



LEVEL 6
6·3
LESSON 3

Imperial Academy Bible Lessons



The Reign of King David

The Reign of King David

Can you imagine waiting 17 years for something you had been promised? What if you had to suffer lots of hardships during those 17 years? That is exactly what David went through. God made David wait for years and years before He gave him what He had promised: the throne of Israel. But while David was waiting—and running for his life from King Saul—he continued to believe God, to love God, rely on Him, and obey Him.

As a young man, David had diligently watched over his father's sheep. He spent many evenings under the stars praying to God and composing music to honor Him. As a teenager, he was already becoming a man after God's own heart! But God had to test this young man more. Why? So that David would have a brilliant future after God had strengthened him greatly through hard trial.

In the previous lesson, you read about how David had to overcome trials in order to develop his faith in God. Over those years, God was testing David to see whether he would rely on Him and continue to be obedient. That proven attitude of trusting and obeying God would be crucial for David to be able to rule God's people well.

INHERITING THE THRONE

Saul had died in battle. Now it was time for David to officially become king. God instructed David to go to Hebron, a city in Judah. When David arrived, the men of Judah anointed him king over their tribe. However, David was not yet king over all of Israel.

One of Saul's generals, Abner, established Saul's son, Ishbosheth, as king over the other 11 tribes of Israel. Abner did this without God's authority. Ishbosheth was not God's anointed representative as king over His people. But God allowed this to happen. Why? Once again, He was testing David's faith and obedience. For seven years, David ruled from Hebron as king—but king of Judah only.

Fill in the blanks from 2 Samuel 3:1 to understand what King David was involved in during those seven years: "Now there was long war between the _____ of _____ and the _____ of _____: but David waxed _____ and _____, and the house of Saul waxed _____ and _____."

Gradually, Abner and the others who supported Ishbosheth as king lost strength. God was exalting King David and abasing those who rebelled against His government. Finally, two men in Ishbosheth's court

actually murdered him. This showed their loyalty to David, they reasoned, and he would be happy that the rival king was dead.

But David was angry with these men for raising their hand against the son of King Saul. He commanded that both of these men be put to death and hung over the pool in Hebron (2 Samuel 4:10-12).

During his years of evading King Saul, David had the opportunity to kill his pursuer. In a cave at Engedi, Saul was vulnerable and unaware that David was right next to him. David's men urged him to kill Saul. But David restrained himself and continued to patiently wait on God.

During those seven years of ruling over Judah only, David continued to wait patiently on God to deal with Ishbosheth's rival kingship. He knew that when God wanted him to be king over all Israel, He would cause Ishbosheth to lose the throne. David had patient faith in God and a strict regard for justice. He also penalized disloyalty by executing Ishbosheth's unfaithful servants.

SHORT ANSWER

What did King David do with Ishbosheth's body to show his respect? _____

DAVID—KING OF ISRAEL

Most of David's life had been filled with challenges, trials and waiting. But now, at 37 years old, he was poised to begin ruling over all of Israel.

During his seven-year reign over Judah, God had taught him how to administer His perfect government. And God watched to see how David would handle the power he was

given. David did a good job of administering God's government and remaining humble, proving to God that he was willing to obey Him—just as he did when he was running from Saul, just as he did when he was tending sheep alone as a teenager.

After Ishbosheth's death, the people of Israel recognized that David was the rightful king of all the tribes. They could see that God blessed those who were under David's rule. The leaders of the tribes of Israel came to Hebron and anointed David, finally making him king over all of Israel.

At this time, Jerusalem was not the capital of Israel. The city was still controlled by an enemy: the Jebusites. They mocked David, saying that even handicapped people could fight off his soldiers because their city had such well-fortified walls. Jerusalem was David's first military target as the king of Israel. His men found a way into the city and captured it. David then established Jerusalem as Israel's new capital city.

Under David's leadership, Israel grew stronger and stronger, because the king was submitting himself to God and His law. David set the example for the nation of how to fear and obey their Creator. When David put his trust in God, God protected the nation.

