

UNDERSTANDING I SAMUEL

General Introduction to the Bible's Storyline and Plot Approaching the Old Testament from a Jewish Perspective

Before we turn our attention to 1 and 2 Samuel, it would be helpful to remind ourselves of the purpose and focus of these studies.

The Old Testament as One Story

These studies are intended primarily for **Christians who want to learn how to read and understand the Old Testament within the larger story of Scripture.**

It is particularly aimed at those who have been accustomed to reading Old Testament passages as individual stories containing moral or spiritual lessons, but who want to understand how these passages contribute to the Bible's overall message of redemption.

The study assumes a basic familiarity with the Bible but is designed to be accessible to **church members, Bible-study groups, and Christian students.**

Its purpose is not simply to teach Old Testament characters or stories, but to help readers see the Old Testament as part of the unfolding story of **God's salvation, culminating in Jesus Christ.**

It is essential to understand that, from the beginning, God revealed His redemptive purpose: to deliver His creation from the curse of sin, the power of death, and the dominion of Satan through the promised Saviour.

This plan of redemption was progressively revealed throughout the Scriptures and fulfilled in Christ, will ultimately find its consummation in the restoration of all things, when God makes all things new and restores the fullness of Edenic fellowship between God and His people.

A particular emphasis will be placed on learning to read the Old Testament **in its original Jewish and covenantal context**, while also understanding how the New Testament identifies Christ as the fulfilment of the Old Testament story.

The New Testament makes clear that this story ultimately finds its fulfilment in **Jesus Christ.**

After His resurrection, Jesus explained to the disciples on the road to Emmaus that the Scriptures—from Moses through the Prophets—were speaking about Him (Luke 24:25–27).

He similarly told the Jewish leaders that the Scriptures they studied testified about Him (John 5:39–40).

Paul stated that God’s promises find their fulfilment in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20).d

Thus, the Bible is not a collection of disconnected stories.

It is one unified story, developed from Genesis to Revelation, centred on God’s redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

The Gospels and Epistles then show us how this story comes together.

Each Gospel demonstrates, in its own way, how Jesus fulfils the promises, patterns, hopes, and expectations of the Old Testament.

And the Epistles deal with how this message [Gospel] having been spread to the whole world must be lived out by believers until the coming of Christ in glory.

This, when we read or preach from the Old Testament, we must keep the big picture in view: the Old Testament is part of one unfolding story of salvation, and that story ultimately points us to Christ.

I Samuel

We have now reached an important stage in the history of Israel, which is recorded in I, and II Samuel.

I Samuel in particular traces the development of Israel from the anarchy at the time of the Judges, to the choosing of the first king, Saul.

It covers a period of about 100 years, from the birth of Samuel, recorded in chapter 1 of I Samuel to the death of Saul in chapter 31, about 1010 BC.

It sets the scene for the rise of a king after God’s own heart in II Samuel and I Kings.

If Judges records the worst of times in the history of Israel, II Samuel and I Kings, the best of times, the most glorious time – the reigns of David and Solomon.

Israel never experienced such glory again – ever.

The Structure of 1 and 2 Samuel

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are a part of the “historical” section of the Old Testament.

In the Hebrew canon the books of Samuel or the Book of Samuel (and referred to as one book) are placed among the Former Prophets, which also include the books of Joshua, Judges, and Kings.

The tendency is for conservative Old Testament students to steer a safe course and treat Old Testament narrative as “merely”, the history of Israel from which devotional material can be drawn.

Not surprisingly expositors have difficulty preaching from Samuel because their aim is often neither to give a history lesson nor random observations on the text.

Any narrative should be viewed as a unit, as one piece composed by one author or compiler and must be related to the unfolding of God’s plan of redemption which would be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, it prepared the way for his birth, death, resurrection and ascension and the age of the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of the Book of Samuel

Although the Book of Samuel is historical in nature, it is not “merely” historical.

This is evident from the selectivity the author obviously used in recording events.

If the work had been designed as a reference tool for students of history in Israel during the time of the monarchy it certainly would be incomplete.

As one looks at the contents of the book it becomes evident that the author had a theological purpose in mind in recording the historical events that he selected.

This fact should not surprise the reader for such selectivity is evident in all narrative literature in the Bible.

The historical events were selected to reveal a theological position held by the author.

The author used selected historical events from the time of the Judges under the theocracy until sometime in David's reign in the time of the monarchy.

He traced the theological standing of the nation to show that the same relationship with God existed under the monarchical [monarch = kingship rule] period as existed before the monarchy.

Blessing and fertility on the land and on the covenant, people came from God in direct proportion to the obedience which the people and ultimately the king (the epitome of the Israelite person in the covenant) evidenced before God.

A study of Samuel's structure indicates that the blessing motif in response to obedience is the key concept in understanding the book.

This motif occurs repeatedly throughout every section of the text.

Structural Units of Samuel

The name "the Book of Samuel" is perhaps a misnomer, since the uninformed would think the books were written by Samuel. Samuel played a small though important part in the narrative.

He is the central figure at the beginning of 1 Samuel, but the narrative continues on into the reign of David long after Samuel's death.

The traditional division of the book (i.e., 1 Sam and 2 Sam) is certainly not adequate.

Several lines of evidence lead the reader to the conclusion that the books were at one time considered one literary unit.

A cursory reading of the last chapter of 1 Samuel and the first chapter of 2 Samuel reveals that the subject matter in those two chapters belongs together.

The Book of Samuel may be divided into seven sections, with most of them based on the person(s) in the narratives:

- (1) *the Eli and Samuel narrative,*
- (2) *the history of the ark,*
- (3) *the Samuel and Saul narrative,*
- (4) *the Saul and David narrative,*
- (5) *the King David narrative,*
- (6) *the civil war narrative, and*
- (7) *the greatness of David narrative.*

Each of these sections will be examined to validate the focus of the author.

It will be shown that blessing (in one's family, livestock, and crops) because of obedience to the covenant is the foremost theme/motif in each section.

The Eli and Samuel Narrative (1 Sam 1-3)

The book opens with *the judgeship of Eli, who led Israel for 40 years* (1 Sam 4:18).

As in each of the first six sections of the book, a sharp contrast exists between the rival forces of obedience and disobedience.

The contrast between the characters is one of the major literary techniques used in presenting a theological understanding of this portion of Israel's history.

Chapter 1 opens with one man, his wives and one of his wives in particular, Hannah, who was filled with sorrow because she had not given birth to a child - it is the time of the Judges.

(1 Samuel 1:1) And there was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim from the hills of Ephraim, and his name was Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephrathite.

(1 Samuel 1:2) And he had two wives, the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the second, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now, most Christians know the story of how Samuel's mother, Hannah prayed to God to give her a son and how she promised that if God answered her prayer, she would dedicate him to God's service and how God called the young boy to serve him.

You can read about this in **chapters 1-3**.

Samuel was the last of the judges and was perhaps the greatest of them all – a man who led the people of Israel faithfully for many years.

But Samuel was born in a time of spiritual darkness.

Eli, who was responsible for Samuel's education and spiritual development, was the high priest at that time.

He had two sons who were also priests and in **chapter 2** we see how corrupt his sons were.

An example of their wickedness is described from verse 12.

(1Sa 2:12) Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the LORD.

(1Sa 2:13) The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand,

(1Sa 2:14) and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This

is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there.

(1Sa 2:15) Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw."

(1Sa 2:16) And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force."

(1Sa 2:17) Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the LORD, for the men treated the offering of the LORD with contempt.

Obviously, what saw at the end of Judges regarding the Levite, indicates that that was not just an isolated event the spiritual downgrade was endemic in Israel.

Sadly, Eli did nothing about his sons, as we see in verses 22-25,

1SA 2:22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁴ No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, Godⁿ may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

In verse 27 we read,

1SA 2:27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: `Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? ²⁸ I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. ²⁹ Why do youⁿ scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?"

Israel's dire spiritual state is summarized in chapter 3 verse 1,

1SA 3:1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

In other words, it was a time when God no longer spoke to his people – there was what Amos would later speak of as

*AM 8:11 a famine through the land--
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.*

Obviously, the fact that God spoke to Samuel meant that God's word was returning to Israel, preparing the way for the greatest king, David, whom Samuel would anoint years later.

This is what we read about Samuel,

1SA 3:19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

1SA 4:1 And Samuel's word came to all Israel.

But in chapters 4-6 we have the record of some strange events that took place, probably while Samuel was growing up – I call it, **the strange case of the Ark of the Covenant** and it illustrates that the stories recorded in the O.T. carried deeper significance than just historical interest.

The focus of these chapters is the Ark of the Covenant – its capture and return to Israel.

We have a description of the Ark of the Covenant in **Exodus 25**.

It **contained** the two tables of the Ten Commandments, golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that blossomed overnight.

The Ark stood in the holy of holies – it was the place God chose to meet his people.

It was a symbol of God's presence among his people; a symbol of his protection and it was sometimes carried into battle as a symbol that God was fighting for his people – it was a symbol of

his rule, it was like a throne, with the cherubim surrounding God's throne.

The ark was thus of vital importance to the life and existence of Israel.

THE STORY IN CHAPTERS 4-6.

Chapter 4 opens with the Israelites and the Philistines facing each other in conflict.

Israel and the Philistines are at war again 4:1],
Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek.

Who were the Philistines?

They were descended from Mizraim [one of the sons of Ham].

Isaac had dealings with them, and they caused him trouble.

They were a sea people who came from Crete and settled on the strip of coast near Gaza.

Now, they were among the nations God had commanded Israel to conquer.

Because they did not obey God, this is what we read about them in Judges 3:1

JDG 3:1 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan ² (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): ³ the five rulers of the Philistines, etc ⁴ They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

They became a threat in the latter years of the judges.

Occupying the narrow strip of coast, they sought to increase their territory by annexing part of Israel's territory.

We know that Samson fought against them and defeated them, until he allowed himself to be trapped by Delilah and was taken captive by the Philistines.

But he repented and in the temple of their god Dagon, he literally brought house down upon them.

Now the Philistines were superior to the Israelites, militarily, technologically, and administratively – they were one of the most efficient states at that time.

Let us read on,

² The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield.

What a terrible defeat for Israel.

The natural question –

³ When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh, so that itⁿ may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies."

Their answer was to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh.

1SA 4:4 So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

It would seem there was no longer a tabernacle, and the ark was kept at Shiloh.

It is obvious they believed that the presence of the ark would secure victory.

So, the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, who were both priests, brought the ark from Shiloh to the army camp.

This gave Israel confidence – they gave a loud shout of victory.

God was now with them. God had come into their camp.

1SA 4:5 When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook

They were confident that the hand of Yahweh that had delivered them from Egypt was with them.

Even the Philistines understood the meaning of the shout and were frightened.

⁶ Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?"

When they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid. "A god has come into the camp," they said.

"We're in trouble! Nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the desert. ⁹ Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!"

They were pagans who believed in many gods and who had heard something about what had happened in Egypt hundreds of years before.

They had never faced an army that brought a god into its camp.

However, they felt they had no option but to face Israel.

But the second battle was worse than the first for Israel.

1SA 4:10 So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers.

And even worse, the ark was captured by the Philistines and the two sons of Eli were killed.

¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

What happened when the Philistines captured the Ark is recorded in chapter 5 – in many ways it is quite amusing.

Now you can imagine how the Philistines felt about their double victory – the defeat of Israel and the capture of Israel's God.

According to their way of thinking, this was proof that their god Dagon was more powerful than Yahweh.

What a trophy of victory.

Here was the very throne of Israel's God and all that Israel's faith stood for, in their hands.

So they took the ark into their temple, the temple of their god Dagon as proof that their god was superior and more powerful than Israel's God.

Who was Dagon? He was an idol of the Philistines, thought to be the father of Baal.

What follows is ironic and amusing.

We see what happened in the pagan temple in **chapter 5:2-5**.

The Philistines brought the ark into the temple of Dagon and set it beside their god – probably to prove that their god was more powerful than Yahweh.

1SA 5:1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. ² Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon.

They were boasting of the power of their god as they had done when they brought Samson into Dagon's temple.

JDG 16:23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

JDG 16:24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying, "Our god has delivered our enemy into our hands, the one who laid waste our land and multiplied our slain."

Well, they were in for a shock as we see in **verse 3**.

³ When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD!

They concluded that this was just a coincidence – they saw nothing significant in it.

So, we read, they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

They saw nothing strange in having to pick up their god – did it not enter their heads that their god was powerless, why could he not pick himself up – why did he fall in the first place?

I would not trust a god who needs me to pick him up.

Well, if they did not get the message the first time, perhaps the second time.

V4: But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. ⁵ That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

But that was just the beginning of their troubles as we see in the rest of **chapter 5:6-6:1**

Everywhere the ark went it brought havoc, trouble, plagues – tumors and probably an infestation of rats.

They moved the ark from one city to another but everywhere it went it caused panic.

As a result, they decided to get rid of it as quickly as possible.

The determined to send it back, but they were not yet sure whether everything that happened was caused by the presence of the ark.

Perhaps it was coincidence.

So they hit on a plan to test whether or not the ark was the source of their troubles.

They decided to return the ark to Israel with a guilt offering.

They also decided on a foolproof test.

They took two cows that had never been yoked, cows that were still feeding their calves.

The fact that the cows had calves that had been taken away from them meant that their natural instinct would be to go back to their calves.

Should they go up to Israel with the ark, something unlikely, willingly pulling the cart containing the ark, this would prove that Israel's God was the source of their problems.

They did not have long to wait for the cows went straight towards Israel.

Now notice that the cows went unwillingly – we read *that* ² *Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and **lowing** all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.*

Chapter 6:13-21 – the Ark in Israel again.

The ark was back in Israel.

But no sooner had the ark found a resting place by the large rock in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh than some of the men of this town investigated the ark.

1SA 6:13 Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. ¹⁴ The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵ The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD.

*1SA 6:19 But God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh, putting seventyⁿ of them to death because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them, ²⁰ and the men of Beth Shemesh asked, "**Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?**"*

That was a vital question.

1SA 6:21 Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your place." So the men of Kiriath Jearim came

*and took up the ark of the LORD. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.
1SA 7:2 It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD.*

The ark remained there until 20 years later David brought the ark back to Jerusalem – 2 Sam 6.

Now, that is the story.

Significance of what happened to Dagon:

❑ Lesson for the Philistines.

What was God teaching the Philistines?

They had placed the ark at the foot of Dagon as a tribute to his power.

They believed they had defeated Yahweh, at best they believed Yahweh was just like their gods and at worst, that Dagon was more powerful.

When God knocked down Dagon, they did not get the message.

Initially they did not see that their god is powerless – they put Dagon back- they still had faith in a fallen Dagon.

Did it cause them to turn to Yahweh? No.

That is how man is: even when our experience shows that our gods are worthless – we put our gods together again.

And then Dagon was decapitated, and his head deposited on the threshold of the temple.

The message: Yahweh alone is God.

Dagon could not withstand his power.

Here was a clear message – that God is in control, even if his people are faithless.

❑ Israel too had to learn about God.

The elders seeing the situation asked the correct question: how were we defeated?

They believed that God is sovereign, and that victory was in his hands alone.

But they came to the wrong conclusion.

They hoped that by taking the ark to the camp they could ensure victory over the Philistines.

What does that tell you about their attitude to the ark?

They placed their faith in the ark and not God.

Like later, when Israel placed their faith in the temple rather than the God of the temple; it was not faith, it was superstition.

It was no longer faith in God.

Their faith was in a thing.

The ark became a lucky charm to keep them from harm.

They forgot that faith in God means living in obedience to him.

They forgot that God's presence among them was conditional upon obedience, repentance and humble dependence upon him.

There was nothing simply automatic about it.

There was nothing inherent in the ark itself – it was God not the ark.

The ark was not a relic to be venerated or manipulated.

The tabernacle and its furniture, including the ark, pointed beyond themselves, and were designed to teach lessons about God, about sin and about how man can come into the presence of God.

They should have known better.

Hophni and Phinehas were very wicked men – they were just representative of the spiritual state of Israel.

They thought they could live wickedly and then use the ark to secure victory over their enemies.

They thought they could use God.

They had to learn that Yahweh was not a God to be manipulated – or used for our own agenda.

God is not someone we can control – God is not tame.

God is not there for us.

The pagans can manipulate their gods through rituals and sacrifices – but not Yahweh.

*PS 51:16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.*

*PS 51:17 The sacrifices of God areⁿ a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.*

*PS 51:19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

That is why God allowed the ark to be captured.

If you think about this, you will see some parallels that are applicable to us: For example, how often we treat prayers as a magic charm, we have a superstitious attitude to prayer – we think if we pray things will automatically move in the right direction – so we talk about the ‘power of prayer’ – forgetting that prayers in and of itself is not powerful, in fact pagans pray – it is the God we pray to that is vital.

Often, we view certain rituals superstitiously, e.g., communion.

Phinehas’ wife learnt of her husband’s death and the capture of the ark.

When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. ²⁰ As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

1SA 4:21 She named the boy Ichabod,ⁿ saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"--because of the capture of the ark of God and the

deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

God had left his people because of their sin.

What now?
What about God's Covenant?
What about his promises?
Was there no hope for his people?

That brings us to consider this incident in the context of the big picture, the context of salvation history.

After reading about these events, a question arises: What was the significance of these events recorded in chapters 4-6?

Now the question that naturally arises at this point is this: **Why does the writer tell us about these incidents?**

Don't forget, the biblical writers were not merely recording history.

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire the biblical writers to record these strange incidents surrounding the ark?

They had a theological purpose in mind in recording the historical events selected.

Perhaps it is more correct to say that the Holy Spirit led them to choose these events to reveal God's plan to redeem; that is to restore all things affected by sin – to restore fellowship with himself.

The question then: How do these incidents fit into the big picture?

In what way do these chapters shed light on God's great plan of redemption?

How do these events lay the foundation for the fulfillment of God's purpose to restore all things?

Now these are important questions if we are going to understand the message of Samuel, and in particular, these incidents.

Well remember that the ark symbolized the presence of God among his people.

But it was more than just a symbol.

God in fact revealed himself there both in the Ten Commandments and in revealing his glory there.

The ark was the place of revelation [Exodus 25:22] and the place where atonement was granted.

We can say that the ark represented the majestic glory among his people.

The focus of these incidents is not so much on the ark itself, but on the God of the ark.

Two questions arise from these events:

- ❑ What now about God's promises to Abraham? What about God's plan of redemption?
- ❑ And secondly, who can stand in the presence of God?

Let us begin with this second question:

God was teaching Israel an important lesson about himself in the incident recorded in chapter 6 – God's judgment upon the men of Beth-Shemesh.

They took God for granted.

They treated God with familiarity.

Again, they thought the ark was something they could use – their attitude to God was similar to the attitude of the pagans to their gods.

They had lost their awe of God.

There was a good reason why the ark was in the holy of holies.

A few years later another man, learned that lesson as David took the ark to Jerusalem.

What happened in the temple of Dagon was a lesson for Israel as well – nothing can stand before God.

That is why chapter 6 ends with: the men of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God?
Who can stand in the presence of God?

That question will be answered as the story of Israel unfolds in the next 1000 years.

But let us take up the narrative from the return of the ark.

SCRIPTURE READINGS: I Samuel [selected]

TITLE: THE PARTIAL KINGDOM

Essentially, the books of Samuel, 1 Kings 1:1–10, and the parallel accounts in 1 and 2 Chronicles present the unfolding history of God's rule over His people in the land He had given to Israel.

To some extent, this kingdom might appear to be the fulfilment of the promised kingdom, particularly during the reigns of David and Solomon.

Yet, as we trace Israel's history from Samuel onward, it becomes evident that this was only a partial expression of the kingdom God had promised.

The kingdom was not yet manifested in its fullness, for Israel's kings remained flawed, and the people continued in sin and unfaithfulness to the covenant.

Consequently, as in the period of the Judges, we witness the continuing outworking of the Deuteronomic covenant curses, demonstrating Israel's need for a righteous and faithful King who would ultimately establish God's kingdom in its fullness.

But let us begin with the last of the Judges.

We have seen that Samuel, the last judge of Israel, was born during a time of spiritual darkness, which is summarized in the words of I Samuel 3:1 In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

However, under Samuel's leadership Israel experienced what we can call a spiritual revival.

We must remember that to all intents and purposes, Israel consisted of 12 separate tribes, to a large extent independent of each other, they were not a united nation.

They were only united as a nation under God whom they were called to worship and obey.

