated. He decided to try again to bring the ark to Jerusalem. This time he made proper plans and preparations.

**First**, he prepared a special place: a tent in Jerusalem in which to place the ark. **Second**, he prepared a special people (**Levitical house of Kohath**) they used poles to bring it up to Jerusalem. David gave special orders to the priests. He said, "Consecrate yourselves both you and your relative, that you may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel, to the place that I have prepared for it."

Sometimes details are important with God. We must do right things in the right way. Can you see the anxious look with sweat running down their faces as they approached and lifted the ark in the proper way? How would you like to have had that responsibility in view of what happened to Uzza?

As they approached the city a crowd gathered in the streets. There was great excitement. David was dancing with all his might. There was shouting by the people and the sound of many musical instruments. David did not wear his royal garments or march with royal dignity. He probably wore a sleeveless ephod while dancing with all his might around the ark praising the Lord.

After the ark was placed in the special tent, David offered burnt offerings for his sins and the sins of the people. David composed a psalm about the honor, majesty, might, glory, and power of God. He closed it with the word "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting even to everlasting" (1 Chronicles 16:36).

Michal daughter of Saul and wife of David watched as David came into the city dancing. When David became a fugitive, Saul gave her to another man. David wanted her to be returned to him. When taken from her second husband he ran behind her, weeping, until he was forced give her up. As David returned to his house he was met at the door by an irate Michal. "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today."

In her eyes he made a fool of himself. It was obvious the flame of love had been extinguished. David did not undress and become naked. He wore a robe with a garment under it. He did not wear any of his royal robes. He appeared in very plain clothes. A sad note says, "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death."

This may indicate that she and David no longer lived together as husband and wife. She despised him for the things that made him great: his identification with the people and his enthusiasm for God. She may have resented his taking the place of her father Saul. David was a much greater and better king.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID #9

### David Moves to Expand and Consolidate His Kingdom

Between 2 Samuel, Chapters 6 and 7 David completes building his palace and is engaged in wars. However, one day it struck him "I live in a luxurious house while the ark of God is in a tent!" He called in Nathan his friend and adviser and confidant. He told Nathan his thoughts. The prophet enthusiastically responded "Go, do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you." That night, God appeared to Nathan in a vision and told him he had been too hasty in approving David's plan to build a temple for the Lord.

Nathan was advised they should have first inquired of the Lord whether the building of a temple met with God's approval. Sometimes when our intentions and motives are good, our plans may not be God-approved.

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

It is not uncommon for people to reason regarding some innovation in worship, since the intention is to honor the Lord, surely He will be pleased. The only way we can know what will please the Lord is to read what He has approved and clearly stated in his word. It was probably difficult for Nathan to have to come back to David the next day and tell him God had not approved of their plans.

Specifically God said, "You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought Israel up out of Egypt to this day. I have moved from one tent site to another, from one dwelling place to another. Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their leaders whom I commanded to shepherd my people, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?' In other words God said, "I didn't ask you to build Me a house. I've been doing fine without it."

It seems God had several reasons why He didn't want David to build Him a house. David tells us the Lord said, "You have shed much blood, and have waged great wars; you shall not build a house to My name, because you have shed so much blood on the earth before Me. Behold a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon (which means peaceful, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days. He shall build a house for My name." (1 Chronicles 22:8-10).

Sometimes it is difficult when God says "no" to our plans and dreams. This does not mean He has left us. Sometimes it is because He has something better in mind for us. God gave David two promises. A son would build the temple and his dynasty would continue forever. David would understand the first of these promises. However, the second promise would be far after the days of Solomon in "Jesus Christ the righteous" who would establish and everlasting kingdom who even now reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords.

David did not sulk or act resentful. We are told, "Then David the king went in and sat before the Lord." This was the tent he had prepared for the ark and sat down like a servant in the presence of his master. He prays a moving and humble prayer in 2 Samuel 7. Ten times he referred to himself as "thy servant."

God blessed David and sent His Holy Spirit to give him an inspired blueprint for the temple. As a result David began to acquire materials to be used in building of the temple. He had stonecutters to hew out stones, collected iron to make nails, bronze and timbers of cedar for the doors. He was responsible for providing 3,860 tons of gold and 37,760 tons of silver.

Much of the plunder was recovered from wars David fought in and set aside for the temple fund. The leaders also gave generously 190 tons of gold, 375 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze and 3,750 tons of iron, as well as precious stones. He would not live to see it built but he knew it would be a beautiful building. It has been estimated the total cost would exceed several billions of dollars. The details of the temple were given to David by inspiration, which he passed on to Solomon. Seemingly David spared nothing to insure the beauty of the temple.

We now turn to a series of wars fought by David and his men. He would gain one victory after another. Keep in mind three facts: (1) He was fulfilling the land promise given to Abraham. (2) He was finishing what Joshua had begun. (3) He was establishing the peace God said was necessary before the temple could be built. We have picked a few of these battles because of their uniqueness.

2 Samuel 21:15-22 tells of four battles in which four Philistine giants were skilled all appear to be related to Goliath. In the first David became weary. A Philistine who was descendant of Goliath saw that David was exhausted and decided to kill David and make a name for himself.