Nearby, the Philistines learned that Israel was developing into a strong power. They wanted to crush Israel before it got any stronger. The Philistine army mobilized and marched to the Valley of Rephaim, southwest of Jerusalem. Rather than taking matters into his own hands, David prayed to God for guidance on how to respond to this major threat.

Fill in the blanks below using 2 Samuel 5:19 to see David's prayer to God. "And David inquired

of the LORD, saying, Shall I go up to the Philistines? will you _____? And the LORD said unto David, _____ for I will doubtless _____ the Philistines into your hand.

God instructed David to fight against the Philistines. David obeyed God and led Israel's army against this deadly enemy. David obeyed God, and God gave Israel victory (verse 25).

MOVING THE ARK TO JERUSALEM

During a time of relative peace in Israel, David decided to move the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The ark represented God. Moving it from Kirjath-jearim, a hill town, to the capital city was a special occasion. David put a lot of planning into this event. He sent 30,000 men, including soldiers, priests and musicians, to Kirjath-jearim. The ark was loaded onto a cart pulled by oxen, and the caravan began the journey back to Jerusalem.

The people sang and danced as they accompanied the ark on this special journey. This was a joyful event! Then something unexpected happened. The oxen stumbled, causing the cart to shake, as well as the ark. Uzzah, a Levite, grabbed the ark to steady it and keep it from sliding. God immediately struck him dead (2 Samuel 6:6-7).

Suddenly, the celebration turned into confusion, sadness and fear. How had this event to honor God turned into something so tragic?

The people stopped transporting the ark. David was upset by what had happened to Uzzah. It was clear that God was very displeased with what David was doing, even though David thought he was honoring God.

David decided to carefully study God's Word to understand why God

had killed Uzzah. In the Scriptures he learned that God had given the Israelites special commandments about the ark. He specifically commanded that the ark should not be touched, and if anyone touched it, they would die (Numbers 4:15). This taught the people to deeply respect and fear God.

God's detailed instructions said that the ark should be carried on the shoulders of the sons of Kohath. Yet these very specific and very relevant instructions were forgotten when David was making preparations for this momentous occasion of moving the ark.

God had commanded the Israelites as they came out of Egypt to not touch the ark. Instead, He instructed that they carry the ark on their shoulders, using poles (Numbers 7:9). And yet even though David had sought advice and made extensive preparations for moving the ark (1 Chronicles 13:1-4), this instruction was forgotten.

Three months after Uzzah died, David once again moved the ark onward to Jerusalem. This time, he transported it according to God's instructions.

Dancing and singing, David led the march to Jerusalem. As the ark drew nearer, people in the city could hear the sound of trumpets, harps and cheerful voices. Finally, the ark of God arrived successfully in the capital city of God's chosen nation. But it happened only after David had learned a vital lesson in knowing and obeying God's law.

THE PROMISE OF A HOUSE

After David moved the ark to Jerusalem, God allowed Israel a period of peace and rest during which its enemies did not attack. During this time, David was in his palace,

marveling at all the blessings that God had given him. He felt humbled and honored by what God had given him, and he thought: *I live in a palace full of magnificence and wealth and yet God's ark, the symbol of His throne, sits in a tent.* David decided to build for God!

David called the Prophet Nathan to the palace and sought his counsel on building God a house. Nathan told him to proceed, but that night, God revealed to Nathan His answer. David had been a man of war and had shed much blood. He would not be allowed to build God a house (1 Chronicles 28:3). But

David was so dedicated to God, and God loved David so much, that He would allow David's son, a man who would be involved in much less bloodshed, to build the house.

Read 2 Samuel 7:13 to learn what God promised David. "He shall build an house for my name, and I will _____ the _____ of his kingdom _____."

Although God did not allow David to build Him a house, He expressed great love for David and actually promised to build *him* a house. It would not be a house of stone or wood, but



ILLUSTRATIONS: JULIA GOODARD

King David leads the procession bringing the ark to Jerusalem.

an honor bestowed on David's descendants. These descendants, who would be called "the house of David," would reign on David's throne continuously forever, one after another. The last descendant to rule on this throne would be Jesus Christ, and He would rule from His throne over all nations—for eternity.

David was thrilled, almost speechless, that God would grant him the honor of establishing His eternal throne!