As they found themselves fighting the Philistines and others, they struggled to present a united front against their enemies.

The book of Samuel records how the Israelites solved the problem – they crowned a king.

The book of Samuel shows how he rose to prominence in Israel.

God established him as an important leader – he served God and the people faithfully, seeking only God's best for them.

(1Sa 7:3) And Samuel said to all the house of Israel, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your heart, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtaroath from among you and direct your heart to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."

(1Sa 7:4) So the people of Israel put away the Baals and the Ashtaroath, and they served the LORD only.

(1Sa 7:5) Then Samuel said, "Gather all Israel at Mizpah, and I will pray to the LORD for you."

(1Sa 7:6) So they gathered at Mizpah and drew water and poured it out before the LORD and fasted on that day and said there, "We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the people of Israel at Mizpah.

(1Sa 7:7) Now when the Philistines heard that the people of Israel had gathered at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the people of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines.

(1Sa 7:8) And the people of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to

cry out to the LORD our God for us, that he may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

(1Sa 7:9) So Samuel took a nursing lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. And Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

(1Sa 7:10) As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to attack Israel. But the LORD thundered with a mighty sound that day against the Philistines and threw them into confusion, and they were defeated before Israel.

(1Sa 7:11) And the men of Israel went out from Mizpah and pursued the Philistines and struck them, as far as below Beth-car.

(1Sa 7:12) Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen and called its name Ebenezer; for he said, "Till now the LORD has helped us."

(1Sa 7:13) So the Philistines were subdued and did not again enter the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

(1Sa 7:14) The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath, and Israel delivered their territory from the hand of the Philistines. There was peace also between Israel and the Amorites.

(1Sa 7:15) Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.

(1Sa 7:16) And he went on a circuit year by year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah. And he judged Israel in all these places.

(1Sa 7:17) Then he would return to Ramah, for his home was there, and there also he judged Israel. And he built there an altar to the LORD.

However, the people became restless under Samuel's leadership – they feared external threats such as the Philistines and having seen how the nations around them had kings ruling over them, they asked for one, too.

Turn with me now to **I Sam 8:4-5** which marks an important turning point in the history of Israel.

Samuel who was Israel's greatest Judge, was now old – what was going to happen?

Who was going to lead Israel?

What about Samuel's sons?

This is what we read at the beginning of **chapter** 1SA 8:1

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. ² The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. ³ But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

This is what happened, 1SA 8:4

*So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. ⁵ They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a **king to leadⁿ us, such as all the other nations have.**"*

How did Samuel react? 1SA 8:6 *But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD.*

No doubt Samuel must have felt this personally as a rejection of his leadership, and perhaps of failure, however I think what upset him more was the fact they were no longer satisfied with God's rule – it was a failure of faith in God.

But God spoke to him

,⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. ⁸ As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. ⁹ Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

The rest of I Samuel tells us how God granted the request of Israel and gave them a king like the other nations, and it is again a sad and tragic story, tragic because Saul started off so well but ended so badly.

At this point I want to raise two questions:

Was God against Israel having a king?

What is the significance of the reign of Saul?

First Question: Was God against Israel having a king?

No, God was not against Israel having a king.

Let me remind you of that repeated sentence in Judges which I referred to a few moments ago – “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit”.

In this way, the writer under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit saw that there was need for a king to bring order in Israel.

But this pointed to something deeper still.

What was happening in Israel because of their sin was a picture of the state of the whole world, the whole of mankind.

But God did not leave humanity in their sin.

We saw that God choose Abraham and made him a promise that through him God would give him a people and a land, that God would make him into a great nation.

This was in effect a promise to restore God’s kingdom – to establish a perfect kingdom.

So there was always this idea of a kingdom under God’s rule.

God began to create and develop this kingdom through Abraham’s line.

From Genesis 12 – Exodus, the focus is on the gradual fulfillment of the promise that Abraham’s descendants would be a great nation.

Everything God did was to bring his people back under this rule, which would lead to blessing.

It was through Joshua that we see that God gave them the land.

Could that be the beginning of God’s rule?

No for we see how the people rebel against God's rule, which is the story of Judges.

But as we saw, in a remote part of Palestine, God was working in a very ordinary family, **Naomi, Ruth and Boaz**, God was in fact preparing the way for the king who would rule under God – David.

So the idea of a king was always in view in God's plan.

It was implicit in the concept of the kingdom.

Let me draw your attention to an amazing statement that Jacob made before he died, as he blessed his sons, which proves this point.

GE 49:8 "Judah,ⁿ your brothers will praise you;

your hand will be on the neck of your enemies;

your father's sons will bow down to you.

GE 49:9 You are a lion's cub, O Judah;

you return from the prey, my son.

Like a lion he crouches and lies down,

like a lioness--who dares to rouse him?

GE 49:10 The scepter will not depart from Judah,

nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,

until he comes to whom it belongsⁿ

and the obedience of the nations is his.

The sceptre and ruler's staff speak of rule and dominion.

Here is a clear prophecy that from Judah God will raise a king, who will rule – the lion.

Even before Israel entered the Promised Land, God had given them these instructions concerning a king,

DT 17:14 When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," ¹⁵ be sure to appoint over you the king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your own brothers. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not a brother Israelite. ¹⁶ The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." ¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

So, God was not against Israel having a king – but the king had to be the Lord's choice.

He would in a sense be like Adam, God's earthly steward, exercising dominion over God's kingdom.

It was implicit, as I say in the very concept of kingdom.

The king would be like Adam, a vice-regent under God.

So why the upset about Saul?

Well, it is because the people wanted a king LIKE THE NATIONS around them.

It was not their request for a king that was wrong, but their motivation in asking for a king.

They should in fact have turned to the Lord and prayed for godly judges to be raised up, just as he had done in the past.

But they worked out their own solution to the problem.

They were actually rejecting God's kingship.

⁷ And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king.

They wanted a king instead of God, rather than a king under God – the very thing that made them unique; they wanted to be like the other nations.

You see 'the key thing is that their king had to be obedient to God's rule, the king had to be the primary example, the perfect model of God's person in God's place under God's rule'.

So, when we come to I Samuel and look at Israel's insistence on a king – it was not a king under God, but a king like the other nations.

And God gave them the kind of king they wanted – he was the very antithesis of the king God desired.

It is not as if God did not warn them in chapter 8 verse 9-21.

However, Saul was the model of a king, tall, handsome, strong – very impressive but also humble and likeable.

Saul, an impressive young man without equal among the Israelites--a head taller than any of the others. [I Sa 9:1]

When Samuel wanted to introduce him to the people, he hid.

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the baggage."

1SA 10:23 They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. ²⁴ Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people."

Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

Not long after his anointing as king he won his first victory and acknowledged it was through the Lord.
this day the LORD has rescued Israel." [I Sa 11:13]

So, Saul started off well.

However, he soon showed a spirit of rebellion.

Two specific instances of his disobedience are recorded.

In **chapter 13**, we read that Israel was poised to go into battle against the Philistines.

- Now Samuel told Saul he had to wait until he could offer up burnt offerings before the battle.

However, while they were waiting, Saul's soldiers began to desert – the position was looking desperate.

So instead of waiting for Samuel, Saul ordered burnt offerings to be made, because he was afraid that his army would be too depleted to fight the Philistines.

Turn to chapter 13:10

10 Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

1SA 13:11 "What have you done?" asked Samuel.

Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Micmash, ¹² I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

1SA 13:13 "You acted foolishly," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. ¹⁴ But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

- The second instance of disobedience was his decision to save Agag the Amalekite king and the best of their sheep and oxen against God's command.

This is what we read in chapter 15

⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calvesⁿ and lambs--everything that was

good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.

And then he had the temerity to claim he had obeyed 1SA 15:13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's instructions."

1SA 15:14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?"

1SA 15:15 Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."

1SA 15:16 "Stop!" Samuel said to Saul. "
19 Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes of the LORD?"

1SA 15:20 "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."

1SA 15:22 But Samuel replied:

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices

as much as in obeying the voice of the LORD?

*To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.*

*1SA 15:23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.*

*Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king."*

These were not simply personal slip-ups or minor lapses – it displayed a refusal to trust and obey God.

He was not fit to lead the people as Israel's king under God.

For that reason, he God rejected him as king.

1SA 15:23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,

and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.

*Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
he has rejected you as king."*

Subsequent events in the reign of Saul confirmed what God had predicted would happen.

Second Question: What is the significance of the reign of Saul?
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Or to put it differently, what was Saul's role in God's plan of salvation?

Now, first of all, despite Saul's imperfections, God used him to prepare the way for David.

But through Saul, God also showed Israel the sort of king he rejected.

Saul never ever submitted himself to God.

He never exemplified God's rule in his own life, how then could he lead the people?

He was like the kings that emerged later in the history of both Judah and Israel – kings that led the people of God astray.

God showed them what happens when they reject his rule over them.

[It is dangerous when God gives us what we want when what we want is outside of his will].

But, further, Saul's imperfections bring into sharp focus the kind of king God wanted – a king after God's own heart – a king who would act as his true vice-regent.

Here was the very antithesis of God's rule.

He thus prepared the way for the king God choose – the king after God's own heart – the king who would exemplify God's rule – who would submit himself to God. The rest of I Samuel and II Samuel focuses on David.

Let us look thirdly at the significance of David in God's plan of redemption.

In the **first place**, David was not the sort of person one would expect to be king.

This is implied in Samuel's assessment the oldest of Jesse's sons, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, *"Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."*

This is what the Lord said,

1SA 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

When the last of the brothers had appeared before Samuel, only David remained.

"Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit downⁿ until he arrives."

1SA 16:12 So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

This must mean that David was not like Stallone or Swarznegger – like Saul or David's other brothers.

In a world that measured kings by their physical strength, David did not look too impressive.

As a result, in the **second place**, Samuel anointed him and with that anointing, the Spirit came upon him, confirming his ministry as king of Israel.

1SA 16:13 So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.

The **third** significant thing we are told about David is that he was a shepherd.

He was the one who would no longer shepherd sheep, but Israel.

What is even more significant is that confrontation we read about between **David and Goliath recorded in chapter 17.**

That fight had clear spiritual significance – he went representing God as we can see,

1SA 17:8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. ⁹ 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." ¹⁰ Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." ¹¹ On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

When David arrived on the scene he understood the significance of Goliath's challenge, *1SA 17:26 David asked the men standing near him, "What will be done for the man who kills this Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?"*

With this challenge he confronted Goliath, *SA 17:45 David said to the Philistine, "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 defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the*

earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. ⁴⁷ All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of you into our hands."

As we know, he went out alone to fight Goliath – with the weapons of a shepherd – a staff and a sling.

The symbolism is obvious-David as the ideal leader would shepherd the nation – so beautifully described in that well-known **Psalm 23**.

From then on, David fought the Philistines, and they could not stand against him.

The **fourth** significant aspect of David's life was the fact that he was rejected in his own land. [18-20]

Because of David's anointing and his victories, Saul became jealous of him and drove him out of his household.

He was rejected – he was misunderstood, persecuted, hounded from place to place by Saul – He first sought refuge among the Philistines.

Eventually he hid in the cave of Adullam. *1SA 22:1 David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. ² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.*

It was ironic that he who was already anointed as king of Israel, was an outlaw in his own kingdom.

And **lastly**, we see that after Saul's death, when David assumed leadership of Israel, he not only united the kingdom, he also completed the occupation of the land of Palestine begun by Joshua and left incomplete by the Judges.

He united Israel to become a great nation.

After this, David **brought back the ark of the covenant**, to Jerusalem – God was again among his people.

Here was the fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham.

*GE 12:2 "I will make you into a great nation
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.*

GE 13:14 The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. ¹⁵ All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspringⁿ forever.

This is echoed in II Samuel 7:9

Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.

" `The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom.

¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before meⁿ; your throne will be established forever.' "

Was this the fullness of the promise?

As far as Israel was concerned, it represented the fulfilment of God's covenant with Abraham.

That promise made in 2000 BC was now being fulfilled 1000 years later – God had brought them so far but was it the complete fulfilment – no, but at that time Israel was not aware of this.

There was a great David to come, but at that time this was not revealed.

Although David was the king after God's own heart – he was flawed – he was not perfect – the perfect king was yet to come.

David was what we can call the prototype, the model, the foreshadowing of the perfect king – his kingdom pointed to the final kingdom.

David and his kingdom point to something better – which was yet to be revealed in the coming King, someone from his line – someone called the Son of David, but also the Son of God.

David only, foreshadowed the coming of the other King, the Lord Jesus Christ who is the true King, the King of kings, the one of whom Isaiah wrote,

and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor,ⁿ Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

ISA 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace

there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne

and over his kingdom,

establishing and upholding it

with justice and righteousness

from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty

will accomplish this.

In the book of Revelation John sees the Lamb who is about to open the seals of the scroll, symbolizing the unfolding of God's plan of salvation and notice what he sees,

See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

It is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

- He was the one who was born in an obscure town, to poor parents, in humble circumstances.

There was nothing majestic about him.

He was like a root out of dry ground.

He was despised and rejected of men – although the coming Messiah, the King, he was rejected by his own people.

- It is significant that he too was anointed and filled with the Holy Spirit before his ministry – and immediately after he fought Satan in the wilderness, like David fought Goliath and he was victorious.
- He was the true shepherd of Israel – “I am the good shepherd” he said, the true shepherd, who would lay down his life for his sheep.
- He was the one who defeated Satan, the enemy of God’s people and brought in a kingdom that is will never end – a kingdom that has broken into this present age and is extending until every kingdom will be brought to submit to God.

Do you see that you will not understand the O.T. unless you see the big picture, unless you see how describes the unfolding of God’s one plan of salvation.

You see the O.T. is more than a collection of stories about the history of Israel, peculiar rituals and ceremonies and some strange prophets whose messages are obscure – all of which are not relevant to us.

Every book in the O.T., every incident, every ceremony and ritual, the prophets, the Psalms, and Proverbs can only be understood in relation to this plan of salvation.

In other words, there is a unity in the O.T. – there is a story line or a plot line that runs through the O.T.

Now that plot line is continued into the N.T where we see how God's plan of salvation was fulfilled in Christ Jesus and this plan to restore all things is taking place in and through the church – the true church.

Today, we are privileged for we live in the time of fulfilment and can therefore understand God's plan like no one in the O.T. could.

Peter stated this when he wrote in I Peter 1:10-12

1PE 1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

The writer to the Hebrew believers wrote something similar,

HEB 1:1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe

Now, I believe that this was the way the apostles preached from the O.T. as they proved that Jesus fulfilled the O.T.

Let me give you some examples:

Jesus himself –

MT 5:17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

LK 24:25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christⁿ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses

and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

Paul -

RO 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-- ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son,

RO 3:21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

When we say the O.T. points to Christ, we are not merely talking about isolated texts – but the whole movement of the O.T.

It is tragic that for so long most Christians have not seen the lines connecting everything in the O.T. to Jesus Christ and the N.T.

The result has been that many Christians do not read the Bible with understanding, especially the O.T.

In fact, many Christians do not really understand the message of the Bible, except superficially.

And for that reason, many Christians are unable to see that God is still working out his purposes in the world right now.

For the same reason, Christian's view salvation as merely getting us to heaven.

And often, our view of salvation is individualistic.

Most preaching in the church concerns our individual needs – as if salvation is all about our comfort, happiness, peace, etc.

The cry is, 'Relevancy' by which we mean – how does the gospel make me happy, successful, and healthy.

We think salvation is about living a fulfilled and happy life on this earth.

How tragic that we always relate everything to 'me'.

The reality is that we are broken people living in a broken world.

Everything will not come right in this life.

Just because we are Christians does not mean we will not get depressed, or not have difficult marriages, or have problem children, or struggle financially, or get sick and experience disappointment – it is not because there is something wrong with our faith, but because ultimately things will not come right in this life – that is not the message of the gospel.

God's plan is far bigger than our salvation, as wonderful as that is, or our happiness and peace.

God's purpose is nothing less than recreating all things lost through the fall.

It is nothing less than bringing harmony into a universe disrupted by man's disobedience.

It is nothing less than a restoration of all things.

And thank God we are part of that, but we are part of that, we are not the centre of this plan.

So, let's stop looking at God's working in the world, in history, today – from our own individualistic narrow perspective.

The interesting thing is that once I understand the big picture, then everything in my life takes on new meaning as I see that I belong to another kingdom – one which is advancing, one which is everlasting and that my whole life is pointing to that, everything I do is part of that great plan.

It is vital for us to relate what is happening in the world today, in our lives right now, with God's plan to renew all things.

That gives me a different perspective on my life – it enables me to enjoy success without making success the meaning of my life – I can face the

hardships, struggles and failures of life without falling into despair, but with my eyes fixed on the best that is yet to be.

As I said, when we looked at the book of Ruth.

God's purpose for your life and my life, is connected to something far greater than ourselves.

For us, there is always a connection between the ordinary events of life and the stupendous work of God in history.

This means that everything we do in obedience to God, no matter how small, is significant.

God is using the foolish things and the insignificant people in the world to confound the wise and the powerful.

The Christian life is not given over to trifles.

Our lives are part of something so much bigger than we realize.

No matter how insignificant we may be in the eyes of the world, or how insignificant we may feel our lives may be, God is using us to establish his kingdom until one day, we will be with and see our perfect king and he will reign for ever and ever – and we will reign with him.

What I mean is that we must relate everything that happens in the world now to the story line – Christians are meant to understand the time we are living in.

Paul admonishes us in Romans 13 that we must understand the present time.

It is because Christians do not understand the present time, the time we are living in that they become confused, afraid, defeatist, and negative.

The O.T. reveals how God set in motion a plan to redeem all things in Jesus Christ.

KING SAUL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

- 1.** The confusing passages: **I Samuel 16:14, 15-16, 23, 18:10, 19:9.**
Does this mean that someone can lose the Holy Spirit and be lost?

2. **Loss of the Holy Spirit was God's judgment upon him** – God removes his authority and empowering to be King over Israel – God's appointed king [Messianic type].

3. The Road down.

I Samuel 8:1-9, 19-21. – Israel demands a king, they do not trust God – God grants them their request.

I Samuel 9:14-17 - looking for father's donkeys and thus meets Samuel, the last judge.

I Samuel 10:1-7, 9-11, 17-25.

I Samuel 11:14.

I Samuel 13:1

Usurps Samuel's priestly role – **7b-14**

Why? He did not trust God.

I Samuel 15:1-3, 9-25 – does not obey God.

He is rejected as king.

4. David – I Samuel 16:1, 7, 12b-13

Note that it is after David is anointed as king and the Spirit leaves Saul – **I Samuel 16:14** - it is connected to kingship.

Note too that evil spirit tormenting Saul not permanent – I Samuel 16:21-23

TOWARD AN ANSWER.

Prior to Pentecost, Holy Spirit given to equip men and women for specific tasks – Exodus 31:2-5

Nothing is said about whether they were regenerate.

Saul was anointed with the Spirit to lead Israel as king – just like the judges in the book of Judges.

(Jdg 3:9) But when the people of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for the people of Israel, who saved them, Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother.

(Jdg 3:10) The Spirit of the LORD was upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD gave Cushan-rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand. And his hand prevailed over Cushan-rishathaim.

(Jdg 3:11) So the land had rest forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

6:34, 11:29, 13:25, 14:6, 19

The Spirit was connected to kingship – that explains David's prayer in Psalm 51:11.

We do not know whether Saul was regenerate or not,

He may have been but clearly lost authority and kingship as God's judgment upon him, he no longer portrayed godly kingship.

He could have been regenerate but had poor understanding and a life that increasingly strayed.

Well, the answer to both questions: David ascends the throne, and it is significant that he takes the ark to Jerusalem clearly showing that he is the King appointed by God, the king to lead his people, the king after God's own heart – the promise is fulfilled.

And then later, his son, Solomon built the Temple.

1KI 6:1 In the four hundred and eightiethⁿ year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.

1KI 6:11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: ¹² "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. ¹³ And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."

1KI 7:51 When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated--the silver and gold and the furnishings--and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.

1KI 8:1 Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David.

1KI 8:6 The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.

1KI 8:10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. ¹¹ And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple.

1KI 8:20 "The LORD has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers when he brought them out of Egypt."

1KI 8:22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven ²³ and said:

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below--you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ²⁴ You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it--as it is today.

1KI 8:25 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.' ²⁶ And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

1KI 8:27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ²⁸ Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. ²⁹ May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. ³⁰ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

But we know that later, after David, because of Israel's sin, the glory departed again – **Ezekiel** sees this – what now?