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Abishai saw what was happening and ran to David's side killing the giant. David's close call caused his men to urge him to stay at home and not enter combat any more. David was too important and must survive.

In a battle with the Philistines near David's home village of Bethlehem, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem which is by the gate." It was not a request but a wish. "Three mighty men" fought their way through the Philistines, drew water from the well, and fought their way back to David. He refused to drink it because it could cost the men their lives. He poured it on the ground as a drink offering to Jehovah. He said, "Be it far from me O Lord, that I should do this." Shall I drink the blood of the men who went in jeopardy of their lives?"

David fought with the Moabites. His great grandmother was a Moabite. He had entrusted his parent's safety to the king of Moab when he was a fugitive. Yet, he treated them with cruelty executing two thirds of them. Jewish writers say the king of Moab had massacred his parents and family. Why? We cannot know for sure. This seems out of character with David.

David attacked a mountainous kingdom north of Damascus which put him at the Euphrates River the northern boundary God had promised Israel. Attacking from the rear he took 21,700 prisoners plus their many horses and chariots. Being so close to Damascus they rushed to the aid of their neighboring king. David killed 22,000 of their men. Those who remained became vassals to Israel.

The end of 2 Samuel 8:6 emphasizes how David accomplished this feat. David was a military genius, his leaders courageous, his men a fighting machine, but these were not responsible for his remarkable success. "The Lord helped David wherever he went." David knew the One who deserved the credit.

David now turns to the south. 2 Samuel 8:13 says, "So David made a name for himself when he returned from killing." This may have been the Edomites which gave him access to the Gulf of Aquaba, and the trade routes to the south. A key phrase says, "and the Lord helped David wherever he went" (2 Samuel 8:14). Psalm 60 is a commentary on this truth. It was written at the early stage of the battle which was not going well.

The battle swung the other way and David could say, "Through God we shall do valiantly, and it is He who will read down our adversaries (v. 12). David never forgot the One who gave him victory. Verse 15 summarizes David's reign: "David reigned over all Israel; and David administered justice and righteousness for all his people." Jonathan requested David to show kindness his family.

David searched and found a son Mephiboshet crippled in both feet. His nurse scooped him up as she heard the Philistines approaching and dropped him. His tiny feet were damaged in the mishap. David makes him a part of the family. He was invited to eat at the king's table.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID # 10 David's Tragic Fall

David is one of our Old Testament heroes. He is one of the most popular men in the Bible. He is a man after God's own heart. Suddenly a dark tragedy will scar his life forever. It is difficult to believe our hero could sink so low. It makes us realize how easily one can fall from grace. We see that when Satan takes over we can be destroyed quickly. David completely messed up his life.

David no longer went into battle leading his army. He no longer had the stemma to engage in hand to hand combat. At the request of his army he now remained at his palace when his army went to war. One night he got out of bed and walked on his roof. Roofs in Palestine were flat for utilitarian reasons. People often slept on them because it was cooler in the summer time.

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

As he looked out over the roofs of other building he saw a beautiful woman bathing. Why she chose to do this so close to the roof of David would only be speculation. **Did she know that David often walked on his roof at night and would be able see her?** When David saw her he felt himself tempted. He should have gone back to bed. But he allowed lust to grow in his heart and take over.

He sent to find who the woman was and found out that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, a valiant soldier who had risked his life for David in days past. He was one David's **"Mighty men."**

He had Bathsheba brought to him, committed adultery with her, and then sent her home. He acted like an oriental potentate of that day instead of a man after God's own heart. But this is not the end of this dark story. Bathsheba sent word to David that she was pregnant. **What shall he do?** He thinks he can cover up his sinful deed. He had Uriah brought home from the battle field and encouraged him to go home to his wife. This way maybe Uriah would think it was his baby. Uriah was a man of integrity and dedication to his king. He would not go home.

Learning of this David said to Uriah, **"Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?"** Listen to Uriah's reply. **"The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my Lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"**

David insists that he remain one more day and then go back to the troops. Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day. David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him. He got Uriah drunk but that night Uriah slept on a mat among David's servants. David's cover up plan was not working.

The next morning David wrote to Joab and sent it with Uriah. He wrote, **"Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."** In other words David was saying, **"kill Uriah!"** David, surely this can't be you! Joab followed the command of David and Uriah was killed in battle. It sounds like a modern day soap opera.

One writer points out that David had broken 40 percent of the Ten Commandments. He broke **"you shall not covet," "you shall not commit adultery," "you shall not bear false witness," "you shall not murder."** Even in a modern day court it would not have taken only ten minutes for a jury to reach a verdict of guilty, deserving the death penalty.

In many ways David's sin was worse than Saul's. Saul's sins were a direct violation of commands God gave to Saul. Saul certainly would have killed David, **"God's anointed,"** who at the time was an innocent man. Yet, the enormity of David's sin seems greater than Saul's sins.

Now consider the results of David's sins. They almost destroy David. David himself tells us in **Psalm 32:3, 4.** **"When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long, for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away as with the fever-heat of summer"**.

