

THE LIFE OF DAVID - BIBLE STUDIES

There are 58 references to David in the New Testament, and Christ is described both as the Son of David and the Lord of David. David is both an example of a man of faith from whom we are to learn, and a type of Christ, a shepherd who points to the Great Shepherd, a king who points to the King of kings. Walter Chantry comments that ‘Only the supreme providence of God and the unfathomable depths of divine grace could have conceived and forged the life of David.’

David Anointed as King (1 Sam.16:1-13)

1. What is the attitude of the prophet Samuel to King Saul? (16:1) What is God’s attitude? Why did God remove Saul from the kingship? (1 Sam.13:8-9, 13-14; 15:8-9, 19-23) What did God tell Samuel to do? (16:1) _____

2. How did Samuel respond to this command? (16:2) What did God say to him? What might we learn from this? How did the Bethlehem elders respond? (16:5) Why must a sacrifice take place first? _____

3. Whom did Samuel first think would be the next king? (16:6) On what basis? How are God’s values different? (16:7; note 1 Sam.9:2) What does the world value and what does God value? _____

4. Whom does Samuel look at next? (16:8-10) How many of Jesse’s sons are rejected? _____

5. Who has been almost left out of calculations? (16:11) What is his occupation? How is David described? (16:12; this is one of the few physical descriptions that we have in the Bible; cf. 2 Cor.10:10) _____

6. What does Samuel do to David, and what does God do to David? (16:13)

Note that Saul too had the Spirit but only for a time (1 Sam.10:6, 10; 11:6; 16:14).

Saul Vexed (1 Samuel 16:14-23)

1. What is said about the Spirit and Saul? (16:14a; see too Judges 16:20, although note Hebrews 11:32 for Samson) Can there be a temporary influence of the Spirit in the life of an unbeliever? (Luke 11:24-26; Heb.6:4-6) _____

Matthew Henry: 'If God and His grace do not rule us, sin and Satan will have possession of us.'

2. What does the Bible say about God's sovereignty over evil? (16:14b; see too Judges 9:5-6, 22-23, 25, 52-54; 1 Kings 22:19-23; Proverbs 16:4) How can we understand this? _____

Keil and Delitzsch say that this was a demon.

3. What provides some temporary relief for Saul? (16:15-23) What is said about David's musical capabilities? (2 Samuel 23:1) How useful are such remedies and what are the drawbacks? Can you think of other examples (e.g. diversionary tactics in child discipline, breathing techniques to overcome fear or panic attacks, anything designed simply to put a person in a better mood)? What was the main thing that Saul needed to do? (Prov.28:13) _____

Martin Luther found music very consoling, and Ulrich Zwingli said that it kept the lads quiet.

Blaise Pascal said that man’s problem is that he cannot sit in a room by himself.

*None but Jesus, none but Jesus
Can do helpless sinners good* (Joseph Hart).

David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17)

The date is about 1030 B.C.

1. Where were the armies of the Philistines and the Israelites gathered? (17:1-3) _____

This is about 17 miles south-west of Jerusalem. E. M. Blaiklock says that the last time he saw the place, it was a lettuce farm.

2. Describe Goliath of Gath (17:4-7) _____

3. What was Goliath’s challenge to Israel? (17:8-10) What effect did his words have on the Israelites? (17:11) _____

In Homer, there is representative combat between Hector and Achilles.

4. What happened during the next forty days? (17:12-16) What job was given to David? (17:17-18) _____

5. What happened next? (17:19-23) _____

6. How fearful was Israel? (17:24-25) What incentives did Saul provide that did not move any Israelite? What about the promises of God? (Ex.23:22; Deut. 3:22; 20:1-4) _____

Roland de Vaux says that this means exemption from taxation and forced labour.

7. Why was David shocked at Israel’s fear? (17:26) What is this teaching us? (Prov.28:1) What do the Israelites tell David? (17:27) _____

*No lion can him fright,
He’ll with a giant fight,*

*But he will have a right
To be a pilgrim* (John Bunyan).

8. How did Eliab respond to David about this? (17:28) How true is this to human nature?! (note 1 John 3:11-12) What followed? (17:29-30) _____

Arthur Pink: 'The man of God must be prepared to be misinterpreted and to stand alone.'

9. What was Saul's evaluation of David? (17:31-33) _____

10. What is David's answer to this? (17:34-37) How can we use past experiences and talents to reinforce faith? What is Saul's final response? (17:37b) Who fought the bear and lion? (cf. 17:35, 37) _____

11. How did Saul want to arm David? (17:38-40) What was David's response to that? Again, what can we glean from that? _____

12. What was Goliath's evaluation of David? (17:41-44) _____

13. How does David view the battle? (17:45-47) What would result from David's victory? (17:46) What would be the effect on Israel? (17:47) _____

Walter Chantry: 'A steady hand in the fight is the result of a steady gaze of faith.'