Read David's prayer in verses 18-22: "Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, _____, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that you have brought me hitherto? ... Wherefore you are _____, O LORD God: for there is _____, neither is there any God beside you, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

Despite this incredible blessing, David remained humble—an attitude that earned him the title "a man after [God's] own heart" (Acts 13:22). David's prayer shows that he understood he did not deserve the honor that God was giving him. He knew that every blessing and opportunity came from God, and he cried out to God in emotional and grateful thanks.

God did not allow David to build a house (also called a temple) for His ark. But He did allow David to prepare for its construction, and David diligently worked to acquire, organize and prepare precious materials, stones, wood, gold and silver to be used in the construction of the temple. He wanted to make sure that the temple would be the highest quality possible.

God gave David great victories over Israel's enemies. These Gentile leaders gave David many valuable items. David collected these

treasures for eventual use in the planned magnificent temple—to honor the great Creator God.

TEMPTATION TURNED INTO LUST

One evening before sunset, David was standing on the roof of his palace, observing the city around him, when something caught his attention. A beautiful woman was taking a bath. David knew the right thing to do was to look away, taking his mind off of the temptation. However, he continued to think about her, and allowed his thoughts to turn into lust.

David succumbed to the temptation, and told his servants to bring the woman to the palace. He committed adultery with her that night, a grievous sin that breaks the Seventh Commandment.

David assumed he had gotten away with his sin. Weeks went by, and it appeared that no one had discovered what he had done. But then came shocking news from Bathsheba: She was pregnant with David's baby.

David ordered Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to come to the palace. He wanted Uriah to be with his wife for a while. That way, when the baby was eventually born, Uriah and everyone else would assume the child was his. However, Uriah was a loyal and honorable soldier. He said it would be dishonorable for him to be with his wife while his fellow soldiers were risking their lives on the front lines of battle.

David tried to get Uriah drunk so he would then sleep with his wife, but that did not work either. Finally David made yet another wicked decision. He told his general, Joab, to put Uriah in the most dangerous part of the



The Prophet Nathan confronts King David.

battle where he would be killed. Joab obeyed, and Uriah was killed. David had not only committed adultery but also murdered an innocent man.

After Uriah's death, David married Bathsheba and she had a son. It appeared that David had gotten away with his sins. But what did God think?

Read 2 Samuel 11:27. "... But the thing that David had done _____ the LORD."

God sent Nathan the prophet to David. Nathan told him a story: There was a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had many sheep, but the poor man only had one lamb, a pet that he cared for deeply. When a traveler arrived to stay with the rich man, he did not take one of his own sheep to feed his guest; he took the poor man's only lamb and fed it to him.

This story infuriated David. "This man shall surely die!" he exclaimed. But David was not expecting Nathan's reply: "*You are the man.*"

Nathan recounted to the king that God

had protected him from Saul, made him king, and given him many blessings. But David had despised God's commandments by committing adultery with another man's wife and then murdering her husband.

David had worked hard to keep his sins hidden, but now God had exposed them. David was guilty of evil, and he knew it. Even kings must pay the penalty for breaking the laws of God.

Nathan told David, "Because you have disobeyed God and sinned, the sword will never depart from your house. Violence and bloodshed will come out of your house, and your wives will be taken by your neighbor."

David could see the pain and suffering caused by his sins. "I have sinned against the Eternal," he told Nathan, realizing that he had sinned against God most of all. Nathan reassured David that because of his repentance, God had forgiven him. But there was still a consequence: The child born to Bathsheba would die.

Later, God did bless David and Bathsheba with another son, Solomon, whose name means "peaceable."

REBELLION IN DAVID'S HOUSE

Amnon, David's eldest son, committed a terrible crime against his half-sister Tamar. He was cruel and abusive to her. When David heard what had happened, he was very upset, but he did not correct Amnon. By not properly correcting his children, David only created more heartache and suffering for himself in the future.

For two years, Absalom, Tamar's brother, devised a plan to murder Amnon. Rather than allowing God to deal with Amnon's

sin, Absalom took matters into his own hands. During a banquet at Absalom's house, Absalom ordered his servants to kill Amnon.