If we had seen David in those days, he would have appeared much the same. He would still be on his throne carrying out his royal duties, but inside his heart, his sins were tearing him apart. Guilt can be devastating. Even when forgiven, it has a way of haunting us the rest of our lives. Although God is willing to forgive often we cannot forgive ourselves thus the guilt stays around.

David seemingly would have kept the **"cover up"** going if he could. David had a friend who knew the facts. This was Nathan who was sent by God to David. God reached out first while David carried out the cover up. Nathan told a story of two men, one rich, one poor.

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The poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb. He treated it as a daughter. The rich man had many flocks. A visitor came to the rich man but rather than take a lamb from his own flock to feed the man he took the poor man's ewe lamb. David's anger was on fire. He delivers a judgment immediately. The rich man deserves to die and be made to pay fourfold for the ewe lamb.

Nathan maybe with some reluctance told David, "you are the one I'm talking about." You have so much and Uriah had so little. You have taken his wife and his life. God has blessed you with so much and you have done this!"

David could have tried to continue his "cover up" or he could have offered all kinds of excuses "It was Bathsheba's fault, not mine." David's heart is broken. He answered Nathan "I have sinned against the Lord," Nathan replied, "The Lord also has taken away your sin you shall not die" (2nd Samuel 12:13). Sounds almost too easy doesn't it?

David was a man after God's own heart, not because he was perfect, but because he had a heart that remained tender and could be touched by the message of truth. He not only needed to be forgiven of his sin but he needed relief from his guilt.

In Psalm 51:11 David writes, "Do not cast me away from Thy presence, and do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me." David had seen what had happened to Saul when God's spirit had been removed. He had literally become crazy. How often he had played his harp for Saul in the night to try and give him some relief.

David now cries, "Don't let this happen to me." In Psalm 32:1, 2, 5 David writes. "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! "How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!...I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgression to the Lord; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin."

No, David did not deserve forgiveness but God in His infinite mercy forgave him because David had a heart that could be broken, because David repented and turned back to God. The difference between Saul and David was that Saul did not have the kind of heart that was fixed on God.

Saul was concerned about honor, glory, politics, and holding on to his kingdom at any cost; establishing a dynasty even though God had told him the kingdom would be taken from him and given to another. He was determined to have his will, not the Lord's will.

In contrast David was concerned his relationship with God. As his psalms indicate, with David it was all about giving God the glory and honor in all things. As was stated in the beginning of this lesson after the dust of sin or some crisis settled, David's spiritual compass was always pointed toward God. Another thing that was important to David was that Nathan, probably his closest friend continued to be his friend.

The worst thing we can do to a person who is re-covering from a tragedy, a habit, or an overwhelming sin is to be unforgiving or to ignore him. One reason the Lord has given us the church is so that we will have brothers and sisters to encourage us when we are down and out. People are more likely to be faithful in a congregation where they feel accepted. Rejection of a penitent sinner is a cruel act even if that person is the most faithful member.

LIFE OF DAVID #11  
David Reaps What He Has Sown

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

There is an age old law (Adage) which never changes. "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal. 6:7, 8.)

There is no better illustration of this than during the latter part of David's life. As already observed he committed adultery with Bathsheba, then had her husband killed and then played the hypocrite as though nothing had ever happened. Back when he ruled over the tribe of Judah in Hebron David had eight sons born to him, each one from a different mother.

After seven years in Hebron David moved to Jerusalem and made it the capital city. We are told "Meanwhile David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David." This was obviously a very large family that would require special attention.

Considering the great number in his family and his busy schedule as a king, plus his wars it appears David had little time to devote to his family. Yet his family needed his attention and guidance. His home was a dysfunctional home that needed him badly. It was around this time (2 Samuel 11) David messed up his life with Bathsheba. David confessed his sin and repented.

Nathan assured him "The Lord has taken away; your sin, you shall not die." The penalty for adultery was to stone the guilty party to death. Note now Nathan's words to David. "Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house. Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your companion, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight.'"

Thus even when the guilt of sin is removed the consequences can linger on year after year. In David case, "The sword shall never depart from your house.....I will raise up evil against you from your own household." Because of David's sin, his household would be battered with storm after storm from within.

The first tragedy in David's family is one of the saddest in the Bible. It is something we do not like to even discuss. The tragedy begins, "Now it was after this that Absalom son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar." What has David been doing with his many children from different wives? What kind of relationship had he formed with his children? We are told that one of his sons, Ammon, loved Tamar.

Ammon loved in the sense of fulfilling his lust. He did not know the difference between lust and love. He was consumed with lust for his half-sister Tamar. His desire was so great that he became ill. Appearing downcast he confided to a friend named Jonadab his secret of lusting after Tamar his half sister.

Jonadab was quick to suggest an evil solution. Just pretend to be sick. When his father David comes to see him say to him, "Please let my sister Tamar come and give me some food to eat, and let her prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat from her hand."

Ammon had no respect for his father; the king was someone to exploit in order to get what he wanted. If his father could get by with committing adultery and murder why couldn't he get by with rape? Absentee fathers are often filled with guilt and are anxious for their children to like them; they are ripe for manipulation. David agreed to Ammon's request. When Tamar brought food to his bedroom he grabbed her and begged, "Come lie with me, my sister." She was terrified.