The people in exile – where are the promises?

There was a greater than David – one who would bring back the glory because he is the glory [John 1] – he would enable man to stand in the presence of the awful glory of God – he would defeat all the gods of this world – there is only one, the Lord Jesus Christ.

All this anticipates David's victory over the Philistines later, but also our Lord's victory over Satan and his forces of evil.

So, the lessons Israel had to learn – pointed to the final fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Summarized and symbolized in Psalm 24
The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,

the world, and all who live in it;
PS 24:2 for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.
PS 24:3 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
PS 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.ⁿ
PS 24:5 He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.
PS 24:6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.ⁿ
PS 24:7 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
PS 24:8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
PS 24:9 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
PS 24:10 Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty--
he is the King of glory.

Application now:

I wonder how many Christians are not guilty of thinking God is there for us, to make us happy, to make us feel secure and give us peace.

Many Christians the born again experience has been psychologized into a mind cure divorced from the all-embracing claims of God upon every aspect of our life and destiny. {Keddie}

We have reduced the message of the Bible into an inward-looking individualistic experience – what it all means to “me” – that is where the focus is – not the glory of God.

And so, we think we can use God for our own agenda – we can live as we please and then think we can manipulate God with our prayers.

We think we can use spiritual things like magic keys to unlock the storehouse of God’s power.

That was the attitude of the Israelites to God – they thought they could use God when they wished and then dispense with God as they wished.

THE RISE OF DAVID, HIS STRUGGLES, VICTORIES AND HIS SONGS AND PRAYERS REFLECTING HIS RESPONSE TO HIS TRIALS.

I Samuel 16-31 – David's rise to power and his significance in God's Redemptive plan to establish a kingdom.

We saw how the youngest son of Jesse, of the Tribe of Judah is chosen by God to replace Saul and future king of Israel.

He was a shepherd, devoted to God although so young.

In **I Samuel 16** he is anointed as King and immediately receives the Holy Spirit.

As a result of the Spirit leaving Saul, and an evil spirit oppressing him, he had moments of emotional instability, this provided the occasion for David to be introduced to the royal court where he is appointed to play to Saul to soothe him.

Chapter 17, we see that David as God's anointed king fights Goliath the enemy of Israel, but ultimately of God.

No one else understands the significance of the battle but David.

¶ The problem of 17:5-58 – did Saul not know David?
Result of the victory on David and Saul's relationship.

READ CHAPTER 18, which is the backdrop of what happens from 18-27.

What we see that the more God's hand of blessing is manifested in David's life, the more Saul tries to destroy him.

Steps leading to Saul's hatred and relentless pursuit of David.

His struggle with Saul includes 5 major events.

First, David and Saul's son, Jonathan, become good friends – this friendship began shortly after David killed Goliath [18:1] and lasted until Jonathan's death – significance of this – Jonathan is the crown prince – and yet he

accepts that David will be king – it demonstrates his humility and submission to God.

This put Jonathan in a difficult position because he was also loyal to his father and loved his father – this is seen in at the end he fought alongside his father.

Second, Saul becomes obsessive in his desire to have David killed – he knows his kingdom has been taken from him but instead of submitting to God he tries to fight God.

In chapter 19 we see that he sent messengers to David's house to have him arrested [9-11] but time and again, God rescued him.

In his determination to kill David he even hurled his spear at Jonathan when he tried to defend him.

Even worse, he destroyed an entire town Nob when he discovered its priests had given David's men provisions, [21:1-9, 22:7-19].

Third, David took extreme measures to prove his loyalty to Saul, for example, twice he spared Saul's life when he had the chance to kill him - 24:3-6, 26:6-16.

In each instance, Saul expressed remorse however, he was not sincere for he continued his pursuit of David.

Fourth, David met and married Abigail [25] whose husband Nabal treated David and his men with contempt when they asked him for provision – in response David decided to kill the men working for Nabal, but through Abigail's intervention he spared them, but 10 days later, the Lord took Nabal's life and David married her.

Fifth, David utterly frustrated with Saul, joined the Philistines [27:1-3], who thought they could use David to their advantage.

Achish the king of Gath gave David the city of Ziklag and so David became his vassal.

However, David used the security of this relationship to further his own cause in Judah.

Later on the Philistines realized they could not trust David and dismissed him from their ranks before the final battle with Saul [29].

It is interesting that David was probably about 15 years old when Samuel anointed him as king, but he only actually became king in reality at the age of 30 [**II Samuel 5:4**].

Saul's final battle – 28-31

As Saul prepared for battle against the Philistines, he sought spiritual guidance [chapter 28].

But the Lord did not answer him, so in desperation, Saul disguised himself and went to visit a medium living in Endor.

It is unbelievable that he did this because, in line with the Law of God, he banned consulting mediums etc., from his kingdom.

It shows how desperate he was, that he went against God's law and his law to consult this medium.

He wanted her to call up Samuel from the dead.

I Samuel 28:3, 9.

The Bible is clear about this.

Lev 19:31, 20:6 [II Kings 21:6].

The text seems to indicate that Samuel actually did appear.

The passage calls the figure Samuel and he certainly spoke with the authority of Samuel, he spoke truth – not words to give Saul false comfort – it was a pronouncement of judgment, that he would die in battle with the Philistines the next day.

Whether the woman had ever spoken with departed spirits before is unclear, but she did this time and was shocked.

But despite Samuel's clear warning, Saul, though alarmed, proceeded with the battle plan – that cost him his life.

Meanwhile, the Philistines lords decided they did not trust David to join them in battle against Saul – chapter 29.

Despite David's protestations of loyalty, Achish dismissed David from his service.

This proved a blessing for as David has fought against Saul, many Israelites would never have forgiven him – so David became an innocent by-stander to the battle that claimed Saul's life and the life of Jonathan.

David returned to Ziklag to find the Amalekites had looted the city and taken the women and children [chapter 30].

At God's direction, he pursued the Amalekites, defeated them, and rescued the captives – as for the spoils of war, he sent them as a gift to the elders of Judah, which increased his standing in Israel.

Perhaps at the same time David was defeating the Amalekites in Judah, Saul was losing his battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa.

Three of Saul's sons, including Jonathan died in the battle.

Saul was wounded and afraid of what the Philistines would do to him committed suicide.

When the Philistines found the bodies of Saul and his sons they fastened them to the gate at nearby Beth-shun.

But the men of Jabesh-gilead, removed the bodies and gave them a proper burial.

And so, the life of Israel's first king came to a tragic end.

Significance of David.

The Psalms

Give insight into David's relationship with God.

During the years of exile and being outlawed, David did some questionable things due to circumstances, yet one thing stands out, his complete trust in the Lord.

Some of the psalms attributed to David were written in this time.

Psalm 7 – David pursued by Saul [I Samuel 18].

The blessing of a good conscience.

Theme – prayer resolves crisis and issues in praise for the solution.

Psalm 9, 10. Wrestling faith.

9:1-12 – Confident faith.

9:13-10:6 – Faith tried.

10:7-18 – Praying faith.

11:Faith and truth.

1-3 – The Lord's protection.

4-6 – The Lord's providence.

7 - The Lord's favour.

Psalm 16-17 [I Samuel 23:25].

Psalm 18 – I Samuel 22:1]

Psalm 34 – I Samuel 21:10-14.

Fleeing from Saul, David sought refuge with the Philistine king of Gath, called by his personal name, Achish, but in this Psalm by his royal name Abimelech [Gn 20:2, 21:22, 26:8].

Soon the king knowing David's value, detained him as a hostage.

However, David pretended to be mad and thus was released and escaped.

David attributed his release to the Lord.'

II SAMUEL

The Kingdom under David.

Chapter 1 – David laments the deaths of Saul
and Jonathan.

Chapter 2 - He becomes King of Judah

Chapter 3 – Civil war between Saul and David's families.

Chapter 4 - Sons of Saul murdered.

Chapter 5 – David becomes king of all Israel when he defeats the Philistines.

Chapter 6 – The Ark returns to Israel and to Jerusalem – the king and the presence of God in Israel.

The importance of David in salvation history is

Clear in the Scripture – see Matthew's genealogy- Jesus connected to Abraham and David – Covenant.

Chapter 7 – God's promise – his covenant of an everlasting throne – could only be fulfilled in Christ.

Connect to Hebrews 1 – which shows this promise if fulfilled in Christ.

Psalms written during this time;

Psalm 30 – dedication of Temple.

Solomon would build temple, so this either has reference to bring Ark to Jerusalem or looks forward to the temple.

II Samuel 7:5,

[See Psalm 69 – preparing for the building of the temple – II Chron 28:11-21.

Chapter 10 - More victories – the area promised to Abraham is now ruled by David.

David honours promise to Jonathan.

Chapter 11 - David is not the perfect king, this is not the fulfilled Kingdom.

Sin with Bathsheba.

Chapter 12 – Nathan confronts David – consequences of the sin.

Wider effects on the family of David.

Chapter 13 - Family troubles – Amnon and Tamar.

How David responded [verse 7 – naïve?]

Verse 21 – David angry.

Absalom's revenge.

Chapter 14-15-16-18 Absalom's conspiracy.

Chapter 18/19 – Absalom's death – see 18:33

Tension between JUSTICE AND LOVE – see notes below. PSALMS WRITTEN DURING THIS TIME.

CONFESSION.

Psalms 32, 38 and 51

REBELLION

Psalm 3 – II Samuel 15:13-17:24

Psalm 4 – II Samuel 15

Psalm 5/6 – second morning of his flight from Jerusalem.

Psalm 13 – II Samuel 18:5

(2 Samuel 18:5) And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

Psalms 86 - II Samuel 16:5-7, 17:1-4

II Samuel 19:1-20:26

After the revolt of Absalom, and the resultant civil war, the country was divided.

There were 3 distinct groups that were divided which could lead to a weakening of the kingdom.

There was David's victorious army.

There were Absalom's northern supporters.

There were representatives of David's tribe, Judah.

How would David react now?

We see David's wisdom and his forgiveness which resulted in the healing of the animosities and so the kingdom was united under his rule until the end of his life.

V13 (2 Samuel 19:13) And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.'

Amasa was the commander of Absalom's army, but David forgives and rewards him by appointing him in the place of Joab, a way in which he showed his displeasure that Joab had disobeyed the king and killed Absalom.

The northern tribes were happy to accept David again, but Judah was hesitant – but it was important for David to be fully accepted by his own tribe – so he made it a priority to win them over.

(2 Samuel 19:11) And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king?

(2 Samuel 19:12) You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?'

(2 Samuel 19:14) And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants."

(2 Samuel 19:15) So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

19:16-39

This whole section takes place at the river Jordan and is a reversal of what happened when he fled from Jerusalem.

David was met by some of his supporters; Barzillai, he had supported David when he fled from Absalom, (2 Samuel 17:27) When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim, (2 Samuel 17:28) brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, (2 Samuel 17:29) honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

He now came to meet David at the Jordan,

(2 Samuel 19:31) Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan.

(2 Samuel 19:32) Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man.

(2 Samuel 19:33) And the king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem."

(2 Samuel 19:34) But Barzillai said to the king, "How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

(2 Samuel 19:35) I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

(2 Samuel 19:36) Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward?

(2 Samuel 19:37) Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you."

(2 Samuel 19:38) And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you."

(2 Samuel 19:39) Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home.

(2 Samuel 19:40) The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

Two other interesting persons came to meet David,

(2 Samuel 19:16) And **Shimei** the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

(2 Samuel 19:17) And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And **Ziba** the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king,

Notice two important names, **Shimei and Ziba**.

What do we know about **Shimei**?

(2 Samuel 16:5) When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually.

(2 Samuel 16:6) And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

(2 Samuel 16:7) And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man!"

(2 Samuel 16:8) The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."

(2 Samuel 16:9) Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head."

(2 Samuel 16:10) But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

(2 Samuel 16:11) And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to."

(2 Samuel 16:12) It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today."

(2 Samuel 16:13) So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.

Now notice when David is at the Jordan on his way back to Jerusalem,

(2 Samuel 19:18) and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, (2 Samuel 19:19) and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart."

(2 Samuel 19:20) For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

(2 Samuel 19:21) Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

(2 Samuel 19:22) But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?"

(2 Samuel 19:23) And the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath.

David forgave Shimei.

Now the other person was **Ziba** – who was he?

When David became king he enquired about Saul's family,

(2 Samuel 9:1) And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

(2 Samuel 9:2) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:3) And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."

(2 Samuel 9:4) The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."

(2 Samuel 9:5) Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

(2 Samuel 9:6) And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:7) And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."

(2 Samuel 9:8) And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

(2 Samuel 9:9) Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson."

(2 Samuel 9:10) And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

(2 Samuel 9:11) Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.

Now, what about **Mephibosheth**?

MEPHY BOSHETH

Let us remind ourselves who he was and his relationship with David.

(2 Samuel 4:4) Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

But now notice what happens at the time of Absalom's rebellion,

(2 Samuel 16:1) When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

(2 Samuel 16:2) And the king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink."

(2 Samuel 16:3) And the king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.'"

(2 Samuel 16:4) Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." And Ziba said, "I pay homage; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

So Ziba is there and Mephibosheth also turns up,

2 Samuel 19:24) And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.

(2 Samuel 19:25) And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

(2 Samuel 19:26) He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame.

(2 Samuel 19:27) He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you.

(2 Samuel 19:28) For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?"

(2 Samuel 19:29) And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land."

(2 Samuel 19:30) And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home."

As David regained control, new seeds of discontent were already sprouting.

There was intertribal dissension between Judah and the rest of the tribes,
(2 Samuel 19:41) Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"

(2 Samuel 19:42) All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?"

(2 Samuel 19:43) And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And this came to a head when Sheba, a Benjaminite, initiated a rebellion.

(2 Samuel 20:1) Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

But this rebellion lacked public support and it exposed the commander that David had replaced Joab with Amasa.

(2 Samuel 20:2) So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

In response, David called his new commander in chief to quell the rebellion,
(2 Samuel 20:4) Then the king said to Amasa, "Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself."

(2 Samuel 20:5) So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time that had been appointed him.

(2 Samuel 20:6) And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself to fortified cities and escape from us."

This exposed Amasa as incompetent and so a new commander was appointed.

While they were pursuing this rebellion, Joab had Amasa killed, there could be only one general.(2 Samuel 20:8) When they were at the great stone that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was wearing a

soldier's garment, and over it was a belt with a sword in its sheath fastened on his thigh, and as he went forward it fell out.

(2 Samuel 20:9) And Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

(2 Samuel 20:10) But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand. So Joab struck him with it in the stomach and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.

(2 Samuel 20:11) And one of Joab's young men took his stand by Amasa and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab."

(2 Samuel 20:12) And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the highway. And anyone who came by, seeing him, stopped. And when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field and threw a garment over him.

(2 Samuel 20:13) When he was taken out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

Sheba retreated to a town, (2 Samuel 20:14) And Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah, and all the Bichrites assembled and followed him in.

(2 Samuel 20:15) And all the men who were with Joab came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah. They cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart, and they were battering the wall to throw it down.

(2 Samuel 20:16) Then a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'"

(2 Samuel 20:17) And he came near her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." And he answered, "I am listening."

(2 Samuel 20:18) Then she said, "They used to say in former times, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel,' and so they settled a matter.

(2 Samuel 20:19) I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 20:20) Joab answered, "Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy!

(2 Samuel 20:21) That is not true. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, called Sheba the son of Bichri, has lifted up his hand against King David.

Give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." And the woman said to Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall."

(2 Samuel 20:22) Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

(2 Samuel 20:23) Now Joab was in command of all the army of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites;

(2 Samuel 20:24) and Adoram was in charge of the forced labor; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;

(2 Samuel 20:25) and Sheva was secretary; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

(2 Samuel 20:26) and Ira the Jairite was also David's priest.

And so, David re-united his kingdom and he reigned until his death.

The remainder of chaps. 21–23 glances over David's career retrospectively.

This section is like an appendix to David's reign and is not chronological.

The Greatness of David Narrative (2 Sam 21–24)

The in these chapters are not miscellaneous additions to the book as some would suppose, they recall some of the problems that David faced illustrating God's guidance and forms the motivation for these psalms of praise in chapter 22 and his last words in chapter 23.

The seven sons of Saul (2 Sam 21:1–4)

The covenantal aspect of David is stressed in this section.

Saul had treated the Gibeonites wrongly, which was the cause of famine in the land, the natural outgrowth of breaking the covenant.

(2 Samuel 21:1) Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD. And the

LORD said, "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

Saul as he fought the Philistines, attacked the non-Israelites of Gibeon because he viewed them as a threat, but they were not a threat, however he had them killed.

He had broken a covenant Joshua had made with them,

(Joshua 9:3) But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, (Joshua 9:4) they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, (Joshua 9:5) with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:6) And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us."

(Joshua 9:7) But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?"

(Joshua 9:8) They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?"

(Joshua 9:9) They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (Joshua 9:10) and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth.

(Joshua 9:11) So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us."

(Joshua 9:12) Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:13) These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey."

(Joshua 9:14) So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.

(Joshua 9:15) And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

(Joshua 9:16) At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them.

(Joshua 9:17) And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.

(Joshua 9:18) But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders.

(Joshua 9:19) But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them.

(Joshua 9:20) This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them."

(Joshua 9:21) And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.

(Joshua 9:22) Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us?

(Joshua 9:23) Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

(Joshua 9:24) They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you--so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing.

(Joshua 9:25) And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it."

(Joshua 9:26) So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them.

(Joshua 9:27) But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

Even though they were tricked into making a covenant, yet it was binding and God took that oath as binding – now years later, some consequences.

2 Samuel 21:2) So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.

(2 Samuel 21:3) And David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And how shall I make atonement, that you may bless the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 21:4) The Gibeonites said to him, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "What do you say that I shall do for you?"

(2 Samuel 21:5) They said to the king, "The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel,

(2 Samuel 21:6) let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them."

(2 Samuel 21:7) But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

David allowed the Gibeonites to execute the sons of Saul except for Mephibosheth.

David protected him because of David's covenant with Mephibosheth's father Jonathan.

(2 Samuel 21:8) The king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite;

(2 Samuel 21:9) and he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the mountain before the LORD, and the seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest.

Including this narrative, absolves David of killing the family of Saul as revenge.

This also depicts the fact that Saul's line was eventually reduced to one crippled man—from the most powerful-looking man in Israel (Saul) to one of the least-imposing figures (Mephibosheth), who could never mount a rebellion against David.

In contrast, David had complete power over Saul's line and over the affairs of Israel.

The giant-killers (2 Sam 21:15–22) .

This recounts some of David's wars against the Philistines – not chronological – goes back in time.

Perhaps recorded to give background to Psalm of praise in chapter 22 and David's last words in chapter 23.

Shows how God provided David with mighty warriors.

This section includes a list of the giant-killers and their victims.

David and his fighting men evidenced great power and vitality as they were conquering previously undefeated foes.

See problem of verse 19 and I Chron 20:5

David ' s song of thanksgiving (2 Sam 22)

This psalm, which also appears with minor variations as Psalm 18, recounted the central theological point of the book.

The Lord is in control and will fight on behalf of those who live according to the covenant.

True success comes from Him.

Therefore David could say, "The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me" (2 Sam 22:21).

David ' s last words (2 Sam 23:1-7) .

The covenant between the Lord and David is highlighted in these short verses.

Because of God's covenant promise, David was confident his enemies could not overwhelm him.

David ' s mighty men (2 Sam 23:8–39) .

This impressive list stands in contrast to the original group of misfits and malcontents who originally surrounded David (1 Sam 22:2).

David's forces increased as Saul's decreased.

The census and the site of the temple (2 Sam 24) .

When David began trusting in his own strength instead of the Lord and His covenant (24:1–9), pestilence came on the whole land (24:10–17).

Trusting in the mercy of God, David was convinced that God would honor His covenant and would not completely destroy the nation or David's line.

The theological problem;

(2 Samuel 24:1) Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

(2 Samuel 24:2) So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people."

(2 Samuel 24:3) But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

(2 Samuel 24:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

(2 Samuel 24:5) They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer.

(2 Samuel 24:6) Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon,

(2 Samuel 24:7) and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba.

(2 Samuel 24:8) So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

(2 Samuel 24:9) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

(2 Samuel 24:10) But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

(2 Samuel 24:11) And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

(2 Samuel 24:12) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(2 Samuel 24:13) So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(2 Samuel 24:14) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

(2 Samuel 24:15) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men.