Absalom became afraid of what his father David might do, so he took his family and servants and fled from Israel. He stayed in Geshur, in Syria, for about three years. Finally, his father pardoned him, and he came back to Jerusalem. After he returned, David did not allow Absalom to visit the palace for another two years. The king wanted to make it clear to all of Israel that even though Absalom was a prince, he was still guilty of his crime.

THE STRUGGLE FOR LEADERSHIP

Despite Absalom's sin of murdering his brother, he was still admired by many in Israel. He was extremely handsome (2 Samuel 14:25). Because of his physical qualities, people were drawn to his leadership.

With his older brother, Amnon, now dead, Absalom assumed he would be the next king over Israel. As his father grew older and his reign drew to a close, Absalom's lust for power grew stronger. Absalom became determined to take control of his destiny to make sure that he became the next king of Israel.

Absalom plotted to steal the hearts of the people away from his father. Absalom stood at the gate of the city to talk to those who came to the king for judgment. He judged the people and granted them many favors in order to win their support. All those who came to Absalom looked upon him favorably (2 Samuel 15:6).

After winning the loyalty of many people, Absalom gathered his followers and servants at Hebron, where he anointed himself king.

His next course of action was to attack Jerusalem, overthrow his father, and take control of Israel. Hearing of his son's plans, David and his family fled.

David understood that this tragic division was a result of his sins. God had forgiven him, but there is always a consequence for disobedience. God told David that the sword would never depart from his house. The civil war that erupted at Absalom's rebellion was a reminder of what happens when God's law is broken.

When Absalom sacked Jerusalem and took over the king's palace, one of his advisers counseled him to take his father's concubines who were left behind. This fulfilled the prophecy of punishment that God had given to King David in 2 Samuel 12:11.

One of Absalom's military leaders was eager to attack David's army. But rather than hastily make a decision, Absalom called Hushai to the palace to ask his advice. Absalom did not know that Hushai was still loyal to King David. To give David more time, Hushai advised Absalom not to attack but to instead increase the size of his army. David needed the extra time to gather support, as he prepared to defend himself and to counterattack.

When the time came for the battle, David ordered his servants not to harm Absalom. The two sides clashed, and God gave David's servants the victory. Absalom fled in fear. As he raced through the wood away from David's forces, Absalom looked behind him to see how far away his pursuers were. He did not see the low-hanging branch of a large oak tree. Suddenly, Absalom's head was caught in the tree, and his horse continued galloping

forward. Now Absalom was dangling from the tree, helpless.

Joab, a loyal captain in David's army, heard the news and quickly rode to where Absalom was. Upon arrival, Joab was faced with a choice: obey the king and protect Absalom or disobey and kill the king's son. Joab decided to kill Absalom. When David heard the news, rather than celebrating the victory in battle, he mourned the death of his son.

David did praise God for the blessings and protection that He granted him. David composed a song in honor of God's great

mercy (2 Samuel 22). Just as when David had been a young man running from Saul, now that he was old and still struggling with enemies, he still put all his trust in God.

TEMPTATION STRIKES AGAIN

Following the turmoil of Absalom's rebellion, Israel again experienced a period of relative peace. During this time, David felt a sense of security and power. David instructed Joab to count the number of able-bodied men throughout all the tribes of Israel who could serve in the army. David wanted to compare



Absalom gets caught in the branches of a tree.

the strength of Israel's army to that of its enemies. He did not realize it, but this was a prideful thing to do.

Joab told David, "If God is fighting our battles, why does it matter how many men we have in the army? It's God's strength that defeats our enemies—not man's." David overruled Joab's concern and sent him to number the army.

Joab fulfilled David's command and returned after nearly 10 months with the result of the census. He had counted 1,300,000 men capable of fighting in the armies of Israel. Almost immediately, David's heart sank. He realized the evil he had committed against God. Once again, he experienced terrible guilt. He could see that by asking for the army to be numbered, he was relying on man's strength for protection and not God's.

David quickly repented of his sin against God. Read 2 Samuel 24:10 to see David's repentant attitude. "And David's heart _____ [pained, grieved] him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have _____ in that I have done: and now, I beseech you, O LORD, take away the _____ of your servant; for I have done very foolishly."