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He being stronger than her raped his sister. Then he hated her. He had her thrown out. **But what is the reaction of David when he heard about it?** We are told he was very angry, but he did absolutely nothing. He did not even console Tamar. **How could he discipline Amnon when he had copied a page out of his father's own book?**

Back in **2 Samuel 14: 25, 26** we have already been introduced to Absalom, another son of David. **"Now in all Israel was no one as handsome as Absalom, so highly praised: from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him. And when (Absalom) cut the hair of his head (and it was at the end of every year that he cut it, for it was heavy on him to cut it), he weighed the hair of his at head 200 shekels by the king's weight."**

Absalom's hair along with the many compliments on his handsomeness indicates to us he was a vain man. When Absalom, her full brother, heard about Tamar he determined that that he would make Amnon pay for his sin. Two years went by before he would even speak to him. All this time hatred was festering in Absalom's heart. Being the time for sheep shearing was a festive time.

Absalom invited his brothers to share in the banqueting. He asked his father to send Absalom to represent him at the feast. Absalom got Amnon drunk, then got his servants to kill him. **Where did he get the idea of getting someone drunk to lower their defenses? Where did he get the idea of having someone to do your killing for you? Remember David and Uriah?**

Absalom fled to Eshur. Three years go by and the pain goes away from David' heart about Amnon. At the time a plot was laid to bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. David gives in and Absalom is allowed to return but not to the palace but to his own house. For two years he did not see the face of David. Finally Absalom came to the king and prostrated himself with his face to the ground before the king, and then the king kissed Absalom. There was still no communication between David and his son.

Absalom sets in motion a plot to take over David's thrown. He devoted four years to winning the hearts of the people. He became very visible riding around the country in a royal chariot keeping his name before the nation. He stood each day at the gate to the palace greeting those who came by. He planted the thought in the minds of the people, **"Unlike my father, I am accessible and I am fair!"**

The people began to listen to Absalom. He told his father he wanted to go to Hebron to fulfill a vow. This was the place he intended to announce that he was the king. A large crowd gathered at Hebron. At an appointed time the people shouted, **"Absalom is king in Hebron."** A message came to David, **"The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."** David was devastated.

David commanded all his servants to flee. He left behind ten concubines to care for the palace. David and his advisors were out of control. They fled toward the east. Absalom and his army began to march into Jerusalem. He was advised to **"Go in to your father's concubines"**. This said three specific things. **(1)** He had taken his father's place as king. **(2)** He was not afraid of his father. **(3)** All ties were now irrevocably broken.

David's army was preparing to meet Absalom's army. David spoke to those in command **"Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom."** The battle was fought in the dense forest of Ephraim. Absalom riding on his mule caught his hair in the thick branches of a great Oak tree. The hair he was so proud of became his downfall. Left hanging by his hair Joab thrust three spears through Absalom's heart. Messengers came to David and told what happened.

David began to wail, **"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I have died instead of you? O Absalom, my son, my son!"** What a tragic ending for David and Absalom! David reaped bitterly what he had sown and there will be other disappointments.

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

God removes the guilt of sin, but many times there are severe consequences that must be lived out. David will endure even more consequences yet to come.

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #12 David Accepts God's Discipline Gracefully

Accepting God's discipline gracefully is the theme of our study today. The writer of Hebrews reminds us, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" (Hebrews 12:5-6). There seems no doubt that David suffered as a result of his sins. Word was received by David that his son Absalom had been proclaimed king.

Most of the army had sided with him, and they were marching toward the capital in Jerusalem. When David heard the news he urged all in the palace, "Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us shall escape from Absalom." They headed eastward hoping to put the Jordan River between them and Absalom's army. As they began to climb the western slope of the Mount of Olives they could hear the weeping in the city behind them.

David also wept as he climbed the mountain. His head was covered and he walked barefoot. Part of his grief and anguish probably was over the fact he realized he had failed as a father. He also wept because he feared what would happen to Jerusalem. He may have felt that after all these years all he had tried to accomplish had been for nothing.

As they all passed over the brook Kidron, Zadok and Abithar came by. They were two priests whom David had appointed to take care of the tabernacle in Gibeon and the ark in Jerusalem. With them were Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant. They were willing to go with their king, but David said, "Return the ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the Lord, then He will bring me back again, and show me both it and His habitation (tent)".

David knew to the Jews the ark was some kind of good luck charm to be carried around to help them win battles but it should remain in Jerusalem to remind the people that the true King of Israel was Jehovah. David goes ahead to say, "But if He should say thus, 'I have no delight in you,' behold here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to him."

This is an example of David's willingness to accept the discipline of the Lord gracefully. We see David's virtue. If it is was God's will that David's return to the throne, that would be fine. If it was not God's will then do with me what is best. David wanted the two priests to remain behind so they would know what was happening and they could send word before he crossed the Jordan River.

More agony came upon David as word reached him that Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom. Ahithophel had been one of David's most trusted counselors. Now he had betrayed David. David did not waste time in self-pity, but poured out his heart to God; "O Lord I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness" (15:31).