(2 Samuel 24:16) And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

(2 Samuel 24:17) Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

(2 Samuel 24:18) And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

(2 Samuel 24:19) So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded.

(2 Samuel 24:20) And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground.

(2 Samuel 24:21) And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people."

(2 Samuel 24:22) Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood."

(2 Samuel 24:23) All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

(2 Samuel 24:24) But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

(2 Samuel 24:25) And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:1) Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:2) So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

(1 Chronicles 21:3) But Joab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

(1 Chronicles 21:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab. So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem.

(1 Chronicles 21:5) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword, and in Judah 470,000 who drew the sword.

(1 Chronicles 21:6) But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.

(1 Chronicles 21:7) But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:8) And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

(1 Chronicles 21:9) And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

(1 Chronicles 21:10) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(1 Chronicles 21:11) So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Choose what you will:

(1 Chronicles 21:12) either three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or

else three days of the sword of the LORD, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(1 Chronicles 21:13) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

(1 Chronicles 21:14) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.

(1 Chronicles 21:15) And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:16) And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

(1 Chronicles 21:17) And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. But do not let the plague be on your people."

(1 Chronicles 21:18) Now the angel of the LORD had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:19) So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD.

(1 Chronicles 21:20) Now Ornan was threshing wheat. He turned and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves.

(1 Chronicles 21:21) As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went out from the threshing floor and paid homage to David with his face to the ground.

(1 Chronicles 21:22) And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD--give it to me at its full price--that the plague may be averted from the people."

(1 Chronicles 21:23) Then Ornan said to David, "Take it, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering; I give it all."

(1 Chronicles 21:24) But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

(1 Chronicles 21:25) So David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

(1 Chronicles 21:26) And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

(1 Chronicles 21:27) Then the LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

(1 Chronicles 21:28) At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there.

(1 Chronicles 21:29) For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon,

(1 Chronicles 21:30) but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Explanation – Job, Acts 2 and 4, Luke 22:31

SCRIPTURE READING: I Samuel

INTRODUCTION.

We have now reached an important stage in the history of Israel, which is recorded in I, and II Samuel.

I Samuel in particular trace the development of Israel from the anarchy at the time of the Judges, to the choosing of the first king, Saul.

It covers a period of about 100 years, from the birth of Samuel, recorded in chapter 1 of I Samuel to the death of Saul in chapter 31, about 1010 BC.

It sets the scene for the rise of a king after God's own heart in II Samuel and I Kings.

If Judges records the worst of times in the history of Israel, II Samuel and I Kings, the best of times, the most glorious time – the reigns of David and Solomon.

Israel never experienced such glory again – ever.

The Structure of 1 and 2 Samuel

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are a part of the "historical" section of the Old Testament.

In the Hebrew canon the books of Samuel or the Book of Samuel (and referred to as one book) are placed among the Former Prophets, which also include the books of Joshua, Judges, and Kings.

The tendency is for conservative Old Testament students to steer a safe course and treat Old Testament narrative as "merely" the history of Israel from which devotional material can be drawn.

Not surprisingly expositors have difficulty preaching from Samuel because their aim is often neither to give a history lesson nor random observations on the text.

Any narrative should be viewed as a unit, as one piece composed by one author or compiler and must be related to the unfolding of God's plan of redemption which would be fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ, it prepared the way for his birth, death, resurrection and ascension and the age of the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of the Book of Samuel

Although the Book of Samuel is historical in nature, it is not "merely" historical.

This is evident from the selectivity the author obviously used in recording events.

If the work had been designed as a reference tool for students of history in Israel during the time of the monarchy it certainly would be incomplete.

As one looks at the contents of the book it becomes evident that the author had a theological purpose in mind in recording the historical events that he selected.

This fact should not surprise the reader for such selectivity is evident in all narrative literature in the Bible.

The historical events were selected to reveal a theological position held by the author.

The author used selected historical events from the time of the Judges under the theocracy until some time in David's reign in the time of the monarchy.

He traced the theological standing of the nation to show that the same relationship with God existed under the monarchical period as existed before the monarchy.

Blessing and fertility on the land and on the covenant people came from God in direct proportion to the obedience which the people and ultimately the king (the epitome of the Israelite person in the covenant) evidenced before God.

A study of Samuel's structure indicates that the blessing motif in response to obedience is the key concept in understanding the book.

This motif occurs repeatedly throughout every section of the text.

Structural Units of Samuel

Introduction

The name "the Book of Samuel" is perhaps a misnomer, since the uninformed would think the books were written by Samuel.

Actually Samuel played a small though important part in the narrative.

He is the central figure at the beginning of 1 Samuel, but the narrative continues on into the reign of David long after Samuel's death.

The traditional division of the book (i.e., 1 Sam and 2 Sam) is certainly not adequate.

Several lines of evidence lead the reader to the conclusion that the books were at one time considered one literary unit.

A cursory reading of the last chapter of 1 Samuel and the first chapter of 2 Samuel reveals that the subject matter in those two chapters belongs together.

The Book of Samuel may be divided into seven sections, with most of them based on the person(s) in the narratives:

- (1) the Eli and Samuel narrative,
- (2) the history of the ark,
- (3) the Samuel and Saul narrative,
- (4) the Saul and David narrative,
- (5) the King David narrative,
- (6) the civil war narrative, and
- (7) the greatness of David narrative.

Each of these sections will be examined to validate the focus of the author.

It will be shown that blessing (in one's family, livestock, and crops) because of obedience to the covenant is the foremost motif in each section.

The Eli and Samuel Narrative (1 Sam 1-3)

The book opens with *the judgeship of Eli, who led Israel for 40 years* (1 Sam 4:18).

As in each of the first six sections of the book, a sharp contrast exists between the rival forces of obedience and disobedience.

The contrast between the characters is one of the major literary techniques used in presenting a theological understanding of this portion of Israel's history.

Chapter 1 opens with one man, his wives and one of his wives in particular, Hannah, who was filled with sorrow because she had not given birth to a child - it is the time of the Judges.

Now, most Christians know the story of how Samuel's mother, Hannah prayed to God to give her a son and how she promised that if God answered her prayer, she would dedicate him to God's service and how God called the young boy to serve him.

You can read about this in **chapters 1-3**.

Samuel was the last of the judges and was perhaps the greatest of them all - a man who lead the people of Israel faithfully for many years.

But Samuel was born in a time of spiritual darkness.

Eli, who was responsible for Samuel's education and spiritual development, was the high priest at that time.

He had two sons who were also priests and in **chapter 2** we see how corrupt his sons were.

1SA 2:12 Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the LORD.

An example of their wickedness is described from verse 13.

Sadly, Eli did nothing about this as we see in verses 22-25,

1SA 2:22 Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours.

²⁴ No, my sons; it is not a good report that I hear spreading among the LORD's people. ²⁵ If a man sins against another man, Godⁿ may mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

In verse 27 we read,

1SA 2:27 Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: `Did I not clearly reveal myself to your father's house when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? ²⁸ I chose your father out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to

wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your father's house all the offerings made with fire by the Israelites. ²⁹ Why do youⁿ scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'

Israel's dire spiritual state is summarized in chapter 3 verse 1,
1SA 3:1 The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

In other words, it was a time when God no longer spoke to his people – there was what Amos would later speak of as

AM 8:11 a famine through the land--
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.

Obviously, the fact that God spoke to Samuel meant that God's word was returning to Israel, preparing the way for the greatest king, David, whom Samuel would anoint years later.

This is what we read about Samuel,
1SA 3:19 The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground. ²⁰ And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD. ²¹ The LORD continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.
1SA 4:1 And Samuel's word came to all Israel.

But in chapters 4-6 we have the record of some strange events that took place, probably while Samuel was growing up – I call it, **the strange case of the Ark of the Covenant** and it illustrates that the stories recorded in the O.T. carried deeper significance than just historical interest.

The focus of these chapters is the Ark of the Covenant – its capture and return to Israel.

We have a description of the Ark of the Covenant in **Exodus 25**.

It **contained** the two tables of the Ten Commandments, golden pot of manna and Aaron's rod that blossomed overnight.

The Ark stood in the holy of holies – it was the place God chose to meet his people.

It was a symbol of God's presence among his people; a symbol of his protection and it was sometimes carried into battle as a symbol that God was fighting for his people.

The ark was thus of vital importance to the life and existence of Israel.

THE STORY IN CHAPTERS 4-6.

Chapter 4 opens with the Israelites and the Philistines facing each other in conflict.

Israel and the Philistines are at war again 4:1],
Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek.

Who were the Philistines?

They were descended from Mizraim [one of the sons of Ham].

Isaac had dealings with them and they caused him trouble.

They were a sea people who came from Crete and settled on the strip of coast near Gaza.

Now, they were among the nations God had commanded Israel to conquer.

Because they did not obey God, this is what we read about them in Judges 3:1

JDG 3:1 These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan ² (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): ³ the five rulers of the Philistines, etc ⁴ They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

They became a threat in the latter years of the judges.

Occupying the narrow strip of coast, they sought to increase their territory by annexing part of Israel's territory.

We know that Samson fought against them and defeated them, until he allowed himself to be trapped by Delilah and was taken captive by the Philistines.

But he repented and in the temple of their god Dagon, he literally brought house down upon them.

Now the Philistines were superior to the Israelites, militarily, technologically and administratively – they were one of the most efficient states at that time.

Let us read on,

² The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield.

What a terrible defeat for Israel.

The natural question –

³ When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the LORD bring defeat upon us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the LORD's covenant from Shiloh, so that itⁿ may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies."

Their answer was to bring the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh.

1SA 4:4 So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

It would seem there was no longer a tabernacle and the ark was kept at Shiloh.

It is obvious they believed that the presence of the ark would secure them victory.

So the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, who were both priests, brought the ark from Shiloh to the army camp.

This gave Israel confidence – they gave a loud shout of victory.

God was now with them. God had come into their camp.

1SA 4:5 When the ark of the LORD's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook

They were confident that the hand of Yahweh that had delivered them from Egypt was with them.

Even the Philistines understood the meaning of the shout and were frightened.

⁶ Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?"

When they learned that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp, ⁷ the Philistines were afraid. "A god has come into the camp," they said.

"We're in trouble! Nothing like this has happened before. ⁸ Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the desert. ⁹ Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!"

They were pagans who believed in many gods and who had heard something about what had happened in Egypt hundreds of years before.

They had never before faced an army that brought a god into its camp.

However, they felt they had no option but to face Israel.

But the second battle was worse than the first for Israel.

1SA 4:10 So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers.

And even worse, the ark was captured by the Philistines and the two sons of Eli were killed.

¹¹ The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

What happened when the Philistines captured the Ark is recorded in chapter 5 – in many ways it is quite amusing.

Now you can imagine how the Philistines felt about their double victory – the defeat of Israel and the capture of Israel's God.

According to their way of thinking, this was proof that their god Dagon was more powerful than Yahweh.
What a trophy of victory.

Here was the very throne of Israel's God and all that Israel's faith stood for, in their hands.

So they took the ark into their temple, the temple of their god Dagon.

Who was Dagon?

He was an idol of the Philistines, thought to be the father of Baal.

What follows is ironic and amusing.

We see what happened in the pagan temple in **chapter 5:2-5**.

The Philistines brought the ark into the temple of Dagon and set it beside their god – probably to prove that their god was more powerful than Yahweh.

1SA 5:1 After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. ² Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon.

They were boasting of the power of their god as they had done when they brought Samson into Dagon's temple.

JDG 16:23 Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

JDG 16:24 When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,
"Our god has delivered our enemy
into our hands,
the one who laid waste our land
and multiplied our slain."

Well they were in for a shock as we see in **verse 3**.

³ When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD!

They concluded that this was just a coincidence – they saw nothing significant in it.

So, we read, They took Dagon and put him back in his place.

They saw nothing strange in having to pick up their god – did it not enter their heads that their god was powerless, why could he not pick himself up – why did he fall in the first place?

I would not trust a god who needs me to pick him up.

Well, if they did not get the message the first time, perhaps the second time.

V4: But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. ⁵ That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

But that was just the beginning of their troubles as we see in the rest of **chapter 5:6-6:1**

Everywhere the ark went it brought havoc, trouble, plagues – tumors and probably an infestation of rats.

They moved the ark from one city to another but everywhere it went it caused panic.

As a result they decided to get rid of it as quickly as possible.

The determined to send it back, but they were not yet sure whether everything that happened was caused by the presence of the ark.

Perhaps it was coincidence.

So they hit on a plan to test whether or not the ark was the source of their troubles.

They decided to return the ark to Israel with a guilt offering.

They also decided on a foolproof test.

They took two cows that had never been yoked, cows that were still feeding their calves.

The fact that the cows had calves that had been taken away from them meant that their natural instinct would be to go back to their calves.

Should they go up to Israel with the ark, something unlikely, willingly pulling the cart containing the ark, this would prove that Israel's God was the source of their problems.

They did not have long to wait for the cows went straight towards Israel.

Now notice that the cows went unwillingly – we read that ² Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and **lowing all** the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

Chapter 6:13-21 – the Ark in Israel again.

The ark was back in Israel.

But no sooner had the ark found a resting place by the large rock in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh than some of the men of this town looked into the ark.

1SA 6:13 Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. ¹⁴ The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. ¹⁵ The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD.

1SA 6:19 But God struck down some of the men of Beth Shemesh, putting seventyⁿ of them to death because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them, ²⁰ and the men of Beth Shemesh asked, **"Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?"**

That is a vital question.

1SA 6:21 Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your place." So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They took it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD.

1SA 7:2 It was a long time, twenty years in all, that the ark remained at Kiriath Jearim, and all the people of Israel mourned and sought after the LORD.

The ark remained there until 20 years later David brought the ark back to Jerusalem – 2 Sam 6.

Now, that is the story.

Significance of what happened to Dagon:

Lesson for the Philistines.

What was God teaching the Philistines?

They had placed the ark at the foot of Dagon as a tribute to his power.

They believed they had defeated Yahweh, at best they believed Yahweh was just like their gods and at worst, that Dagon was more powerful.

When God knocked down Dagon they did not get the message.

They at first do not seem to see that their god is powerless – they put Dagon back- they still had faith in Dagon.

Did it cause them to turn to Yahweh? No.

That is how man is: even when our experience shows that our gods are worthless – we put our gods together again.

And then Dagon was decapitated and his head deposited on the threshold of the temple.

The message: Yahweh alone is God.

Dagon could not withstand his power.

Here was a clear message – that God is in control, even if his people are faithless.

Israel too had to learn about God.

The elders seeing the situation asked the correct question: how were we defeated?

They believed that God is sovereign and that victory was in his hands alone.

But they came to the wrong conclusion.

They hoped that by taking the ark to the camp they could ensure victory over the Philistines.

What does that tell you about their attitude to the ark?

They placed their faith in the ark and not God.

Like later, when Israel placed their faith in the temple rather than the God of the temple; it was not faith, it was superstition.

It was no longer faith in God.

Their faith was in a thing.

The ark became a lucky charm to keep them from harm.

They forgot that faith in God means living in obedience to him.

They forgot that God's presence among them was conditional upon obedience, repentance and humble dependence upon him.

There was nothing simply automatic about it.

There was nothing inherent in the ark itself – it was God not the ark.

The ark was not a relic to be venerated or manipulated.

The tabernacle and its furniture, including the ark, pointed beyond themselves and were designed to teach lessons about God, about sin and about how man can come into the presence of God.

They should have known better.

Hophni and Phinehas, were very wicked men – they were just representative of the spiritual state of Israel.

They thought they could live wickedly and then use the ark to secure victory over their enemies.

They thought they could use God.

They had to learn that Yahweh was not a God to be manipulated – or used for our own agenda.

God is not someone we can control – God is not tame.

God is not there for us.

The pagans can manipulate their gods through rituals and sacrifices – but not Yahweh.

PS 51:16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

PS 51:17 The sacrifices of God areⁿ a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

PS 51:19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices,
whole burnt offerings to delight you;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

That is why God allowed the ark to be captured.

Phinehas' wife learnt of her husband's death and the capture of the ark. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. ²⁰ As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

1SA 4:21 She named the boy Ichabod,ⁿ saying, "The glory has departed from Israel"--because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. ²² She said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

God had left his people because of their sin.

What now? What about God's Covenant? What about his promises? Was there no hope for his people?
--

That brings us to consider this incident in the context of the big picture, the context of salvation history.

After reading about these events, a question arises: What was the significance of these events recorded in chapters 4-6?

Now the question that naturally arises at this point is this: Why does the writer tell us about these incidents?

Don't forget, the biblical writers were not merely recording history.

Why did the Holy Spirit inspire the biblical writers to record these strange incidents surrounding the ark?

They had a theological purpose in mind in recording the historical events selected.

Perhaps it is more correct to say that the Holy Spirit led them to choose these events to reveal God's plan to redeem; that is to restore all things affected by sin – to restore fellowship with himself.

The question then: How do these incidents fit into the big picture?

In what way do these chapters shed light on God's great plan of redemption?

How do these events lay the foundation for the fulfillment of God's purpose to restore all things?

Now these are important questions if we are going to understand the message of Samuel, and in particular, these incidents.

We'll remember that the ark symbolized the presence of God among his people.

But it was more than just a symbol.

God in fact revealed himself there both in the Ten Commandments and in revealing his glory there.

The ark was the place of revelation [Exodus 25:22] and the place where atonement was granted.

We can say that the ark represented the majestic glory among his people.

The focus of these incidents is not so much on the ark itself, but on the God of the ark.

Two questions arise from these events:

- ❑ What now about God's promises to Abraham? What about God's plan of redemption?
- ❑ And secondly, who can stand in the presence of God?

Let us begin with this second question:

God was teaching Israel an important lesson about himself in the incident recorded in chapter 6 – God's judgment upon the men of Beth-Shemesh.

They took God for granted.

They treated God with familiarity.

Again, it is clear that they thought the ark was something they could use.

They had lost their awe of God.

There was a good reason why the ark was in the holy of holies.

A few years later another man, learned that lesson as David took the ark to Jerusalem.

What happened in the temple of Dagon was a lesson for Israel as well – nothing can stand before God.

That is why chapter 6 ends with:
the men of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God?"

Who can stand in the presence of God?

That question will be answered as the story of Israel unfolds in the next 1000 years.

Well, the answer to both questions: David ascends the throne and it is significant that takes the ark to Jerusalem clearly showing that that he is the King appointed by God, the king to lead his people, the king after God's own heart – the promise is fulfilled.

And then later, his son, Solomon built the Temple.

1KI 6:1 In the four hundred and eightiethⁿ year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.

1KI 6:11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: ¹² "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, carry out my regulations and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. ¹³ And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."

1KI 7:51 When all the work King Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated--the silver and gold and the furnishings--and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.

1KI 8:1 Then King Solomon summoned into his presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David.

1KI 8:6 The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim.

1KI 8:10 When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. ¹¹ And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple.

1KI 8:20 "The LORD has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²¹ I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our fathers when he brought them out of Egypt."

1KI 8:22 Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven ²³ and said:

"O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below--you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. ²⁴ You have kept your promise to

your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it--as it is today.

1KI 8:25 "Now LORD, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a man to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your sons are careful in all they do to walk before me as you have done.' ²⁶ And now, O God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.

1KI 8:27 "But will God really dwell on earth? The heavens, even the highest heaven, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! ²⁸ Yet give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy, O LORD my God. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence this day. ²⁹ May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, 'My Name shall be there,' so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. ³⁰ Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive.

But, we know that later, after David, because of Israel's sin, the glory departed again – **Ezekiel** sees this – what now?

The people in exile – where are the promises?

There was a greater than David – one who would bring back the glory because he is the glory [John 1] – he would enable man to stand in the presence of the awful glory of God – he would defeat all the gods of this world – there is only one, the Lord Jesus Christ.

All this anticipates David's victory over the Philistines later, but also our Lord's victory over Satan and his forces of evil.

So the lessons Israel had to learn – pointed to the final fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Summarized and symbolized in Psalm 24
The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
PS 24:2 for he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the waters.

PS 24:3 Who may ascend the hill of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
PS 24:4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.ⁿ
PS 24:5 He will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God his Savior.
PS 24:6 Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, O God of Jacob.ⁿ
PS 24:7 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
PS 24:8 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.
PS 24:9 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
PS 24:10 Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty--
he is the King of glory.

Application now:

I wonder how many of us today are not guilty of thinking God is there for us, to make us happy, to make us feel secure and give us peace.