14. How did David defeat Goliath? (17:48-49) _____

15. What happened after that? (17:50-54) _____

16. What inquiries does Saul make? (17:55-58) _____

This seems strange because Saul knew David back in 1 Samuel 16:14-23. Perhaps Saul's memory has been affected, or perhaps this is an inquiry about

David's family as David will become Saul's son-in-law.

17. Graeme Goldsworthy says this is all about the flow of biblical theology, and we are meant to see David as the one who points to Christ. But how much of David's faith and courage are we meant to imitate, and how much should we see him as pointing to the Son of David as our representative? _____

The Sin of Jealousy (1 Sam.18:1-16)

After the triumph over Goliath, David experiences an extended period of trials and troubles.

1. What is Jonathan's attitude to David? (18:1) Why is this so remarkable? Did Jonathan have any worldly reason to be kind to David? _____

2. What did Saul do in response? (18:2) _____

3. What did Jonathan do with David? (18:3) How did he enhance and illustrate this covenant? (18:4) _____

For some odd reason, Arthur Pink does not treat Jonathan as a regenerate man.

Walter Chantry: 'A faithful friend is a strong defence in adversity, a soothing medicine when one is deeply wounded.'

4. With what task did Saul entrust David? (18:5) How did the people respond to this? (18:5-7, 16) Is this much above the level of the adulation of film stars and pop stars? (notice that the Philistines of Gath came to hear the song in 1 Samuel 21:10-11) Contrast it with Miriam's song in Exodus 15:1-3, 21. What is the great difference? What are the dangers in being a celebrity? _____

5. Why was Saul so hostile to David? (18:8-9; Prov.14:30) When did Saul appreciate David? (cf.16:21) What does this reveal about Saul's motives? (note 1 Cor.13:4) _____

Robert Murray M'Cheyne left Dundee for a mission in the Holy Land. While M'Cheyne was away, a revival broke out in Dundee under the preaching of William Burns. When M'Cheyne returned, he felt no envy, but rejoiced that God had blessed His people.

6. What happened to Saul the next day? (18:10) Where did this spirit come from? _____

7. What did Saul plan to do to David? (18:10-11) _____

8. Why was Saul afraid of David? (18:12, 16) _____

9. Why did Saul make David a commander in his army? (18:12-13; see 18:17) But what happened? (18:14-15) _____

10. What is all this teaching us about our ambitions? Contrast Saul and Robert Murray M'Cheyne. _____

David Marries Michal (1 Sam.18:17-30)

David is the one born to be king but first he has to live the life of a fugitive.

1. What had Saul promised back in 1 Samuel 17:25? What is his thinking in 18:17? How does Saul disguise his deceitfulness? Who is to be David's wife?

2. What do you make of David's response in verse 18? (recall that David had already been anointed king) _____

3. What did Saul's word mean at this time? (18:19) _____

4. What was told Saul then? (18:20) Why was he pleased? Again, what does this reveal about Saul? _____

5. What does Saul think to himself? (18:21) What does he say to David? _____

6. How does Saul get his servants to do his dirty work? (18:22-23) Again, what is David's response? What do the servants do then? (18:24) _____

Walter Chantry: 'The cat was playing with the mouse.'

7. What is Saul's plan? (18:25) How does he disguise his evil by pretending to solve the problem of David's being too poor to pay the dowry? _____

Notice how Saul tries to appear godly (v.17) and compassionate (v.25).

Evil always tries to appear good (Psalm 55:21). Bernard Nathanson in *The Silent Scream* recalled how abortionists refer to the head of the aborted baby as 'Number 1', obviously to cloak the fact that it is a child's head that is being crushed.

Interestingly enough, Saul's plan is not far removed from David's later plan to get rid of Uriah (cf. 2 Samuel 11).

8. What do you make of David's naïve response in verse 26? (this is the

country boy in the royal palace! Recall that he already knew Saul who had tried to kill him) What did David go out and do? (18:27) _____

9. What was Saul obliged to do (18:27) and to recognise (18:28-29)? What effect did this have on Saul? How is it possible to recognise the hand of God in a situation yet still not repent? _____

Saul recognises the hand of God in 1 Samuel 24 and 1 Samuel 26, but it does not change him.