His request began to be fulfilled almost immediately. He then met Hushai, one of his advisers. He told Hushai to return to the city and offer to serve Absalom as his adviser. This way he could counteract any counsel of Ahithophel. He told Hushai to pass on anything he learned to the priests, Zadok and Abithar. They in turn would get word to David. As David descended down the eastern slope of the mount he came to the village of Bahurim.

A relative of Saul, a man named Shimei, came out, throwing rocks at David and cursing him. He said David was receiving what he deserved. Abishai, who was with David, urged the king to let him cut off the head of the man. David refused.

By Jimmy Eaton



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He said, "Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord has told him. Perhaps the Lord will look on my affliction and return good to me instead his curing this day" (2 Samuel 16:10-12).

Again we see how David gracefully accepted the discipline of the Lord. David submitted to Shimei's abuse. It would have been easy to retaliate. David probably saw it as another consequence of his sin. Psalm 3 was written as David fled from his son Absalom.

Part of it reads: "O lord, how many are my foes! How many rise up against me! Many are saying of me, 'God will not deliver him.' But you are a shield around me, O Lord; you bestow glory on me and life up my head" (Psalm 3:1-3).

The scene now shifts back to Jerusalem. Hushai Has arrived. He begins to shout, "Long live the king!" "Long live the king!" (16:16). He immediately seeks to become an advisor to Absalom. Thus he might send information so David would know what was being planned. Ahithophel who was now loyal to Absalom advised Absalom to go into his father's concubines to show he was not afraid of his father. He next advised him to go after David immediately while David was weary.

Hushai thwart Ahithophel's counsel. He gives several reasons Ahithophel's plan would not work. Hushai suggests another plan. Absalom needed to gather an army composed of men from all the tribes. Absalom himself would be their leader leading them into battle. Hushai's plan was accepted over Ahithophel's plan.

A secret message was passed on to David immediately that he should move on into the wilderness quickly before Absalom could catch up with him. By now those loyal to David increased to around 6,000 men. Both sides now gathered to battle. David is advised not to take part in the battle. Physically he was not up to it. As his army left he cries out, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom" (18:5).

The battle was a total disaster for Absalom and his army. Absalom's army who were not used to fighting in the woodlands became disorganized. They lost 20,000 men. David now awaits the results. He was shocked to hear Absalom had died. In the course of the battle he caught his hair in an Oak tree and while hanging there by his hair was killed by David's former commander Joab, who took three javelins and thrust them through the heart of Absalom. They threw his body in a big pit and piled rocks over his dead body.

David cried out in anguish, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I have died instead of you. O Absalom, my son, my son!" Absalom had not spoken to his father for 5 years because he had killed his brother Amnon. Joab rebuked David for grieving over Absalom. He said he was thinking only of his own personal pain rather than the pain of the men who had died in the battle to save David. The insurrection had lasted only a few weeks. David must now go back to Jerusalem and attempt to bring order and peace to the nation.

When the army of Absalom returned to Jerusalem they realized they had made a tragic mistake. It was David who had defeated their enemies giving them freedom. It was David who was responsible for their prosperity. David let the leaders know that their rebellious behavior would not be held against them. Although David was the offended party, he took the lead in restoring a relationship with the offenders.

As David neared Jerusalem many who had taken part in the insurrection were there to greet him as if they had done nothing to encourage the insurrection. Seemingly David is willing to forgive their disloyalty. As soon as David was back on the throne he was swamped with representatives from the northern tribes squabbling about the way their groups had been mistreated regarding the return of the king.

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All the squabbling among the northern tribes resulted in another attempt at rebellion by "a worthless fellow.....whose name was Sheba" (20:1). In putting down this rebellion Joab assassinated Amasa so he could get back his old job as commander-in-chief of David's army.

You can almost imagine David sighing, lifting up his eyes to heaven, praying, "Lord give me strength." Back when the people rejected Samuel as their ruler and demanded a king little did they realize the hardships they would bring upon themselves

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #13 The Mysterious Census?

Second Samuel 24:1 says that anger of the Lord was against Israel and that God moved David to number the people, that is, to take a census. However, 1 Chronicles 21:1 names Satan as the one who urged David to do a census. This is difficult to explain. It may be that God permitted Satan to tempt David to accomplish some purpose similar to God's permitting Satan to hurt Job.

David urges Joab to take the oversight of the census. However, Joab and his captains seem opposed to David's census at first. There was nothing wrong in a census itself as it had been done previously. Joab in 24:3 may suggest David is being motivated by pride. Nevertheless Joab with his captains carry out the census which lasted 9 months and 20 days. If the census was wrong it would be because David was replacing trust with statistics. He wanted to know how big his army was.

The census evidently got underway quickly. It began on the eastern side of the Jordan River then proceeded north then turned westward and then came south until it reached Beersheba. Finally it ends in Jerusalem. They did not attempt to number those in the tribe of Levi since they were exempt from military duty nor the men of Benjamin.

The tabernacle had rested in the land of Benjamin for many years before Jerusalem was captured, and Joab may have thought it unwise to invade holy territory on such a mission that he seems to have doubts about. The incomplete total of men capable of going into battle reported to David was 1,300,000. The tribe of Judah had 500,000 and the rest of the tribes had 800,000. This could indicate that Judah was more loyal to David than the other tribes.