What concerns me is that today for many Christians the born again experience has been psychologised into a mind cure divorced from the all-embracing claims of God upon every aspect of our life and destiny. {Keddie}

We have reduced the message of the Bible into an inward looking individualistic experience – what it all means to “me” – that is where the focus is – not the glory of God.

And so we think we can use God for our own agenda – we can live as we please and then think we can manipulate God with our prayers.

We think we can use spiritual things like magic keys to unlock the storehouse of God's power.

That was the attitude of the Israelites to God – they thought they could use God when they wished and then dispense with God as they wished.

II Samuel 19:1-20:26

After the revolt of Absalom, and the resultant civil war, the country was divided.

There were 3 distinct groups that were divided which could lead to a weakening of the kingdom.

There was David's victorious army.

There were Absalom's northern supporters.

There were representatives of David's tribe, Judah.

How would David react now?

We see David's wisdom and his forgiveness which resulted in the healing of the animosities and so the kingdom was united under his rule until the end of his life.

V13 (2 Samuel 19:13) And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.'

Amasa was the commander of Absalom's army, but David forgives and rewards him by appointing him in the place of Joab, a way in which he showed his displeasure that Joab had disobeyed the king and killed Absalom.

The northern tribes were happy to accept David again but Judah was hesitant – but it was important for David to be fully accepted by his own tribe – so he made it a priority to win them over.

(2 Samuel 19:11) And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king? (2 Samuel 19:12) You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?' (2 Samuel 19:14) And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants."
(2 Samuel 19:15) So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

19:16-39

This whole section takes place at the river Jordon and is a reversal of what happened when he fled from Jerusalem.

David was met by some of his supporters; Barzillai, he had supported David when he fled from Absalom, (2 Samuel 17:27) When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim, (2 Samuel 17:28) brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, (2 Samuel 17:29) honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

He now came to meet David at the Jordan,

(2 Samuel 19:31) Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan.

(2 Samuel 19:32) Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man.

(2 Samuel 19:33) And the king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem."

(2 Samuel 19:34) But Barzillai said to the king, "How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

(2 Samuel 19:35) I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

(2 Samuel 19:36) Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward?

(2 Samuel 19:37) Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you."

(2 Samuel 19:38) And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you."

(2 Samuel 19:39) Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home.

(2 Samuel 19:40) The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

Two other interesting persons came to meet David,

(2 Samuel 19:16) And **Shimei** the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

(2 Samuel 19:17) And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And **Ziba** the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king,

Notice two important names, **Shimei and Ziba**.

What do we know about **Shimei**?

(2 Samuel 16:5) When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually.

(2 Samuel 16:6) And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

(2 Samuel 16:7) And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man!"

(2 Samuel 16:8) The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."

(2 Samuel 16:9) Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head."

(2 Samuel 16:10) But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

(2 Samuel 16:11) And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to.

(2 Samuel 16:12) It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today."

(2 Samuel 16:13) So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.

Now notice when David is at the Jordan on his way back to Jerusalem,

(2 Samuel 19:18) and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, (2 Samuel 19:19) and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart.

(2 Samuel 19:20) For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

(2 Samuel 19:21) Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

(2 Samuel 19:22) But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?"

(2 Samuel 19:23) And the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath.

David forgave Shimei.

Now the other person was **Ziba** – who was he?

When David became king he enquired about Saul's family,

(2 Samuel 9:1) And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

(2 Samuel 9:2) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:3) And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."

(2 Samuel 9:4) The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."

(2 Samuel 9:5) Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

(2 Samuel 9:6) And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:7) And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."

(2 Samuel 9:8) And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

(2 Samuel 9:9) Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson."

(2 Samuel 9:10) And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

(2 Samuel 9:11) Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.

Now, what about **Mephibosheth**?

MEPHY BOSHETH

Let us remind ourselves who he was and his relationship with David.

(2 Samuel 4:4) Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

But now notice what happens at the time of Absalom's rebellion,

(2 Samuel 16:1) When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

(2 Samuel 16:2) And the king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink."

(2 Samuel 16:3) And the king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.'"

(2 Samuel 16:4) Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." And Ziba said, "I pay homage; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

So Ziba is there and Mephibosheth also turns up,

2 Samuel 19:24) And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.

(2 Samuel 19:25) And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

(2 Samuel 19:26) He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame.

(2 Samuel 19:27) He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you.

(2 Samuel 19:28) For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?"

(2 Samuel 19:29) And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land."

(2 Samuel 19:30) And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home."

As David regained control, new seeds of discontent were already sprouting.

There was intertribal dissension between Judah and the rest of the tribes,

(2 Samuel 19:41) Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"

(2 Samuel 19:42) All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?"

(2 Samuel 19:43) And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And this came to a head when Sheba, a Benjaminite, initiated a rebellion.

(2 Samuel 20:1) Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

But this rebellion lacked public support and it exposed the commander that David had replaced Joab with Amasa.

(2 Samuel 20:2) So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

In response, David called his new commander in chief to quell the rebellion,

(2 Samuel 20:4) Then the king said to Amasa, "Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself."

(2 Samuel 20:5) So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time that had been appointed him.

(2 Samuel 20:6) And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself to fortified cities and escape from us."

This exposed Amasa as incompetent and so a new commander was appointed.

While they were pursuing this rebellion, Joab had Amasa killed, there could be only one general.(2 Samuel 20:8) When they were at the great stone that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was wearing a soldier's garment, and over it was a belt with a sword in its sheath fastened on his thigh, and as he went forward it fell out.

(2 Samuel 20:9) And Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

(2 Samuel 20:10) But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand. So Joab struck him with it in the stomach and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.

(2 Samuel 20:11) And one of Joab's young men took his stand by Amasa and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab."

(2 Samuel 20:12) And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the highway. And anyone who came by, seeing him, stopped. And when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field and threw a garment over him.

(2 Samuel 20:13) When he was taken out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

Sheba retreated to a town, (2 Samuel 20:14) And Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah, and all the Bichrites assembled and followed him in.

(2 Samuel 20:15) And all the men who were with Joab came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah. They cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart, and they were battering the wall to throw it down.

(2 Samuel 20:16) Then a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'"

(2 Samuel 20:17) And he came near her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." And he answered, "I am listening."

(2 Samuel 20:18) Then she said, "They used to say in former times, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel,' and so they settled a matter.

(2 Samuel 20:19) I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 20:20) Joab answered, "Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy!

(2 Samuel 20:21) That is not true. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, called Sheba the son of Bichri, has lifted up his hand against King David. Give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." And the woman said to Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall."

(2 Samuel 20:22) Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

(2 Samuel 20:23) Now Joab was in command of all the army of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites;

(2 Samuel 20:24) and Adoram was in charge of the forced labor; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;
(2 Samuel 20:25) and Sheva was secretary; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

(2 Samuel 20:26) and Ira the Jairite was also David's priest.

And so David re-united his kingdom and he reigned until his death.

The remainder of chaps. 21–23 glances over David's career retrospectively.

This section is like an appendix to David's reign and is not chronological.

The Greatness of David Narrative (2 Sam 21-24)

The in these chapters are not miscellaneous additions to the book as some would suppose, they recall some of the problems that David faced illustrating God's guidance and forms the motivation for this psalms of praise in chapter 22 and his last words in chapter 23.

The seven sons of Saul (2 Sam 21:1–4)

The covenantal aspect of David is stressed in this section.

Saul had treated the Gibeonites wrongly, which was the cause of famine in the land, the natural outgrowth of breaking the covenant.

(2 Samuel 21:1) Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

Saul as he fought the Philistines, attacked the non-Israelites of Gibeon because he viewed them as a threat, but they were not a threat, however he had them killed.

He had broken a covenant Joshua had made with them,
(Joshua 9:3) But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, (Joshua 9:4) they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for

their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, (Joshua 9:5) with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:6) And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us."

(Joshua 9:7) But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?"

(Joshua 9:8) They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?"

(Joshua 9:9) They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (Joshua 9:10) and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth.

(Joshua 9:11) So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us."'

(Joshua 9:12) Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:13) These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey."

(Joshua 9:14) So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.

(Joshua 9:15) And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

(Joshua 9:16) At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them.

(Joshua 9:17) And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.

(Joshua 9:18) But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders.

(Joshua 9:19) But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them.

(Joshua 9:20) This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them."

(Joshua 9:21) And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.

(Joshua 9:22) Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us?"

(Joshua 9:23) Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

(Joshua 9:24) They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you--so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing.

(Joshua 9:25) And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it."

(Joshua 9:26) So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them.

(Joshua 9:27) But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

Even though they were tricked into making a covenant, yet it was binding and God took that oath as binding – now years later, some consequences.

(2 Samuel 21:2) So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.

(2 Samuel 21:3) And David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And how shall I make atonement, that you may bless the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 21:4) The Gibeonites said to him, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "What do you say that I shall do for you?"

(2 Samuel 21:5) They said to the king, "The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel,

(2 Samuel 21:6) let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them."

(2 Samuel 21:7) But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

David allowed the Gibeonites to execute the sons of Saul except for Mephibosheth.

David protected him because of David's covenant with Mephibosheth's father Jonathan.

(2 Samuel 21:8) The king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite;

(2 Samuel 21:9) and he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the mountain before the LORD, and the seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest.

Including this narrative, absolves David of killing the family of Saul as revenge.

This also depicts the fact that Saul's line was eventually reduced to one crippled man—from the most powerful-looking man in Israel (Saul) to one of the least-imposing figures (Mephibosheth), who could never mount a rebellion against David.

In contrast, David had complete power over Saul's line and over the affairs of Israel.

The giant-killers (2 Sam 21:15-22) .

This recounts some of David's wars against the Philistines – not chronological – goes back in time.

Perhaps recorded to give background to Psalm of praise in chapter 22 and David's last words in chapter 23.

Shows how God provided David with mighty warriors.

This section includes a list of the giant-killers and their victims.

David and his fighting men evidenced great power and vitality as they were conquering previously undefeated foes.

See problem of verse 19 and I Chron 20:5

***David ' s song of thanksgiving
(2 Sam 22)***

This psalm, which also appears with minor variations as Psalm 18, recounted the central theological point of the book.

The Lord is in control and will fight on behalf of those who live according to the covenant.

True success comes from Him.

Therefore David could say, "The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me" (2 Sam 22:21).

David ' s last words (2 Sam 23:1-7) .

The covenant between the Lord and David is highlighted in these short verses.

Because of God's covenant promise, David was confident his enemies could not overwhelm him.

David ' s mighty men (2 Sam 23:8-39) .

This impressive list stands in contrast to the original group of misfits and malcontents who originally surrounded David (1 Sam 22:2).

David's forces increased as Saul's decreased.

The census and the site of the temple
(2 Sam 24) .

When David began trusting in his own strength instead of the Lord and His covenant (24:1–9), pestilence came on the whole land (24:10–17).

Trusting in the mercy of God, David was convinced that God would honor His covenant and would not completely destroy the nation or David's line.

The theological problem;

(2 Samuel 24:1) Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

(2 Samuel 24:2) So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people."

(2 Samuel 24:3) But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

(2 Samuel 24:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

(2 Samuel 24:5) They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer.

(2 Samuel 24:6) Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon,

(2 Samuel 24:7) and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba.

(2 Samuel 24:8) So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

(2 Samuel 24:9) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

(2 Samuel 24:10) But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

(2 Samuel 24:11) And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

(2 Samuel 24:12) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(2 Samuel 24:13) So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(2 Samuel 24:14) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

(2 Samuel 24:15) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men.

(2 Samuel 24:16) And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

(2 Samuel 24:17) Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

(2 Samuel 24:18) And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

(2 Samuel 24:19) So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded.

(2 Samuel 24:20) And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground.

(2 Samuel 24:21) And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people."

(2 Samuel 24:22) Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood."

(2 Samuel 24:23) All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

(2 Samuel 24:24) But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

(2 Samuel 24:25) And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:1) Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:2) So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

(1 Chronicles 21:3) But Joab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

(1 Chronicles 21:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab. So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem.

(1 Chronicles 21:5) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword, and in Judah 470,000 who drew the sword.

(1 Chronicles 21:6) But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.

(1 Chronicles 21:7) But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:8) And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

(1 Chronicles 21:9) And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

(1 Chronicles 21:10) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(1 Chronicles 21:11) So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Choose what you will:

(1 Chronicles 21:12) either three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(1 Chronicles 21:13) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

(1 Chronicles 21:14) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.

(1 Chronicles 21:15) And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is

enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:16) And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

(1 Chronicles 21:17) And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. But do not let the plague be on your people."

(1 Chronicles 21:18) Now the angel of the LORD had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:19) So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD.

(1 Chronicles 21:20) Now Ornan was threshing wheat. He turned and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves.

(1 Chronicles 21:21) As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went out from the threshing floor and paid homage to David with his face to the ground.

(1 Chronicles 21:22) And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD--give it to me at its full price--that the plague may be averted from the people."

(1 Chronicles 21:23) Then Ornan said to David, "Take it, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering; I give it all."

(1 Chronicles 21:24) But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

(1 Chronicles 21:25) So David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

(1 Chronicles 21:26) And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

(1 Chronicles 21:27) Then the LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

(1 Chronicles 21:28) At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there.

(1 Chronicles 21:29) For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon,
(1 Chronicles 21:30) but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Explanation – Job, Acts 2 and 4, Luke 22:31

21:15–22 and 23:8–39 bracket the poetic sections by hero narratives and tales related to the Philistine wars and military lists—that is, by reference to the sagas by which David’s fame and the unification of Israel had been achieved.

Of the inner poetry (22:1–23:7), chap. 22 is a more generalized thanksgiving for deliverance extended to David throughout his career.

The passage then to 23:1–7 , to David as the ideal ruler, the bringer of messianic blessing, meets the expectation raised in 1 Sam 2:1–10 (with a similarity of terminology; cf. God as “Rock” in 1 Sam 2:2 ; 2 Sam 23:3).

Both these concluding psalms throw Davidic kingship into proper relief. In the last resort David reigns only because Yahweh has persevered with him (chap. 22), while the covenant made with his house is only firm because it was imposed by Yahweh and maintained by him. Chapter 24 , David’s ill-advised census of Israel followed by the purchase of the temple site, concludes the books. The mention of Uriah the Hittite at the close of chap. 23 provides the reason for the outburst of divine anger (chap. 24) against David, while the political realities of kingship within Israel’s

experience lead to numbering (a standing army and taxation as well?) an Israel that "cannot be numbered." David, Israel's shepherd, is then smitten through his flock (a sevenfold restitution is taken against the shepherd, cf. 24:17 with 18:3). The climactic purchase of the temple site is a response to Yahweh's direction. The books thus close by underscoring the sovereignty of Yahweh in the conduct of Israel's affairs and in the unfolding of her history.

1 and 2 Samuel thus concern the clear conduct by Yahweh of Israel's affairs and inform us of how difficult and indeed impossible it proved to be for Israel to understand this. The movement between the two books has been one from sovereignty ignored (1 Samuel 1-3) to sovereignty expressed (2 Samuel 24), from the indifferent response to divine kingship at the debased shrine (1 Samuel 1-3) to the required response to divine kingship that the Jerusalem sanctuary will express (2 Samuel 24). Again, they place Israel before the prospect of a future for her as the people of God. It will be the function of the books of Kings to offer a comment upon how the opportunities afforded to Israel were transferred into historical reality.

It is the story of God's action to establish an everlasting kingdom under the rule of the perfect king, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the story of the New Testament.

It is the story of how God establishes his kingdom, fulfills his promise to Abraham – it is the story that tells us about the nature of God's kingdom.

This means that the turning point in history, the fulfillment is found in Christ and that means that we are living in the most significant time in the history of humanity – we are living in the time of fulfillment.

In Jesus Christ, God set up his kingdom, his everlasting kingdom – right now, Christ is ruling that kingdom and right now, those who have believed in Jesus Christ, those who have been given eternal life, are part of that kingdom.

There is nothing more important in these days especially that we Christians understand the times we are living in.

In Romans 13, Paul admonished the Roman believers to understand the present time.

When he wrote these words, Christianity was a minority and despised religion in the world of that time.

Most Christians came from the lower classes of society [not uneducated].

They had no influence in the world.

Don't forget who was ruling at that time – the Emperor Nero – he instigated one the most dreadful persecutions Christians ever faced.

Many of those to whom Paul wrote would lose their possessions, their families and their lives.

In the midst of all this, it would be so easy for the believers to become discouraged and want to give up.

Where was the power of the gospel?
Where was the victory of Christ?
Who was in control of human history?
What did the future hold?

In this context Paul wanted the Roman believers to understand the time they were living in.

Paul wanted the believers to understand that they were living in the most important phase of human history – the most momentous time – this is how he put it,

The hour has come for you to wake from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer than we first believed. The night is nearly over, the day is almost here.

What did Paul mean?

He wanted the Roman Christians to understand that they were part of something greater than themselves, something that transcended their time, they belonged to another kingdom, a spiritual kingdom which was everlasting and was even then bringing down the kingdoms of this world – and in fact within a few years would overcome the mighty Roman Empire.

That was the message of the Book of Revelation.

‘You are more than conquerors’.

They had to understand, even as we have to realize that right now Christ is in control, all authority has been given to him.

He is right now ruling the world in the interests of his people.

Nothing can stop him.

The kings of the earth may take their stand against him and for a time they may seem to be successful in all their arrogance and pride – but they do not last and they come crushing down.

That is the meaning of history – the victory of Christ’s kingdom.

And we belong to that kingdom.

Paul wants the Roman Christians to realize that they belong to another kingdom and that right now, in this present age we must live as children of the kingdom in every part of our lives – our families, our work, our studies, our hobbies, our interests, our relationships.

How are we to live?

Well he has already referred to that – love.

Romans 13 RO 13:8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet,"ⁿ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."ⁿ ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

RO 13:11 And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.ⁿ

Let everything we do be characterized by love [the love that marks us out as disciples].

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

SCRIPTURE: <i>Psalm 32, 38 and 51</i>
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INTRODUCTION

One of the saddest things I have discovered when someone has come for counselling with some problem or another is that often there is an unwillingness to be honest.

The person is quite happy to be counselled until I begin to deal with specific sins and the need to take responsibility to change.

I wonder how many of people are unwilling to admit they are guilty of wrong attitudes or wrong ways of behaving.

Perhaps during the counselling you discover that this person has found ways of excusing sinful ways of behaving.

It is painful to look deep within – we are afraid of exposing our sin, afraid of what we will discover, and having to take responsibility for change.

Many people hate having to admit that they are not perfect, that they are not as good as they want others to think.

They would rather continue feeling good about themselves, avoiding having to admit they are wrong.

And the result: failure to be honest means they close themselves off from positive change.

I am convinced that the greatest obstacle to personal growth and, positive change, is **self-deception**, a refusal to face the truth about ourselves.

To put it in biblical terminology - **a refusal to confess and repent**.

The word CONFESS means simply to acknowledge the truth about ourselves, simply agreeing with God about our sin, being honest about ourselves.

Confession is of course linked to REPENTANCE.

Confession leads to repentance

Repentance means that we must not only confess, but we must be prepared to turn away from our sin – admitting our culpability and taking responsibility to change.

Without Confession and Repentance there can be no spiritual growth.

It hinders us from reaching spiritual and emotional maturity.

It can also rob us of our peace and joy and lead to depression, anxiety and sickness.

We have a description of this in PSALM 32, where David tells us of a time when he tried to avoid the truth about himself.

PSALM 32.

This is not really a prayer. It is a **teaching** [see heading].

☐ Notice with what relief David opens this Psalm.

In the Hebrew it reads: *"O how blessed is he..." or "O how happy is he..."*

One can actually feel David's relief - *"O, the relief of having your transgressions forgiven..."*

☐ Which sin was David referring to in this psalm?

David's sin of adultery with the wife of one of his officers recorded for us in **II Samuel 12.**

You will remember that the relationship with Bathsheba began when David saw her bathing and sent his messengers to get her.

Very simply, the Bible records:

"One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. From the roof of his palace he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said 'Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her...Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, 'I am pregnant.'"

What did David do?

Did he face up to the truth of his adultery?

Did he come in confession before God and Uriah?

Did he try to make restitution?

He did what we are so often guilty of doing.

For almost a year David obstinately resisted the accusation of his conscience, he refused to repent.

Notice what he says in **verse 3** "*I kept silent*".
He refused to face the truth about his sin.

He thought it would go away and he would forget.

HOW DAVID AVOIDED FACING THE TRUTH.

1. First he tried to cover his sin, hide it.

You can hardly believe that this man of God could sink to such a level of deceit and lies.