After David's prayer, God sent Gad the prophet to David. "There is a price that must be paid for sin, even if you are a king," the prophet told David. "God has given you three choices for punishment; you may choose one: seven years of famine in Israel, three months of vicious attacks from your enemies, or three days of pestilence from God" (verse 13).

David considered his options carefully, then chose three days of pestilence from God.

Fill in the blanks using verse 14 to see why he chose that punishment: "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the _____; for his _____ are _____: and let me not fall into the hand of _____."

Immediately, a disease began spreading throughout Israel. People began dying unexpectedly. Every day David received reports of thousands of people who had died. After three days, the disease had killed 70,000 Israelites. This tragedy greatly impacted King David: He deeply repented of the sin that had caused all of this suffering and death.

God recognized David's heartfelt repentance and sent the Prophet Gad to him once again. "Because of your sincere repentance," Gad told David, "God will end the plague. Quickly build an altar on Mt. Moriah on the threshing floor of Ornan and offer a sacrifice to God, then the plague will end."

David heeded Gad's instruction and quickly rode to Mt. Moriah. David purchased the land and offered sacrifices to God. God accepted David's offerings and stopped the plague. Solomon would later build God's temple at this same location.

There is an important lesson in this for us today: Although it was David who committed the sin, it was the entire nation that was punished. When one person sins, it brings everyone else down. David had to learn that lesson the hard way. But he recognized his sin and deeply repented before God, and God forgave him.

For the remainder of David's life, he made preparations for building God's temple. He set aside materials and money for his son Solomon to build it after he died and Solomon



Solomon receives kingly advice from his father, King David.

became king. He also gave Solomon clear instructions and plans on how God wanted everything carried out (1 Chronicles 22:1-19; 29:1-19). Solomon was well prepared to take charge of building God's house, but David had some final parting words of fatherly advice.

A FATHER'S ADVICE

Just before David died, he passed on some of the wisdom he had learned over the course of his life.

Read 1 Kings 2:2-3: "I go the way of all the earth: be you _____ therefore, and show yourself a man; And keep the charge of the LORD your God, to _____, to keep his _____, and his _____, and his _____, and his _____, as it is written in the

law of Moses, that you may _____ in all that you do, and wheresoever you turn yourself."

David knew that if his son obeyed God's law, God would prosper him and give him peace throughout his reign. Shortly after offering this advice, David died, after reigning over Israel 40 years.

EXALTED IN THE WORLD TOMORROW

Because he worked to develop a heart like God's, David will be given an exalted position in the World Tomorrow. He will be king over all the tribes of Israel (Ezekiel 37:24). David made mistakes, just as we all do, but he was quick to repent before God. He remained humble, obedient, faithful and teachable. It was these qualities of his character that stood out to God.

How can you summarize David's attitude? 2 Samuel 23:3 provides the answer: "He that rules over men must be _____, ruling in the _____."

A study of the psalms that David wrote show how loyal and faithful David was. They give clear insight into the sterling qualities of his character.

David was always focused on God's law. He studied and meditated on this law deeply. David looked for areas in his life where he could more perfectly apply God's law. And because he was so diligent in his obedience, God gave him wisdom!

BIBLE MEMORY

2 Samuel 23:3 1 Kings 2:2-3
2 Samuel 24:10, 14 Acts 13:22
2 Samuel 3:1
2 Samuel 5:19
2 Samuel 7:13
2 Samuel 7:18-22
1 Kings 18:38
1 Kings 2:2-3

Published by the
Philadelphia Church of God
and produced in cooperation
with Imperial Academy.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Gerald Flurry

© 2018
All rights reserved.

King David Cipher

Arrange the columns according to the number on top of the line to form a word.
See if you can decode the hidden message formed after rearranging the columns.

3	2	5	1	4	1	2	3	4	5
C	E	M	B	O	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
M	A	N	E	A	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
T	F	R	A	E	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D	O	H	G	S	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
R	A	L	E	T	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
E	K	A	I	D	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D	I		V		_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

WHAT DOES IT SAY?