Realizing that he had been foolish in carrying out the census David confessed his sin to the Lord. At least seven times in Scripture we find David confessing, "I have sinned." However this time he said, "I have sinned greatly." It would seem to us that his sin with Bathsheba was far worse than taking a census.

Four of his sons had died as an indirect result of his sin with Bathsheba - the baby, Amnon, Absalom, Adonijah plus Uriah. Some distinguish David's sin with Bathsheba as lust of the flesh whereas the census was a direct willful rebellion against God's will. Someone has said, "Pride is the ground in which all sins grow." Wm Barclay said, "and the parent from which other sins come."

Gad, God's prophet, came to David and gave him a choice as to which kind of punishment he and the Israelites would receive. "Thus says the Lord, 'Take for yourself either three sacrifice to God. It will soon become the place where Solomon will build the temple. After the plague had ceased, David consecrated the site to the Lord and used it as a place of sacrifice and worship.

So again why did David want a census taken? He now has 1,300,000 men who were capable of bearing the sword into battle. This was the largest army he had ever commanded. Was he consumed with pride? An army this large would assure Solomon of safety and would have provided protection from any nation that might try to invade the land while the temple was under construction.

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

It is amazing what God can accomplish with our sins. Out of the sins of David mentioned above God built a temple. Bathsheba gave birth to Solomon, who succeeded David on the throne. On the property David purchased to erect an altar on which to offer sacrifices.

Solomon would build the temple on this location and would dedicate it to the glory of God. What God did for David is certainly not an excuse for sin, because David paid dearly for committing those two sins. **"But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more"** (Romans 5:20).

What a great and merciful God we serve! This **of famine, or three months to be swept away before your foes, while the sword of your enemies overtakes you. Or else three days of the sword of the Lord, even pestilence in the land, and the angel of the Lord destroying throughout all the territory of Israel"** (1 Chronicles 21:11, 12). David's answer was, **"Let us now fall into the hand of the Lord for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."**

It would seem that God gave David a significant amount of time to select which punishment but David seems slow to yield. **Was David just being stubborn?** Gad, the prophet, again came to David and gave the king three choices, and to make his decision as to which one he would take. He had a choice between famine, military defeat or pestilence.

Between a first and second visits David must have sought the face of the Lord, for God lowered the famine period from seven years to three years which may explain the seeming discrepancy between **2 Samuel 24:13 and 1 Chronicles 21:12**. In His mercy, God shortened the days of the suffering for his people. David pleaded with the Lord to punish him instead of the people. **But why would God kill seventy thousand men and keep David alive?**

We may have overlooked the fact that **2 Samuel 24:1** says that God was angry with **"Israel"** and not with David. So the people may be the main target to receive the plague. **Are they receiving punishment for something they had done?** It has been suggested that the plague may have taken the lives of the Israelites who had rebelled against David in Absalom's attempt to usurp David's throne thus putting themselves under the leadership of Absalom who was not the king.

The result of the plague was 70,000 dead. The text simply does not tell us all we would like to know. This entire event is difficult to understand. We can only speculate at best. While it was David's sin that precipitated this crisis, it appears that the nation had also sinned in some way so as to feel God's discipline. Again the census was a willful rebellion in some way. Certainly Absalom and those who followed him were rebelling against David.

Seventy thousand men had been wiped out in one day by the plague. God now sends an angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. David now sees the angel of the Lord standing between the earth and the heaven, having drawn a sword in his hand he stretches it out over Jerusalem ready to destroy the city. David and the elders of Israel who were in sackcloth, feared the doom that was about to come.

David said to God, **"Is it not I that commanded the people to be numbered? Even I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued."** It seems clear David is saying the census was his idea. He is the one who should be punished.

Next, David is permitted to see a judgment angel hovering over Jerusalem near the threshing floor of Araunah, a Jebusite, who was one of the original Jebusites inhabitants of Jerusalem but was still living there and would still be considered a citizen of Jerusalem now that the Jews occupied the city. The prophet Gad now appears to David. This time he brings a message of hope.

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

David was to build an altar on Araunah's threshing floor and there offer sacrifices to the Lord and the plague would cease. The sacrifice consisted of oxen. Wooden yokes served as fuel. David then paid Araunah fifty shekels of silver for the entire threshing floor to be a place where future sacrifices would be made.

Araunah would have gladly given it to David but David refused to offer to the Lord something that had cost him nothing (2 Samuel 24:20-24). The threshing floor that David purchased was no ordinary property, for it was the place where Abraham had put his son Isaac on an altar many years before to be offered as a be a great encouragement for us as we strive to live the Christian life.

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #14

#### David Prepares Solomon for the Building of the Temple (1 Chronicles 22 – 29)

For many years it had been the dream of David to build a house for God that he might dwell among his people, the Israelites. God forbid him from doing this because he had been "a man of blood." David was disappointed but he could still dream and even collect building materials for the temple. God allowed him to do this thus David was very careful to follow God's "blueprints."

He also would devise and add certain things that the Tabernacle did not have, yet with God's approval. These chapters encouraged the Jews centuries later when they returned from Babylonian captivity in rebuilding the temple. They can encourage us today as we seek to build the church of God. (See Ephesians 2:13-22.)