At first David arranged home leave for Uriah so that he could sleep with his wife and no one would find out about his adultery.

Uriah came home, but he would not sleep with his wife.

In fact he would not even go to his home, "Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house."

When David asked Uriah why he would not go home, he replied, "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."

What an indictment against David.

In desperation, David sent Uriah back to the field with a letter that was his own death warrant, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die."

And that is what happened.

"When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord."

The whole thing was premeditated, deliberate and a cover up.

Rather than confess, David arranged to silent Uriah.

So he added murder to his adultery.

To what great lengths we go to cover up our sin.

But, it goes back to the beginning does it not?

In Genesis we are told that **Adam and Eve's** first reaction to their sin was to hide from God and from each other.

We go to great lengths to avoid the truth about ourselves.

You may well ask, 'But how could he live with himself? How could he just go on as if nothing happened?'

Well, he lied to himself.

2. **Denial.**

David just continued to act as if nothing had happened.

He just went on as normal.

He pretended that everything was fine, hoping that everything would be fine.

He hid his deed from others.

In fact he tried to hide it from himself.

And to make matters worse,

3. **He acted the hypocrite.**

He not only tried to cover up.

He not only pretended nothing had happened. He put up a front.

He pretended to be sorry about Uriah's death.

Joab, David's general sent the message to him about the progress of the battle, "the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of

the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' David told the messenger, 'Say this to Joab' "Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it." Say this to encourage Joab.'"

Another way of avoiding the truth is to,

4. **Blame someone else.**

I wonder whether this is not what David did.

We are not told, but, knowing the deceitful workings of the human mind, I would not be surprised if David in fact blamed Bathsheba.

You see he only invited her over to help her get over her husband's absence at the war front.

He was only trying to comfort her.

How could he know that she would seduce him?

That's what happened.

While he tried to comfort her, she seduced him.
So, it was not really his fault.

Again, **Adam and Eve** are an example of this, as each blamed someone else.

Of course, many psychologists have made this respectable.

We're not sinners. We're not bad.

We're victims of our upbringing, of our environment.

We now have a society of victims.

Every evil is someone else's fault.

Many psychologists would make very good archaeologists.

They are good at digging into the past and the subconscious to find excuses for present sinful behaviour.

But, this approach locks us into the past.

If it is not my fault, and I am a helpless victim, then I am not responsible.

Neither am I responsible for changing.

We also avoid facing the truth by,

5. **Rationalising our behaviour.**

I believe that some amazing rationalisation took place in David's mind.

How could he help being attracted to Bathsheba? He was a virile man.

What could he do when she turned to him for comfort?

He never meant it to go so far.

But once the act was done, he had to protect Bathsheba.

It was the only honourable thing to do otherwise they would stone her.

David not only rationalised his behaviour, he

6. **Minimized it.**

We are not told, but perhaps David reasoned, *"All other kings do what I did."*
"I'm no worse than other kings."

That is how we argue about our sin.

"Everyone does it."

"What I am doing is not so serious when you compare it with what others do."

"It's not a big deal. I am working it out myself."

And so we can go on avoiding the truth.

Yet it did not go away.

THE EFFECTS OF THIS COVER UP

Look at verses 3-4.

You see, the more he tried to cover up, the worse things became for him.

In **Psalm 38**, which a prayer related to the same sin, David describes the physical and emotional effects of his denial.

There were the physical effects: "there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin....My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly....My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body."

There were emotional effects: "My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear...I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning....I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart....even the light has gone from my eyes...."

John Donne: *"Sin is a serpent, and he that covers sin does but keep it warm, that it may sting the more fiercely, and dispense the venom and malignity thereof the more effectively."*

Proverbs 28:15 - "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy."

You see, for the true believer, for those who have spiritual life, committing sin brings bitterness and concealing sin, brings misery and discipline.

That is why John could write that it is impossible for those born of God to continue in sin.

That is the test of the believer.

No believer can ever feel comfortable with unconfessed sin.
It brings misery.

It robs us of peace and joy and brings a wall between the Lord and us.

We lose His fellowship. We grieve the Holy Spirit.

You see, ultimately, we are going against our new nature.

☐ **Apply.**

It may be something like bitterness, resentment, impurity, gossip, jealousy, discontent, pride, malice, and a wrong relationship you are nurturing.

It may be that it's in your home - your relationship with your husband or with your wife.

It could be something more serious.

Whatever, you know that deep down, that you are to blame.

However, you refuse to face the truth about yourself.

You deny, blame others, rationalise, minimize etc., but you won't confess.

And the result?

Tell me,
What is your relationship with God like?
Does it not concern you that you no longer have fellowship with Him?
Do you have peace?
Where is your joy?

Do you think that is the normal Christian life?

Do you want to continue out of fellowship with the Lord, withdrawn from others, blocked off from change and spiritual growth?

Let's see what happened to David.

THE WAY OF RESTORATION.

Thank God, David eventually confessed.

See what he says in **verse 5**.

What brought David to this position?

In **II Samuel 12** we are told that God took the initiative.

God sent Nathan the prophet to confront David.

Let us read II Samuel 12:1-7a, 9b and David's response verse 13.

2SA 12:1 The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³ but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it

grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

2SA 12:4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

2SA 12:5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

2SA 12:7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!"

2SA 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

David faced the truth about himself.

He was brought under conviction.

Psalm 51 is David's prayer of confession after Nathan's visit and **Psalm 32** was written later after he had reflected on what had happened to him.

David's confession is thorough.

It is not just a superficial confession.

Look at 32 verse 5 - **It is sin** = falling short of God's standards, failing to obey God's commandments.

It is iniquity = it is something that originates within our natures – a bias to do wrong.

It is transgression = doing something we know we must not do = *"You know God, that my sin is not just a slip up but a deliberate, premeditated, planned act of self will."*

He faced his sin. No excuses.
He was honest about himself.

And that is why he states in **verse 2**, that the Blessed man is he *"in whose spirit is no deceit."*

God places high value on a person who is honest about himself, who does not try and hide and evade and pretend.

We cannot ever be perfect, God knows that, but he expects us to be truthful about ourselves.

The reason for this is that that is the only way to restoration.

It is the only way to God's grace.

WHAT WAS GOD'S RESPONSE TO DAVID'S CONFESSION?

How did God deal with David's sin?

He deals with it thoroughly.

Look at **verses 1-2**.

He is forgiven = literally means to lift up something.

In this context it speaks of God lifting the guilt of his sin, taking away his guilt = lightened of the burden of his sin. [Took away the heaviness of the guilty conscience].

His sin is covered = speaks of covering or hiding the stain, the impurity of his sin, so that he is in God's sight as one who has not done the sin. [Stain remover].

Not counting his sin against him = future tense. = will not count the sin to my account one day when I appear before God.

In other words, God dealt thoroughly with his sin.

This is what he asked for in **Psalm 51** when he prayed: "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." "Create in me a pure heart, O God..."

David did not completely understand how God would remove the burden of his sin, how God could cover his sin, how God could not hold it against him on the Day of Judgment.

He knew that as a Just and Holy God, his sin could not merely be overlooked.

He knew that his sin would have to be punished but did not know how.

He could not understand that one day **One would come** who would take the burden of our sin, atone for our sin.

He did not know that God would make "him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God".

He did not understand then that "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree..."

But we know. We know that it is our Lord Jesus Christ who "was pierced for our transgressions [and] crushed for our iniquities..."

We know the Lord "laid on him the iniquity of us all."

We know that for us God has made a wonderful provision.

We know we can never be perfect in this life.

We know that we will ever be tempted and sometimes, even fall into temptation.

But we know that God has made a way of restoration if only we will be truthful and confess.

The problem comes when "we claim to be without sin [and so] deceive ourselves [so that] the truth is not in us".

But "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness".

This forgiveness and cleansing comes only to those who stop trying to deal with their own guilt, trying to make up, trying to hide, trying to evade.

It is only those who will honestly look deep within and confess to God who can know the exhilaration of sins forgiven, the lifting of a burden, the cleansing of the conscience.

☐ **David's Counsel** - Read **verses 6-7**

"Don't make the same mistake I made."

"Stop trying to cover your own sin, let God do it."

Now, my dear friend, have you done this?

Christian, are you walking around with some sin in the past which you have never really confessed?

You are a Christian, but that thing has kept you from enjoying fellowship with God.

You can do nothing to set the thing right now.

Yes, you may be living, and continue to live with the consequences of your sin.

Yet that does not mean that God is not prepared to forgive you, and cover your sin and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness.

Remember that is a word to believers.

In **verse 7** David says to God "You are my hiding place".

How often when we sin, we try and hide away from God.

David says, instead of running away from God, **go and hide in God.**

God says to you and to me: *"When you sin my child, don't hide from me, don't run away from me, don't try to avoid me, come to me, as you are."*

"Nothing you do will ever shock me, or turn me away from you, only be honest and come to me as you are."

We find it incredible that God can unconditionally forgive us.

You say, *"I've done something so terrible."* Or *"I've done that repeatedly, how can I come to God again?"*

My dear friend, never limit God's forgiveness.

If God was prepared to forgive David such terrible, horrible sins, then He will forgive you.

It is not the seriousness or the frequency of your sin that stands in the way of experiencing God's forgiveness.

It's your own refusal to come openly to Him in confession and accepting His forgiveness.

God's forgiveness and patience know no limits.

If God can say we must be prepared to forgive other people **seventy times seven** when they repent, how much more will He not forgive us?

Don't stop to reason this out.

Don't ask how or why He can so freely forgive.

Simply accept it.

☐ **Counsel from God - verses 8-9**

God does more than forgive. He comes alongside us and says to us, *"Let me teach you, let me change you."*

I will instruct you = explain my will to you.

I will teach you = show you how to do my will.

I will counsel you and watch over you = I will watch over you as you learn to do my will.

That is how God changes us.

He is intimately involved through the Holy Spirit to explain, show and then help us to do His will.

God says: *"Stop being as stupid as a mule and so cut yourself off from my forgiveness and provision to change."*

"Don't wait until I have to discipline you."

Will you open up to God today?

☐ **But, it could be that you are not a Christian.**

If you have never come to God for forgiveness.

The same applies to you.

You come now.

Come as you are, as in the word of our final hymn, **Just as you are.**

God is more willing to forgive and put the past behind than we are to come.

So come today.

II Samuel 19:1-20:26

After the revolt of Absalom, and the resultant civil war, the country was divided.

There were 3 distinct groups that were divided which could lead to a weakening of the kingdom.

There was David's victorious army.

There were Absalom's northern supporters.

There were representatives of David's tribe, Judah.

How would David react now?

We see David's wisdom and his forgiveness which resulted in the healing of the animosities and so the kingdom was united under his rule until the end of his life.

V13 (2 Samuel 19:13) And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.'

Amasa was the commander of Absalom's army, but David forgives and rewards him by appointing him in the place of Joab, a way in which he showed his displeasure that Joab had disobeyed the king and killed Absalom.

The northern tribes were happy to accept David again but Judah was hesitant – but it was important for David to be fully accepted by his own tribe – so he made it a priority to win them over.

(2 Samuel 19:11) And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king? (2 Samuel 19:12) You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?'

(2 Samuel 19:14) And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants."

(2 Samuel 19:15) So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

19:16-39

This whole section takes place at the river Jordan and is a reversal of what happened when he fled from Jerusalem.

David was met by some of his supporters; Barzillai, he had supported David when he fled from Absalom, (2 Samuel 17:27) When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and **Barzillai** the Gileadite from Rogelim, (2 Samuel 17:28) brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, (2 Samuel 17:29) honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

He now came to meet David at the Jordan,

(2 Samuel 19:31) Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan.

(2 Samuel 19:32) Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man.

(2 Samuel 19:33) And the king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem."

(2 Samuel 19:34) But Barzillai said to the king, "How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?"

(2 Samuel 19:35) I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king?

(2 Samuel 19:36) Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward?

(2 Samuel 19:37) Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you."

(2 Samuel 19:38) And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you."

(2 Samuel 19:39) Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home.

(2 Samuel 19:40) The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

Two other interesting persons came to meet David,

(2 Samuel 19:16) And **Shimei** the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

(2 Samuel 19:17) And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And **Ziba** the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king,

Notice two important names, **Shimei and Ziba**.

What do we know about **Shimei**?

(2 Samuel 16:5) When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually.

(2 Samuel 16:6) And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left.

(2 Samuel 16:7) And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man!

(2 Samuel 16:8) The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood."

(2 Samuel 16:9) Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head."

(2 Samuel 16:10) But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'"

(2 Samuel 16:11) And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to.

(2 Samuel 16:12) It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today."

(2 Samuel 16:13) So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust.

Now notice when David is at the Jordan on his way back to Jerusalem,

(2 Samuel 19:18) and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, (2 Samuel 19:19) and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart.

(2 Samuel 19:20) For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king."

(2 Samuel 19:21) Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?"

(2 Samuel 19:22) But David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?"

(2 Samuel 19:23) And the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king gave him his oath.

David forgave Shimei.

Now the other person was **Ziba** – who was he?

When David became king he enquired about Saul's family,

(2 Samuel 9:1) And David said, "Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

(2 Samuel 9:2) Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba, and they called him to David. And the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:3) And the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in his feet."

(2 Samuel 9:4) The king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "He is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar."

(2 Samuel 9:5) Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, at Lo-debar.

(2 Samuel 9:6) And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, "Mephibosheth!" And he answered, "Behold, I am your servant."

(2 Samuel 9:7) And David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always."

(2 Samuel 9:8) And he paid homage and said, "What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?"

(2 Samuel 9:9) Then the king called Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson."

(2 Samuel 9:10) And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce, that your master's grandson may have bread to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's grandson shall always eat at my table." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

(2 Samuel 9:11) Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do." So Mephibosheth ate at David's table, like one of the king's sons.

Now, what about **Mephibosheth**?

Let us remind ourselves who he was and his relationship with David.

(2 Samuel 4:4) Jonathan, the son of Saul, had a son who was crippled in his feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came

from Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled, and as she fled in her haste, he fell and became lame. And his name was Mephibosheth.

But now notice what happens at the time of Absalom's rebellion,

(2 Samuel 16:1) When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

(2 Samuel 16:2) And the king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink."

(2 Samuel 16:3) And the king said, "And where is your master's son?" Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.'"

(2 Samuel 16:4) Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." And Ziba said, "I pay homage; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king."

So Ziba is there and Mephibosheth also turns up,

2 Samuel 19:24) And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.

(2 Samuel 19:25) And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

(2 Samuel 19:26) He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame.

(2 Samuel 19:27) He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you.

(2 Samuel 19:28) For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?"

(2 Samuel 19:29) And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land."

(2 Samuel 19:30) And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home."

As David regained control, new seeds of discontent were already sprouting.

There was intertribal dissension between Judah and the rest of the tribes,

(2 Samuel 19:41) Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"

(2 Samuel 19:42) All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?"

(2 Samuel 19:43) And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

And this came to a head when Sheba, a Benjaminite, initiated a rebellion.

(2 Samuel 20:1) Now there happened to be there a worthless man, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjaminite. And he blew the trumpet and said, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"

But this rebellion lacked public support and it exposed the commander that David had replaced Joab with Amasa.

(2 Samuel 20:2) So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

In response, David called his new commander in chief to quell the rebellion,

(2 Samuel 20:4) Then the king said to Amasa, "Call the men of Judah together to me within three days, and be here yourself."

(2 Samuel 20:5) So Amasa went to summon Judah, but he delayed beyond the set time that had been appointed him.

(2 Samuel 20:6) And David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he get himself to fortified cities and escape from us."

This exposed Amasa as incompetent and so a new commander was appointed.

While they were pursuing this rebellion, Joab had Amasa killed, there could be only one general.(2 Samuel 20:8) When they were at the great stone that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. Now Joab was wearing a soldier's garment, and over it was a belt with a sword in its sheath fastened on his thigh, and as he went forward it fell out.

(2 Samuel 20:9) And Joab said to Amasa, "Is it well with you, my brother?" And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him.

(2 Samuel 20:10) But Amasa did not observe the sword that was in Joab's hand. So Joab struck him with it in the stomach and spilled his entrails to the ground without striking a second blow, and he died. Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri.

(2 Samuel 20:11) And one of Joab's young men took his stand by Amasa and said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for David, let him follow Joab."

(2 Samuel 20:12) And Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the highway. And anyone who came by, seeing him, stopped. And when the man saw that all the people stopped, he carried Amasa out of the highway into the field and threw a garment over him.

(2 Samuel 20:13) When he was taken out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

Sheba retreated to a town, (2 Samuel 20:14) And Sheba passed through all the tribes of Israel to Abel of Beth-maacah, and all the Bichrites assembled and followed him in.

(2 Samuel 20:15) And all the men who were with Joab came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maacah. They cast up a mound against the city, and it stood against the rampart, and they were battering the wall to throw it down.

(2 Samuel 20:16) Then a wise woman called from the city, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'"

(2 Samuel 20:17) And he came near her, and the woman said, "Are you Joab?" He answered, "I am." Then she said to him, "Listen to the words of your servant." And he answered, "I am listening."

(2 Samuel 20:18) Then she said, "They used to say in former times, 'Let them but ask counsel at Abel,' and so they settled a matter.

(2 Samuel 20:19) I am one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city that is a mother in Israel. Why will you swallow up the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 20:20) Joab answered, "Far be it from me, far be it, that I should swallow up or destroy!

(2 Samuel 20:21) That is not true. But a man of the hill country of Ephraim, called Sheba the son of Bichri, has lifted up his hand against King David. Give up him alone, and I will withdraw from the city." And the woman said to Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to you over the wall."

(2 Samuel 20:22) Then the woman went to all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab. So he blew the trumpet, and they dispersed from the city, every man to his home. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

(2 Samuel 20:23) Now Joab was in command of all the army of Israel; and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was in command of the Cherethites and the Pelethites;

(2 Samuel 20:24) and Adoram was in charge of the forced labor; and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder;

(2 Samuel 20:25) and Sheva was secretary; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests;

(2 Samuel 20:26) and Ira the Jairite was also David's priest.

And so David re-united his kingdom and he reigned until his death.

SCRIPTURE READING: II Samuel 18:1-17, 24-33; 19:1-8 TITLE: Justice or Love.

INTRODUCTION.

We are looking at an incident or a series of incidents that took place in the life of **David**; the title of my message is: Justice or Love?

Our readings will be taken from
II Samuel 18:1-17, 24-33, 19:1-8.

I hope you feel the dramatic tension in this story.

This is almost like a play, a drama, a play with 3 lead actors, David, Joab and Absalom, and 2 minor actors, the 2 messengers in the story.

Joab is David's nephew and his military commander.

? Would you condone his action in killing Absalom in spite of the clear command of David?

Then there is **Absalom**, David's son who led a rebellion not only against his king but his own father.

? What do you think of what he did?

Finally, the most important actor, there is **David**, God's anointed King but also the father of Absalom.

? Can you identify with his love for his rebellious son?

Don't you think he was too soft with Absalom?

Can you see that this incident focuses on the tension between Joab's action and David's attitude?

Ultimately it's a tension between the demands of justice and the compassion of love [or forgiveness].

? That is the tension – do you feel it?

That tension brings us to the purpose why this story is recorded in the Bible.

The Bible does not record events just out of historical interest.

This passage is meant to focus our attention on this tension and what is surprising is the one who ultimately feels this tension – and how this tension is finally resolved – though not in this story.

That is how we are meant to understand and interpret this story.

It is not a message about tough love, or a warning to rebellious sons, nor is it about the consequences of poor parenting.

To really understand this incident and in fact the whole of the O.T., an important interpretative key to understanding the O.T. is to relate it to **God's great plan of redemption** – what we can call '*the story line of the Bible*', it is then that we can really make sense of these stories and we do not reduce the O.T. to some principles of behavior and living [Moralism].

But let me explain what I mean.

You see most Christians have what I call a 'bits and pieces' understanding of the Bible and to the O.T, in particular, and that is why they do not really understand the O.T., they do not see that everything in the O.T., the narratives, the ceremonies, the rituals and laws, the whole structure of the O.T. relates to one theme alone that in fact holds it all together and that is God's great plan to restore all things through Christ – to reverse the curse caused by sin.

BACKGROUND – CONTEXT

Before we see how this story fits the story-line let me give you the background to this story, its immediate context.

Let me remind you that all this takes place near the end of David's life.

You will remember that low point in the life of David, his adultery with Bathsheba and his arranged murder of her husband Uriah.

As a consequence David's family falls apart.

It is an appalling story, from chapter 12 onwards.

What happens is that Tamar, the beautiful sister of David's son Absalom, is raped by her half-brother Amnon.

In response to David's inaction, Absalom plans a deceitful plot and kills his half-brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13).

If that was not enough, Absalom, handsome, attractive, spoilt, deceitful and ruthless leads the country into civil war as he tries to take over the throne.

Look at chapter 14 – we see that there is to be reconciliation between David and Absalom, (2Sa 14:33) So he [Absalom] came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.

But notice what happens next, (2Sa 15:1) After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him.

(2Sa 15:2) And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "From what city are you?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel,"

(2Sa 15:3) Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you."

(2Sa 15:4) Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice."

(2Sa 15:5) And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

(2Sa 15:6) Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

(2Sa 15:7) And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, "Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.

(2Sa 15:10) But Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, 'Absalom is king at Hebron!'"

(2Sa 15:13) And a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom."

(2Sa 15:14) Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

(2Sa 15:16) So the king went out, and all his household after him. And the king left ten concubines to keep the house.

(2Sa 15:23) And all the land wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.

(2Sa 15:30) But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went.

He not only rebelled, but he was determined to insult his father as we see in (2Sa 16:22) So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

We see that he also planned to put David to death,

Throughout this David trusted the Lord, although he also made plans.

All this eventually led to a battle between David's army and the army following Absalom.

David was persuaded to stay behind in Mahanaim (his temporary base) during this battle.

Joab obviously knows that having David with him is just going to complicate matters – the Absalom's rebellion must be dealt with once and for all.

As his loyal fighters leave the city David publicly orders his three army commanders (Joab, Abishai and Ittai), "Deal gently with the young man Absalom" (18:5).

Joab of course, defeated Absalom and his rebel army and he was forced to escape.

Now Absalom had extraordinarily long hair and while trying to escape on his mule his hair was caught in a tree and he was, "suspended between heaven and earth" (18:9).

The loyal fighter who saw him did not know what to do (but he knew he was not to kill him, 18:12f), so he reported to Joab.

Joab, the hard-nosed realist politician, fiercely loyal to David, knew that in spite of David's soft-heartedness (18:5) it was vital for David's throne that Absalom be killed; so he killed him (18:14) (2Sa 18:14) And he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the oak. (2Sa 18:15) And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him. (2Sa 18:16) Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained them. (2Sa 18:17) And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest and raised over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled every one to his own home.

Joab understood that justice had to be done – Absalom was guilty.

Enter the other two players, Ahimaaz the son of Zadok wanted to run with the battle news to David, however Joab would not let him but instructs a Cushite to do it.

The Cushite did, but Ahimaaz insisted on running after him; he ran by a different route and got to David first and told him that the battle was won.

Of course, David wanted to know what had happened to Absalom but Ahimaaz did not want to tell him of Absalom's death [perhaps he knew that often the bearer of bad news becomes a scape goat].

It was at that moment that the other messenger arrived and so David asked him after Absalom and he told David that Absalom was dead.

The news devastates David.

(2Sa 18:33) And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

(2Sa 19:1) It was told Joab, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom."

(2Sa 19:2) So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, "The king is grieving for his son."

(2Sa 19:3) And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle.

(2Sa 19:4) The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Perhaps you have cried like that, or sat with others with others in such grief.

It is a scream of agony from a broken human heart.

No longer is it 'the young man Absalom' but 'O my son Absalom, my son Absalom!'

Such is a love that forgives and wants to forgive his son, treat him with compassion, and who of us does not identify with David.

But then Joab arrives on the scene he rebukes David – instead of mourning he should congratulate his army and those loyal to him.

(2Sa 19:5) Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, "You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines, (2Sa 19:6) **because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.**

He was accusing David of injustice.

? Was Joab right in killing Absalom?

Think of what Absalom had done.

Yes. Absalom had rebelled not just against his own father, serious enough, but worse, he had sought to replace God's anointed king – so it was rebellion against God [*remember how David would not harm Saul while he was king*].

Absalom was guilty of a terrible crime and if he had defeated David, he would have had him put to death.

So for justice to be done, Absalom had to die – if the anointed King is to reign.

There is no place for rebellion in the kingdom.

Joab is right but we also understand David's forgiving love – in fact, he must have remembered God's forgiveness when he was guilty of rebellion against God.

And there's the tension – the requirements of justice and the reality of a father's love.

Unknowingly, David suggests the resolution of the tension, but he is powerless to do anything. (2Sa 18:33) "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

CROSS OVER – FITTING THIS STORY INTO THE BIG STORY.

Can you see how this story brings into sharp focus a theme that begins in **Genesis 3 with a story of rebellion** – the demands for justice and the compassion of love?

It is the story of redemption – the tension is there.

It is a tension that God himself feels more acutely than any human being – the tension between his love and his holiness – his mercy and justice.

In this story we are given insight, as it were, into the heart of God and we can feel it, it is a tension that anyone who has loved and whose love has been betrayed has experienced.

My dear friends do you see that David's grief is God's grieve – David's tears are God's tears?

Do you see that Absalom is you, he me, he is humanity – we see in Genesis that Adam rebels against the King of the universe.

How easy it is to think of God as aloof – transcendent, and even unmoved as he dispenses justice.

But that is not true.

Turn to **Genesis 6** (Gen 6:5) The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Gen 6:6) And the LORD was sorry that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.

Notice – 'it grieved him to his heart'; that means literally his heart was pierced; it is descriptive of the physical pain we feel when we grieve.

God is not unmoved by our sin – there is the tension of the requirements of justice and his compassionate love for us.

Although we see in Genesis 6 God's judgment was to be poured out in the flood, yet, the compassion is there – 120 years to repent and God's mercy to mankind through Noah and his family.

That is the story of God's chosen people, those he delivered.

The Psalmist captures this in Psalm 78 (Psa 78:40) How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness **and grieved him** in the desert! (Psa 78:41) They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel.

It is the same word – he was pained in his heart because of their sin.

The pain of this tension is evident in Hosea 11:1-9, where God the Father of Israel '*ought*' (if we may say this reverently) to destroy his 'son' Israel, and yet his Father's heart 'recoils' within him (v8) (Hos 11:7) My people are bent on turning away from me, and though they call out to the Most High, he shall not raise them up at all. (Hos 11:8) **How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel?** How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. (Hos 11:9) I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

But let me return to David's sorrow for Absalom because David bears testimony to this great bible theme of the tension between Justice and God's love.

Now let me remind you that David is seen in the Bible as a type of Christ, sometimes negatively, as we see his failures and imperfections so he points forward by contrast to the coming King in whom these failures will not be found, David's greater Son'.

He is also seen positively as he anticipates and foreshadows the kingship of the Christ to come.

Let us move forward 1000 years and we see David's greater son lamenting.

See him at the grave of his friend, **Lazarus** and what do we see?

(Joh 11:33) When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was **deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled**.

(Joh 11:34) And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see."

(Joh 11:35) Jesus wept.

(Joh 11:36) So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

This was more than tears of sympathy.

The translation **deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled**.

This speaks of anger even more than sorrow.

Our Lord saw the unnaturalness and horror of what sin has done to bring death into the world and he was moved to anger – that humanity had to suffer.

These tears of love are foreshadowed by David's tears for Absalom.

But even more moving we see David's grief foreshadowed in the tears of Jesus Christ as he wept over impenitent Jerusalem, whom he longs to gather under his wings.

After pronouncing judgment over Israel we see that he breaks down,
(Mat 23:37) "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!

Jesus was weeping for what Israel had done from the beginning – the story of Israel's history was one of the son rebelling against his father and Jesus knew that within a few years the full weight of God's wrath was to fall on them.

He weeps but justice must be done.

However we must understand that God's grief is not a sentimental, passive grief – it is a grief that is determined to deal with this tension.

God does what David could not do when he said, with a breaking heart, (2Sa 18:33) "Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

God did something to resolve the tension between the demands of justice and the compassion of love.

Don Carson reminds us that when we talk about the love of God we should never separate it from the holiness of God.

What the Bible says about the love of God cannot long survive in people's thinking if it is abstracted from the sovereignty of God, the holiness of God, the wrath of God, the providence of God, and the personhood of God, to mention only a few nonnegotiable elements of basic Christianity.

Let remind you of those well-known words from John 3

(Joh 3:16) "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

(Joh 3:17) For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

In John's vocabulary "world" refers to mankind in rebellion against God.

In John 3:16 God's love in sending the Lord Jesus is to be admired not because it is extended to so big a thing as the world, but to so bad a thing; not to so many people, as to such wicked people.

Nevertheless elsewhere John wrote of "the whole world" (1 John 2:2), thus bringing bigness and badness together.

The reality is that it is not his will that humanity should perish, he does no delight in punishing us – so he did something – he did what David desired to do but could not do.

Only at the Cross were these terrible conflicting strands woven together in an awful harmony.

Romans 3:21-26 expounds this resolution, exposing its logic of penal substitution.

It is a resolution anticipated as David cries out of Absalom, more truly than he knew, "Would I had died instead of you" (18:33).

Paul explains this in Romans (Rom 3:24) and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, (Rom 3:25) whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. (Rom 3:26) It was to show his righteousness at

the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Listen to this prophecy in Isaiah 53 which points to how the tension would be resolved – notice the reference to sorrow and grief in this passage,

(Isa 53:3) He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

(Isa 53:4) Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

(Isa 53:5) But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

(Isa 53:6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(Isa 53:10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

(Isa 53:11) Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

Do you see it – God’s grief is concentrated in the suffering servant, the Lord Jesus Christ – justice and love brought together in him?

John puts it like this in his first letter,

(1Jn 4:9) In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.

(1Jn 4:10) In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

And remember that (Rom 5:6) For we yet being without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

(Rom 5:8) But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

(Rom 5:10) For if *when* we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Such is the love of God, of the triune God, he who (2Pe 3:9) The Lord is not slow concerning His promise, as some count slowness, but is long-suffering

toward us, not purposing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

CONCLUSION.

As I draw this to a conclusion let me direct your attention to some important implications of this narrative.

- When we look at Absalom rebelling against the king, we see ourselves, you and me – rebelling against the rightful King, the one who created us, who holds our lives in his hands – like Absalom we deserve justice and that means eternal condemnation in hell.
- Now as you witness the terrible grief of David for his rebellious son, Absalom, we are allowed to see into the very heart of our Father – we see that he is not unmoved – but he is filled with sorrow for our sin – he is righteous and our sin demands justice not just to be done, but to be seen to be done – but in his love, he longs to save us.
- But our sin cannot just be swept under the carpet, ignored, simply forgiven because justice must be done – if God's justice was to be maintained, sin and rebellion had to be dealt with – he sent someone to take Absalom's place – but the one who comes is not a rebel but he takes the place of the rebels and then God executes him.

How easily people talk about God's love – and for that reason don't really understand the depth of God's love because they have ignored the holiness of God.

You see it is only when I understand the terrible holiness of God – our God is a consuming fire, the absolute need for justice not only to be done but to be seen to be done, that we can really understand the amazing love of God.

Now my dear friends, if you are a Christian does this not amazed you – what a God we worship – and it is because of his love that you and I no better than Absalom have been saved and know that love as John writes, (1Jn 3:1) Behold what manner of love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God.

Charles Wesley wrote,
And can it be....

Unbelievers: In closing let me remind you of those amazing words in John John 3:16.

Do you see this – God so loved the world that he sent his Son to save us – so that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will be saved.

Do you see that – if you have never believed, that God so loved you and is giving you an opportunity to put your hope and faith in Christ?

How can you reject such love – love so amazing so divine demands you to fall before him in faith.

Let us imagine ourselves at the end of time, standing at the judgment seat with all the peoples of the earth gathered before God's throne.

As you stand there you feel the joy, the excitement, the triumph but do sense it – there is also a deep sorrow – it is God's sorrow that there are those who have to be turned away because they have rejected his salvation, spurned his great love.

My dear friend, realize that God's wrath, his judgment is not unfeeling.

God does not delight in sending men and women to hell – to the Lake of Fire he prepared for the devil and his evil angels.

God is filled with sorrow to see those who have chosen to remain his enemy in spite of all he did to save them.

God did not create us for hell, but for fellowship with him – his desire is that we should be with him and share in the glory of a new heaven and new earth.

The remainder of chaps. 21–23 glances over David's career retrospectively.

This section is like an appendix to David's reign and is not chronological.

The Greatness of David Narrative (2 Sam 21-24)

The in these chapters are not miscellaneous additions to the book as some would suppose, they recall some of the problems that David faced illustrating God's guidance and forms the motivation for this psalms of praise in chapter 22 and his last words in chapter 23.

The seven sons of Saul (2 Sam 21:1–4)

The covenantal aspect of David is stressed in this section.

Saul had treated the Gibeonites wrongly, which was the cause of famine in the land, the natural outgrowth of breaking the covenant.

(2 Samuel 21:1) Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year. And David sought the face of the LORD. And the LORD said, "There is bloodguilt on Saul and on his house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

Saul as he fought the Philistines, attacked the non-Israelites of Gibeon because he viewed them as a threat, but they were not a threat, however he had them killed.

He had broken a covenant Joshua had made with them,

(Joshua 9:3) But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, (Joshua 9:4) they on their part acted with cunning and went and made ready provisions and took worn-out sacks for their donkeys, and wineskins, worn-out and torn and mended, (Joshua 9:5) with worn-out, patched sandals on their feet, and worn-out clothes. And all their provisions were dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:6) And they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a distant country, so now make a covenant with us."

(Joshua 9:7) But the men of Israel said to the Hivites, "Perhaps you live among us; then how can we make a covenant with you?"

(Joshua 9:8) They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?"

(Joshua 9:9) They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, (Joshua 9:10) and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroath.

(Joshua 9:11) So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us."'

(Joshua 9:12) Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly.

(Joshua 9:13) These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey."

(Joshua 9:14) So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the LORD.

(Joshua 9:15) And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

(Joshua 9:16) At the end of three days after they had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were their neighbors and that they lived among them.

(Joshua 9:17) And the people of Israel set out and reached their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim.

(Joshua 9:18) But the people of Israel did not attack them, because the leaders of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel. Then all the congregation murmured against the leaders.

(Joshua 9:19) But all the leaders said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD, the God of Israel, and now we may not touch them.

(Joshua 9:20) This we will do to them: let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath that we swore to them."

(Joshua 9:21) And the leaders said to them, "Let them live." So they became cutters of wood and drawers of water for all the congregation, just as the leaders had said of them.

(Joshua 9:22) Joshua summoned them, and he said to them, "Why did you deceive us, saying, 'We are very far from you,' when you dwell among us?

(Joshua 9:23) Now therefore you are cursed, and some of you shall never be anything but servants, cutters of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God."

(Joshua 9:24) They answered Joshua, "Because it was told to your servants for a certainty that the LORD your God had commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from

before you--so we feared greatly for our lives because of you and did this thing.

(Joshua 9:25) And now, behold, we are in your hand. Whatever seems good and right in your sight to do to us, do it."

(Joshua 9:26) So he did this to them and delivered them out of the hand of the people of Israel, and they did not kill them.

(Joshua 9:27) But Joshua made them that day cutters of wood and drawers of water for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, to this day, in the place that he should choose.

Even though they were tricked into making a covenant, yet it was binding and God took that oath as binding – now years later, some consequences.

2 Samuel 21:2) So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites were not of the people of Israel but of the remnant of the Amorites. Although the people of Israel had sworn to spare them, Saul had sought to strike them down in his zeal for the people of Israel and Judah.

(2 Samuel 21:3) And David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And how shall I make atonement, that you may bless the heritage of the LORD?"

(2 Samuel 21:4) The Gibeonites said to him, "It is not a matter of silver or gold between us and Saul or his house; neither is it for us to put any man to death in Israel." And he said, "What do you say that I shall do for you?"

(2 Samuel 21:5) They said to the king, "The man who consumed us and planned to destroy us, so that we should have no place in all the territory of Israel,

(2 Samuel 21:6) let seven of his sons be given to us, so that we may hang them before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of the LORD." And the king said, "I will give them."

(2 Samuel 21:7) But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's son Jonathan, because of the oath of the LORD that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul.

David allowed the Gibeonites to execute the sons of Saul except for Mephibosheth.

David protected him because of David's covenant with Mephibosheth's father Jonathan.

(2 Samuel 21:8) The king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth; and the five sons of Merab the daughter of Saul, whom she bore to Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite;

(2 Samuel 21:9) and he gave them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the mountain before the LORD, and the seven of them perished together. They were put to death in the first days of harvest, at the beginning of barley harvest.

Including this narrative, absolves David of killing the family of Saul as revenge.

This also depicts the fact that Saul's line was eventually reduced to one crippled man—from the most powerful-looking man in Israel (Saul) to one of the least-imposing figures (Mephibosheth), who could never mount a rebellion against David.

In contrast, David had complete power over Saul's line and over the affairs of Israel.

The giant-killers (2 Sam 21:15–22) .

This recounts some of David's wars against the Philistines – not chronological – goes back in time.

Perhaps recorded to give background to Psalm of praise in chapter 22 and David's last words in chapter 23.

Shows how God provided David with mighty warriors.

This section includes a list of the giant-killers and their victims.

David and his fighting men evidenced great power and vitality as they were conquering previously undefeated foes.

See problem of verse 19 and I Chron 20:5

David's song of thanksgiving

(2 Sam 22)

This psalm, which also appears with minor variations as Psalm 18, recounted the central theological point of the book.

The Lord is in control and will fight on behalf of those who live according to the covenant.

True success comes from Him.

Therefore David could say, "The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands He has recompensed me" (2 Sam 22:21).

David ' s last words (2 Sam 23:1-7) .

The covenant between the Lord and David is highlighted in these short verses.

Because of God's covenant promise, David was confident his enemies could not overwhelm him.

David ' s mighty men (2 Sam 23:8-39) .

This impressive list stands in contrast to the original group of misfits and malcontents who originally surrounded David (1 Sam 22:2).

David's forces increased as Saul's decreased.

The census and the site of the temple (2 Sam 24) .

When David began trusting in his own strength instead of the Lord and His covenant (24:1-9), pestilence came on the whole land (24:10-17).

Trusting in the mercy of God, David was convinced that God would honor His covenant and would not completely destroy the nation or David's line.

The theological problem;

(2 Samuel 24:1) Again the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

(2 Samuel 24:2) So the king said to Joab, the commander of the army, who was with him, "Go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and number the people, that I may know the number of the people."

(2 Samuel 24:3) But Joab said to the king, "May the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times as many as they are, while the eyes of my lord the king still see it, but why does my lord the king delight in this thing?"

(2 Samuel 24:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army went out from the presence of the king to number the people of Israel.

(2 Samuel 24:5) They crossed the Jordan and began from Aroer, and from the city that is in the middle of the valley, toward Gad and on to Jazer.

(2 Samuel 24:6) Then they came to Gilead, and to Kadesh in the land of the Hittites; and they came to Dan, and from Dan they went around to Sidon,

(2 Samuel 24:7) and came to the fortress of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and Canaanites; and they went out to the Negeb of Judah at Beersheba.

(2 Samuel 24:8) So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

(2 Samuel 24:9) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to the king: in Israel there were 800,000 valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were 500,000.

(2 Samuel 24:10) But David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

(2 Samuel 24:11) And when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

(2 Samuel 24:12) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you. Choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(2 Samuel 24:13) So Gad came to David and told him, and said to him, "Shall three years of famine come to you in your land? Or will you flee three months before your foes while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' pestilence in your land? Now consider, and decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(2 Samuel 24:14) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but let me not fall into the hand of man."

(2 Samuel 24:15) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel from the morning until the appointed time. And there died of the people from Dan to Beersheba 70,000 men.

(2 Samuel 24:16) And when the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who was working destruction among the people, "It is enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

(2 Samuel 24:17) Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Behold, I have sinned, and I have

done wickedly. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand be against me and against my father's house."

(2 Samuel 24:18) And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

(2 Samuel 24:19) So David went up at Gad's word, as the LORD commanded.

(2 Samuel 24:20) And when Araunah looked down, he saw the king and his servants coming on toward him. And Araunah went out and paid homage to the king with his face to the ground.

(2 Samuel 24:21) And Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be averted from the people."

(2 Samuel 24:22) Then Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what seems good to him. Here are the oxen for the burnt offering and the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood.