Solomon did not have to draw up his own plans for the temple. The Lord gave the plans to David (1 Chronicles 28:11, 12) and he passed them on to Solomon. The temple was built to display the glory of God. Our task in the local church today is to glorify God also (1 Corinthians 10:31; 14:25). When it came time for Solomon to dedicate the temple, the glory of God moved in (1 Kings 8:10-11).

However, when Israel sinned, God's glory moved out (Ezekiel 10:4; 11:22-23). The realization of the very presence of God is a powerful motive to glorify God in our worship. The Temple was to be "a house of prayer for all nations" (Isaiah 56:6-7). In Jesus' day He said they had made it into a den of thieves. A den of thieves is the place where thieves run to hide after they've done their wicked deeds. This suggests sacred things can be abused and misused in an evil way.

All nations would include Gentiles who were proselytes. There was a special area for the Gentiles on the grounds of the temple during the time of Jesus. They were restricted but none-the-less they had access to the temple. This was designated as the "court of the Gentiles." There were other areas such as "the court of women," and the "court of the priests." Two times each day a priest would enter the temple to offer incense

The temple was built to display the glory of God, and their task was to bring glory to God. Today in the (spiritual temple) of God which is the church (not a building) our task too is to glorify God. While the Lord didn't permit David to build the temple, He did permit the preparations David made for his son Solomon to do the job.

Someone has said, "Well begun is half done." Eventually the temple was built, and God honored it with His presence because the leaders and people gave their best gifts and sacrifices to the Lord, and carefully followed His instructions.

We are not sure when the Lord gave David the plans for the temple but the purchase of Araunah's threshing floor is significant. It was located at the edge of the City of David where David had already erected his palace. It was located at the highest point in the area. David seems very anxious to purchase this piece of property.

By Jimmy Eaton

## THE LIFE OF DAVID

Also at the time when God sent from heaven a fire to consume David's offerings (1 Chronicles 21:26), David knew his sin was now forgiven and that he was back in fellowship with Lord.

But David also perceived that his altar was now very special to the Lord, and he continued to sacrifice there instead of going to the tabernacle located at Gibeon. The Lord must have let him know that Mount Moriah was the place where he wanted the temple to be built.

David enlisted both Jews and alien residents (1 Kings 5:13-18) to help construct the temple. This was to be under the oversight of Adoniram (2 Samuel 20:24). There were 30,000 Jewish workers to cut timber in Lebanon, 10,000 a month, and then they would return home for two months while another 10,000 would go etc.

There were 150,000 alien laborers cut and delivered massive stones from the hills, supervised by Jewish foremen. The fact that Gentiles worked along with the Jews suggests that the temple was indeed a house for all nations. These Gentile workers were not slave laborers. The Law of Moses prohibited such a practice.

It is clear that for years, David had been collecting materials for the temple; the total cost is beyond our ability to calculate. Much of it came from the spoils of the battles David had fought and won. David the warrior had defeated Israel's enemies and taken their wealth so that Solomon, his son, would have all the material available and it would be at a time when there would be peace throughout the land. This is something that was very rare.

From the time Joshua entered the land after the forty years of wanderings up until about the last ten years of David's life there had always been war. It has been assumed that David began these preparations for the temple when he was around 60 years old. He would die at the age of 70. However, we do not know how old Solomon was at the time.

David said his son was "young and inexperienced" (22:5; 29:1). After Solomon took over the throne he called himself "a little child" (1 Kings 3:7.) This perhaps explains why David admonished and encouraged his son several times to obey the Lord and to finish the work he had been given to do. David's emphasis was that the temple was not for the glory or honor of David or even Solomon. David wanted to be sure that Solomon would honor the Lord and not build a monument to honor himself.

David reminded Solomon of the faithfulness of God. If he would trust the Lord and obey Him fully, the Lord would maintain the peace and security they were enjoying at the time and would enable him to complete the project (28:7, 9, 20). The words "Be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed" were most appropriate. Solomon would take on a tremendous responsibility upon the death of David.

David reminded Solomon of the great amount of wealth accumulated for the project, along with the large number of workers he would have to work with. The amount collected is beyond comprehension. There was 4,235 tons of gold, 48,235 tons of silver, 675 tons of bronze, 375 tons of iron. The majority was from war plunder. The rest was from David own wealth and the leaders.

David ordered the leaders to cooperate with Solomon and help him complete the project. "In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built (1 Kings 6:7). This was an amazing feat in itself. David desired no glory for himself. His main concern was that the name of the Lord be glorified.

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David knew that the priests who would carry out various functions in the temple needed to be properly organized. David organized the Levites (chap. 23), the priests (chap 24), the temple singers (chap. 25), and the temple officers (chap 26) into a harmonious group of servants for the Lord and His people. He wanted to be sure everything was done "decently and in order." Their main goal was service.

The phrase "for the service of the house of the Lord" or its equivalent is used several times in these chapters. The Levites assisted the priests in the sanctuary who had to be at least 30 years old. There were 38,000 Levites divided into four groups. 24,000 assisted the priests, 6000 served as officers and judges. 4,000 were gatekeepers and 4,000 were singers. There was no longer any need to carry any of the sacred furniture as the case was with the tabernacle.