(2 Samuel 24:23) All this, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

(2 Samuel 24:24) But the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

(2 Samuel 24:25) And David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD responded to the plea for the land, and the plague was averted from Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:1) Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:2) So David said to Joab and the commanders of the army, "Go, number Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, and bring me a report, that I may know their number."

(1 Chronicles 21:3) But Joab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of

them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

(1 Chronicles 21:4) But the king's word prevailed against Joab. So Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came back to Jerusalem.

(1 Chronicles 21:5) And Joab gave the sum of the numbering of the people to David. In all Israel there were 1,100,000 men who drew the sword, and in Judah 470,000 who drew the sword.

(1 Chronicles 21:6) But he did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, for the king's command was abhorrent to Joab.

(1 Chronicles 21:7) But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

(1 Chronicles 21:8) And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

(1 Chronicles 21:9) And the LORD spoke to Gad, David's seer, saying,

(1 Chronicles 21:10) "Go and say to David, 'Thus says the LORD, Three things I offer you; choose one of them, that I may do it to you.'"

(1 Chronicles 21:11) So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, 'Choose what you will:

(1 Chronicles 21:12) either three years of famine, or three months of devastation by your foes while the sword of your enemies overtakes you, or else three days of the sword of the LORD, pestilence on the land, with the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now decide what answer I shall return to him who sent me."

(1 Chronicles 21:13) Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

(1 Chronicles 21:14) So the LORD sent a pestilence on Israel, and 70,000 men of Israel fell.

(1 Chronicles 21:15) And God sent the angel to Jerusalem to destroy it, but as he was about to destroy it, the LORD saw, and he relented from the calamity. And he said to the angel who was working destruction, "It is

enough; now stay your hand." And the angel of the LORD was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:16) And David lifted his eyes and saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, and in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

(1 Chronicles 21:17) And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. But do not let the plague be on your people."

(1 Chronicles 21:18) Now the angel of the LORD had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

(1 Chronicles 21:19) So David went up at Gad's word, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD.

(1 Chronicles 21:20) Now Ornan was threshing wheat. He turned and saw the angel, and his four sons who were with him hid themselves.

(1 Chronicles 21:21) As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went out from the threshing floor and paid homage to David with his face to the ground.

(1 Chronicles 21:22) And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD--give it to me at its full price--that the plague may be averted from the people."

(1 Chronicles 21:23) Then Ornan said to David, "Take it, and let my lord the king do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering; I give it all."

(1 Chronicles 21:24) But King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

(1 Chronicles 21:25) So David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

(1 Chronicles 21:26) And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering.

(1 Chronicles 21:27) Then the LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath.

(1 Chronicles 21:28) At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there.

(1 Chronicles 21:29) For the tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon,

(1 Chronicles 21:30) but David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

Explanation – Job, Acts 2 and 4, Luke 22:31

SOLOMON – I Kings.

From II Samuel 11 to the end of Samuel we see that David's reign was marred by his failure in the matter of Bathsheba, and the raising of his children so that the latter part of his life was characterized by rebellion in his own family, rebellion in his kingdom and finally he incurred God's judgment when he had a census made of his fighting men.

So, we look for the fulfilment of God's promise in his son, Solomon.

Introduction to I Kings.

I Kings continues the story of Israel that started in the Book of Joshua.

I Kings is about the reign of Solomon, David's son and described the greatness of the kingdom and also the early history of the division of the kingdom into 10 tribes in the North, thereafter known as Israel and the 2 tribes in the South, known as Judah.

With II Kings the period covered is over 4 centuries to the Fall of Samaria and the Northern Kingdom [722 BC] and the Fall of Jerusalem in [586 BC].

With II Kings we have a record that covers 400 years.

It is a story of Israel's unfaithfulness to the Covenant.

Who wrote I and II Kings – these books have been traditionally attributed to Jeremiah.

The focus throughout falls on whether the kings were faithful to God and the Covenant and time and again, the norm is David – whether the kings followed David in his faithfulness to God – their willingness to walk in the ways of King David.

Each King is evaluated according to his loyalty to God as worshipped in Jerusalem.

We see how the blessings and curses of Deut work [Deut 28] out in the life of God's people – the emphasis is the unfaithfulness of Israel and the faithfulness of God.

So the primary concern of these books is faithfulness and loyalty to God.

What is interesting is how these books view the other nations – the world empires are shown to be more instruments in God's hands.

For a fuller picture of this time we need to read the prophets who challenge the king and God's people with God's word.

Chapters 1-11 – The United Kingdom under Solomon.

These chapters describe the height of Israel's political and military power.

Only during this time did Israel become a major player in international politics.

But this period of strength and glory was offset by Solomon's religious apostasy.

His unfaithfulness to the covenant erased all the accomplishments of his reign.

Shortly after his death Israel's glory was over.

The beginning of Solomon's reign 1:1-2:46.

Solomon was neither the crown prince nor David's eldest living son.

So he had no legitimate claim to be David's successor.

So the story begins by relating how he became king.

Adonijah, David's fourth and oldest living son, was in line to succeed his father.

But he was unwilling to wait for God's timing and he attempted [like Absalom].

While David lay weak with age and confined to bed he attempted to take the kingdom in his own strength and against God's will.

(1 Kings 1:5) Now Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king." And he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him.

His father had never at any time displeased him by asking, "Why have you done thus and so?" He was also a very handsome man, and he was born next after Absalom.

Obviously he began to exalt himself before David was confined to bed, but we again see that David never checked him.

Now it is important to realize that God had told David that Solomon was the succeed him.

Look at I Chronicles we see that God made it clear that he would not build the temple, but his son.

So David began to make arrangements for Solomon.

(1 Chronicles 22:1) Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

(1 Chronicles 22:2) David commanded to gather together the resident aliens who were in the land of Israel, and he set stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God.

(1 Chronicles 22:3) David also provided great quantities of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, (1 Chronicles 22:4) and cedar timbers without number, for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David.

(1 Chronicles 22:5) For David said, "Solomon my son is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, of fame and glory throughout all lands. I will therefore make preparation for it." So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

(1 Chronicles 22:6) Then he called for Solomon his son and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel.

(1 Chronicles 22:7) David said to Solomon, "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house to the name of the LORD my God.

(1 Chronicles 22:8) But the word of the LORD came to me, saying, '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 before me on the earth.

(1 Chronicles 22:9) Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.

(1 Chronicles 22:10) He shall build a house for my name. He shall be my son, and I will be his father, and I will establish his royal throne in Israel forever.'

(1 Chronicles 22:11) "Now, my son, the LORD be with you, so that you may succeed in building the house of the LORD your God, as he has spoken concerning you.

(1 Chronicles 22:12) Only, may the LORD grant you discretion and understanding, that when he gives you charge over Israel you may keep the law of the LORD your God.

Knowing this, why did David not stop this Adonijah?

We see how Adonijah started to win the loyalty of some of the leading men in the kingdom.

(1 Kings 1:7) He conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest. And they followed Adonijah and helped him.

(1 Kings 1:8) But Zadok the priest and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada and Nathan the prophet and Shimei and Rei and David's mighty men were not with Adonijah.

He arranged a ceremony that would lead to his acceptance as king.

(1 Kings 1:9) Adonijah sacrificed sheep, oxen, and fattened cattle by the Serpent's Stone, which is beside En-rogel, and he invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, (1 Kings 1:10) but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the mighty men or Solomon his brother.

So although he had support, the prophets did not support him and so

1 Kings 1:11) Then Nathan said to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king and David our lord does not know it?

It is obvious that David had told the prophets about God's choice so one of the prophets, Nathan, approached Solomon's mother and gave her plan,

(1 Kings 1:12) Now therefore come, let me give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon.

(1 Kings 1:13) Go in at once to King David, and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord the king, swear to your servant, saying, "Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then is Adonijah king?'

(1 Kings 1:14) Then while you are still speaking with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

(1 Kings 1:15) So Bathsheba went to the king in his chamber (now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was attending to the king).

(1 Kings 1:16) Bathsheba bowed and paid homage to the king, and the king said, "What do you desire?"

(1 Kings 1:17) She said to him, "My lord, you swore to your servant by the LORD your God, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.'

(1 Kings 1:18) And now, behold, Adonijah is king, although you, my lord the king, do not know it.

(1 Kings 1:19) He has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army, but Solomon your servant he has not invited.

(1 Kings 1:20) And now, my lord the king, the eyes of all Israel are on you, to tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him.

She is urging him to take action and warns him of inaction,

(1 Kings 1:21) Otherwise it will come to pass, when my lord the king sleeps with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted offenders."

(1 Kings 1:22) While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet came in.

(1 Kings 1:23) And they told the king, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king, he bowed before the king, with his face to the ground.

(1 Kings 1:24) And Nathan said, "My lord the king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'?

(1 Kings 1:25) For he has gone down this day and has sacrificed oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest. And behold, they are eating and drinking before him, and saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!'

(1 Kings 1:26) But me, your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he has not invited.

(1 Kings 1:27) Has this thing been brought about by my lord the king and you have not told your servants who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

(1 Kings 1:28) Then King David answered, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king.

(1 Kings 1:29) And the king swore, saying, "As the LORD lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, (1 Kings 1:30) as I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel, saying, 'Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' even so will I do this day."

(1 Kings 1:31) Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground and paid homage to the king and said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

(1 Kings 1:32) King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king.

(1 Kings 1:33) And the king said to them, "Take with you the servants of your lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.

(1 Kings 1:34) And let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel. Then blow the trumpet and say, 'Long live King Solomon!'

(1 Kings 1:35) You shall then come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, for he shall be king in my place. And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah."

(1 Kings 1:36) And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, "Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, say so.

(1 Kings 1:37) As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

(1 Kings 1:38) So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihon.

(1 Kings 1:39) There Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet, and all the people said, "Long live King Solomon!"

(1 Kings 1:40) And all the people went up after him, playing on pipes, and rejoicing with great joy, so that the earth was split by their noise.

This was happening while Adonijah was having his celebration,

(1 Kings 1:41) Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished feasting. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, "What does this uproar in the city mean?"

(1 Kings 1:42) While he was still speaking, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came. And Adonijah said, "Come in, for you are a worthy man and bring good news."

(1 Kings 1:43) Jonathan answered Adonijah, "No, for our lord King David has made Solomon king, 1 Kings 1:44) and the king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites. And they had him ride on the king's mule.

(1 Kings 1:45) And Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon, and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This is the noise that you have heard.

(1 Kings 1:46) Solomon sits on the royal throne.

(1 Kings 1:47) Moreover, the king's servants came to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours, and make his throne greater than your throne.' And the king bowed himself on the bed.

(1 Kings 1:48) And the king also said, 'Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has granted someone to sit on my throne this day, my own eyes seeing it.'

(1 Kings 1:49) Then all the guests of Adonijah trembled and rose, and each went his own way.

(1 Kings 1:50) And Adonijah feared Solomon. So he arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar.

(1 Kings 1:51) Then it was told Solomon, "Behold, Adonijah fears King Solomon, for behold, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"

(1 Kings 1:52) And Solomon said, "If he will show himself a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth, but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die."

(1 Kings 1:53) So King Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and paid homage to King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

In chapter 2 we have David's final charge to Solomon.

Chapter 2 – **David's charge to Solomon,**

KI 2:1 When the time drew near for David to die, he gave a charge to Solomon his son.

1KI 2:2 "I am about to go the way of all the earth," he said. "So be strong, show yourself a man,³ 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,⁴ and that the LORD may keep his promise to me: 'If your descendants watch how they live, and if they walk faithfully before me with all their heart and soul, you will never fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.'

1KI 2:10 Then David rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David.¹¹ He had reigned forty years over Israel--seven years in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem.¹² So Solomon sat on the throne of his father David, and his rule was firmly established.

To all intents and purposes, Adonijah submits to Solomon but we see that he approaches Bathsheba with a request to Solomon, to give him the Abishag, the concubine who cared to David in his closing years – this Solomon knew, was in actual fact, an underhanded way to later undermine him and make a bid for the throne.

(1 Kings 2:22) King Solomon answered his mother, "And why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also, for he is my older brother, and on his side are Abiathar the priest and Joab the son of Zeruiah."

(1 Kings 2:23) Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, "God do so to me and more also if this word does not cost Adonijah his life!

(1 Kings 2:24) Now therefore as the LORD lives, who has established me and placed me on the throne of David my father, and who has made me a house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today."

(1 Kings 2:25) So King Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and he struck him down, and he died.

1 Kings, the first ten chapters refer to the reign of Solomon.

Solomon had a **very promising beginning** as we see in chapter 3 for example.

³ Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the statutes of his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

1KI 3:4 The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

1KI 3:6 Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

1KI 3:7 "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

1KI 3:10 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for--both riches and honor--so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴ And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." ¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke--and he realized it had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings

There follows a description of the **splendour of his reign – his remarkable wisdom, his wealth, his administration and the building programme.**

1KI 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. ³⁰ Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. ³¹ He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite--wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. ³² He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. ³³ He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. ³⁴ Men of

all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.

The book of Kings shows that Solomon put the finishing touches to the glories of David's reign.

Examples of his wisdom: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.

(1 Kings 3:16) Then two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him.

(1 Kings 3:17) The one woman said, "Oh, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house, and I gave birth to a child while she was in the house.

(1 Kings 3:18) Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. And we were alone. There was no one else with us in the house; only we two were in the house.

(1 Kings 3:19) And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him.

(1 Kings 3:20) And she arose at midnight and took my son from beside me, while your servant slept, and laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast.

(1 Kings 3:21) When I rose in the morning to nurse my child, behold, he was dead. But when I looked at him closely in the morning, behold, he was not the child that I had borne."

(1 Kings 3:22) But the other woman said, "No, the living child is mine, and the dead child is yours." The first said, "No, the dead child is yours, and the living child is mine." Thus they spoke before the king.

(1 Kings 3:23) Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead'; and the other says, 'No; but your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'"

(1 Kings 3:24) And the king said, "Bring me a sword." So a sword was brought before the king.

(1 Kings 3:25) And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other."

(1 Kings 3:26) Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, "Oh, my lord, give her the living

child, and by no means put him to death." But the other said, "He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him."

(1 Kings 3:27) Then the king answered and said, "Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother."

(1 Kings 3:28) And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice.

The highlight of his reign was no doubt the building of the temple – here for the first time the Ark of the Covenant had a permanent structure – we have a record of the building of the temple in chapter 6, and the dedication of the temple in chapter 8.

Here was the clearest sign that God was now living in the midst of his people – the Temple was Israel's witness that they served the only true living God.

Solomon's fame spread all over the world until he was visited by the **Queen of Sheba**.

1KI 10:1 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.

1KI 10:1 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relation to the name of the LORD, she came to test him with hard questions.

⁴ When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, ⁵ the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made atⁿ the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

1KI 10:6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. ⁷ But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁸ How happy your men must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! ⁹ Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king, to maintain justice and righteousness."

Solomon's reign causes this Gentile queen to praise Israel's God.

Israel was being a **blessing to the nations**, like God promised Abraham in Genesis 12.

Was this the fulfilment of God's promised reign, was Solomon God's perfect king?

There is no doubt that this was what we can call Israel's golden age – Israel living a good life, or we could call it the kingdom life.

In many ways, the reign of David's son, Solomon provides an interesting picture of the kind of rule that God intends to establish through the promised seed of Abraham.

So what was his place in God's plan?

Under Solomon, there was a partial fulfilment of God's promise of a kingdom.

What David begins, Solomon brings to glory – back to Eden?

However, this is not the perfect king or the perfect kingdom, glorious as it was.

The latter part of Solomon's reign was marred with failure – his many wives lead him astray – this is what we read in chapter 11,

1KI 11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter--Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. ² They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. ³ He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. ⁴ As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. ⁵ He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molechⁿ the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

1KI 11:9 The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. ¹⁰ Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. ¹¹ So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I

commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. ¹² Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. ¹³ Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

From here on we are into a period of decline.

There is a civil war – the northern tribes rebel against Solomon's son, Rehoboam and so the kingdom is divided between the two tribes in the south called Judah and the ten tribes in the north called Israel.

The history of the ten tribes is a spiral downward until they were taken into captivity in BC 722.

And what about Judah?

Even though there were some good kings, the spiral is downward, with king after king rejecting God's rule.

Kings records the eventual destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and the removal of the king to Babylon, marking the end of the Davidic dynasty's rule.

So the question – what about the promise of God, where was the reign of God?

What about the promise God made to David about an everlasting kingdom?

What about God's promise to establish Abraham's seed?

It seems that we have a repetition of Eden slipping from man's grasp.

However, it should be obvious when you go back to that promise that God made to David in II Samuel chapter 7, **seems to point beyond Solomon.**

⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before meⁿ; your throne will be established forever.' "

The promise looks forward to someone from David's line whose kingdom will be everlasting.

There must be someone greater than David or Solomon.

But it would not for another 1000 years before he would come – the rest of the book of Kings and the Prophets tell us about what happened in this intervening time [we will look at that in subsequent studies].

But one thing is clear, the glory has passed – never to be recaptured in the history of Israel.

But let us jump 1000 years, and listen to these significant words of Jesus,

³¹ The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now oneⁿ greater than Solomon is here.

Of course, Jesus was referring to himself.

Look how Matthew' begins his gospel, with the genealogy of Jesus,

MT 1:1 A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham:

Paul puts it like this in Romans 1

RO 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God-- ² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David

You can only understand the fullness of our Lord's coming to earth in the light of the Old Testament that is why the New Testament constantly refers back to the Old Testament..

The whole OT points to Christ – it is about him.

We can put it like this: the prosperity and glory of David and Solomon's kingdom were but a shadow, or a model, of God's perfect kingdom.

It pointed to it, but it fell short because the perfect king had not yet come – but God was giving his people a picture of what was to come in all its fullness through the one who would be born of David's line, Jesus Christ.

This is what makes the Old Testament much more than just a record of Israel's history – it is the story of God's plan of salvation.

It is the story of God's action to establish an everlasting kingdom under the rule of the perfect king, the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the story of the New Testament.

It is the story of how God establishes his kingdom, fulfils his promise to Abraham – it is the story that tells us about the nature of God's kingdom.

This means that the turning point in history, the fulfilment is found in Christ and that means that we are living in the most significant time in the history of humanity – we are living in the time of fulfilment.

In Jesus Christ, God set up his kingdom, his everlasting kingdom – right now, Christ is ruling that kingdom and right now, those who have believed in Jesus Christ, those who have been given eternal life, are part of that kingdom.

There is nothing more important in these days especially that we Christians understand the times we are living in.

In Romans 13, Paul admonished the Roman believers to understand the present time.

When he wrote these words, Christianity was a minority and despised religion in the world of that time.

Most Christians came from the lower classes of society [not uneducated].

They had no influence in the world.

Don't forget who was ruling at that time – the Emperor Nero – he instigated one the most dreadful persecutions Christians ever faced.

Many of those to whom Paul wrote would lose their possessions, their families and their lives.

In the midst of all this, it would be so easy for the believers to become discouraged and want to give up.

Where was the power of the gospel?

Where was the victory of Christ?

Who was in control of human history?

What did the future hold?

In this context Paul wanted the Roman believers to understand the time they were living in.

Paul wanted the believers to understand that they were living in the most important phase of human history – the most momentous time – this is how he put it,

The hour has come for you to wake from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer than we first believed. The night is nearly over, the day is almost here.

What did Paul mean?

He wanted the Roman Christians to understand that they were part of something greater than themselves, something that transcended their time, they belonged to another kingdom, a spiritual kingdom which was everlasting and was even then bringing down the kingdoms of this world – and in fact within a few years would overcome the mighty Roman Empire.

That was the message of the Book of Revelation.

‘You are more than conquerors’.

They had to understand, even as we have to realize that right now Christ is in control, all authority has been given to him.

He is right now ruling the world in the interests of his people.

Nothing can stop him.

The kings of the earth may take their stand against him and for a time they may seem to be successful in all their arrogance and pride – but they do not last and they come crushing down.

That is the meaning of history – the victory of Christ’s kingdom.

And we belong to that kingdom.

Paul wants the Roman Christians to realize that they belong to another kingdom and that right now, in this present age we must live as children of the kingdom in every part of our lives – our families, our work, our studies, our hobbies, our interests, our relationships.

How are we to live?

Well he has already referred to that – love.

Romans 13 ^{RO 13:8} Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law. ⁹ The commandments, "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not covet,"ⁿ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: "Love your neighbor as yourself."ⁿ ¹⁰ Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

^{RO 13:11} And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. ¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. ¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.ⁿ

Let everything we do be characterized by love [the love that marks us out as disciples].