Now everything was permanently in place. Those who had been responsible for carrying the furniture now had new responsibilities. They cleaned the temple; saw to it that a sufficient supply of meal was available for the offerings. A special kind of olive oil had to be on hand for the lamps. It took time to prepare the oil that was used. Whenever the daily, monthly, and annual sacrifices were offered, the Levite chorus would provide praise to the Lord.

### THE LIFE OF DAVID #15 The Last Days of David

The book of 1 Kings opens by telling us, "When King David was old and well advanced in years, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. So his servants said to him, Let us look for a young virgin to attend the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm. Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful girl and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The girl was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no intimate relations with her."

This may seem strange to us but it must have been totally acceptable to them. No doubt she was added to David's harem which would make it legal for her to be put into such a situation. Josephus says that body warmth was the main purpose of this arrangement.

Ecclesiastes 4:11 may indicate that this was a familiar practice. His health began to fail, but his faith remained strong. We think of David's words in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now I am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his descendants begging bread." God can punish when sin abounds but he does not forsake the righteous.

Believe it or not another usurper steps forward. He is Adonijah whose mother was Haggith one of David's wives. He got some chariots and had 50 men ready to run beside him. He would announce that he was the new king. He no doubt knew that David had already made it known that Solomon was to be the new king but Adonijah must have thought because he was now David's oldest son the people would recognize him the next king.

Adonijah conferred with two influential men – Joab the commander of the army, and Abijhan the high priest. No doubt he thought with these two backing him nothing would stop his being appointed king. They seem to be very willing to go along with him on his being appointed. When he thought the time was right, he made a sacrifice of sheep, cattle and fatten calves. Next he had a great feast for his supporters, some of which were royal officials.

However, he was careful not to invite his brother Solomon. At some point in the feast Adonijah kneels, and the priest Abijhan pours oil on his head. The people then all shout, "Long live King

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**Adonijah!**" When Nathan the prophet hears this he rushes to Bathsheba, to tell her what was taking place.

Together, they go to talk with David. Bathsheba reports to David what has been taking place and Nathan backs up her story.

She made a very passionate plea to the king that he keep his promise and name Solomon to be new king. David now repeats his previous vow that Solomon is to be the next king. He said, **"As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, I will surely carry out today what I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."**

David now instructs Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada to take Solomon and put him on David's own mule and take him to Gihon. There he was to be anointed. They were to blow a trumpet and then shout, **"Long live King Solomon!"** There was immediate rejoicing, so much so that the ground shook from the sound of the people.

Solomon was then taken and placed on the seat on the royal throne of David. Royal officials came to congratulate King David saying **"May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!"** David then bowed his head and thanks God for allowing him to see a successor on his throne. Adonijah the usurper and his guests suddenly disappeared.

Later, probably speaking at his palace to a great gathering of royal officials we are told by the narrator, **"Summoning strength from the Lord, David arose from his sickbed and charged the people to support the new king and to build God a temple."**

Speaking with a weak but yet a firm voice he rose to his feet and said: **"Listen to me, my brothers and my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.' Yet the Lord, the God of Israel, chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah as leader, and from the house of Judah he chose my family, and from my father's sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. Of all my sons—and the Lord has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel. He said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father, I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time. So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the Lord our God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever."**

Out of fear Adonijah the usurper went and took hold of the horns of the alter which gave him assurance of safety. He would not turn loose unless Solomon would vow that he would not harm him. When brought before Solomon he bowed down to King Solomon and was instructed to go home.

As the time drew near for David to die, he gave a final charge to Solomon. **"I am about to go the way of all the earth....So be strong, show a man, and observe what the Lord your God requires: Walk in his ways, and keep his decrees and commands, his laws and requirements, as written in the Law of Moses, so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go."**

As death nears David recalls that certain matters of justice had not been carried out. He asks Solomon to take care of this unfinished business.

By Jimmy Eaton

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To some this situation may sound vindictive, but this is not the case. David does not want to leave a situation which should have called for the death penalty to go unnoticed. He does not want this to be neglected and forgotten. The Living Bible (*Paraphrased*) gives us a good account of what David says to Solomon.

"Now listen to my instructions. You know that Joab murdered my two generals, Abner and Amasa. He pretended that it was an act of war, but it was done in a time of peace. You are a wise man and will know what to do---don't let him die in peace (natural causes, but by execution). But be kind to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite. Make them permanent guests of the king, for they took care of me when I fled from your brother Absalom. And do you remember Shimei, the son of Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim? He cursed me with a terrible curse as I was going down to Mahanaim; but when he came down to meet me at the Jordan River I promised I wouldn't kill him. But that promise doesn't bind you! You are a wise man, and you will know how to arrange a bloody death (execution) for him" (1 Kings 2:5-9).

The New King James renders this last verse as follows: "Now therefore, do not hold him guiltless, for you are a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

Verse 10 closes out the life of David. "So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David." Thus we conclude that David was one of the greatest men ever to live. He was a man who had many faults but he remained a man after God's own heart all of his lifetime.