10. What successes did David enjoy at this time? (18:30) _____

David Escapes from Saul (1 Samuel 19)

There are four escape stories in this chapter (vv.1-7, 8-10, 11-17, 18-24).

1. What does Saul say to Jonathan and to his servants? (19:1) _____

2. What did Jonathan tell David? (19:2-3) What are Jonathan's motives? _____

3. What did Jonathan say to his father about David? (19:4-5) Again, how would you evaluate Jonathan in all this? _____

4. What does Jonathan manage to obtain from Saul? (19:6) What do you make of an ungodly man trying to sound pious? _____

5. What happens as a result of Jonathan's brave words to his father? (19:7) How lasting is this? _____

6. What happened when war broke out with the Philistines? (19:8) What lesson should Saul have derived from this? _____

7. How did Saul react? (19:9-10) Where did the evil spirit come from? (note too 16:14 and 18:10) How would you explain this? What did David do? _____

8. What did Saul do next? (19:11-12) What did Michal do to protect David? What was David able to do? _____

Their house was evidently along the outer city wall, like Rahab's house in Joshua 2, and the house from which Paul escaped from Damascus (Acts 9)

9. What did Michal do next? (19:13) What was she doing with an idol? (the same word, 'teraphim', is found in Genesis 31:19, 30) _____

10. What did Michal tell Saul's men? (19:14) How did Saul respond to this? (19:15-16) What did the soldiers find out then? _____

11. What does Michal tell her father? (19:17; recall v.11) God used Michal to protect David, but what do you make of Michal? _____

12. Where did David flee to? (19:18-19) _____

Ramah is not far north of Jerusalem, and only about two miles from Gibeah.

13. What happened when Saul and his men came to capture David? (19:20-24) What did Saul learn from the three warnings? What do we learn from Saul's prophesying? What is the difference between the gifts of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit? Can one have some of the gifts without being possessed by the Spirit in a saving way? (note Numbers 22-24 for Balaam, and Judges 7:13-14) _____

Jonathan, a True Friend (1 Samuel 20)

The subtitle of this chapter might be: 'How to walk the tightrope of relationships'.

1. To whom does David go? (20:1) What is David's claim? _____

Arthur Pink, who is usually very helpful, criticizes David for turning to Jonathan rather than the Lord. That is unfair and overly pious, and the logic of it, one would think, would lead him to criticize Paul in 2 Timothy 4:9-10. Pink has a set against Jonathan, but Walter Chantry calls him 'ever the selfless friend'.

2. What is Jonathan's first response to this accusation? (20:2) What is David's explanation of Jonathan's ignorance of his father's plans, and how does David renew his claim? (20:3) _____

Pink rather arbitrarily asserts that verse 2 is a lie.

3. What does Jonathan say after he is convinced that David is correct? (20:4) _____

4. What test does David give Jonathan to use the next day? (20:5-7) What do you make of David's resort to lying in verse 6? _____

5. How does David seek to show his seriousness? (20:8) _____

6. What is Jonathan's reassurance to David? (20:9) _____

7. What is David's worry in verse 10? _____

8. What covenant does Jonathan believe in, and what does he seek from David? (20:11-17) _____

9. How does Jonathan propose to communicate Saul's attitude to David? (20:18-23) _____

10. What happened over the next few days? (20:24-27) _____

11. What did Jonathan tell his father? (20:28-29; recall v.6) _____

Walter Chantry has no difficulty with this: 'Evasion and tactics of battle demand deceit. Fools must be answered according to their folly.'

12. How did Saul react and what motivated him? (20:30-31) _____

13. What did Jonathan say in response, and how did Saul react to that? (20:32-33) _____

14. What was Jonathan's response to that? (20:33-34) _____

15. What subterfuge did Jonathan resort to in order to contact David? (20:35-40) _____

16. How did Jonathan and David conclude all this? (20:41-42; note Psalm 133 and Proverbs 18:24b) _____

Walter Chantry thinks that David and Jonathan may have met only one more time after this.

17. Summarise the roles of Saul, Jonathan, and David in this chapter.

What is Sin? (1 Samuel 21:1-6)

The medieval Church refused to allow communicants to receive the wine, mainly due to the fear that some drunken peasant might spill it. The ceremonial overrides the moral in such an outlook.

1. To where did David flee? Who was there, and why was he suspicious and afraid? (21:1) _____

Nob was north of Jerusalem.

2. What was David's reply? (21:2) Was this true? What do you make of this lie? (Psalm 119:163; Proverbs 13:5) _____

This later led to Saul's massacre of 85 priests because Saul blamed them for helping David. David was aggrieved at this (1 Sam.22:16-22).

William Jenkyn: 'God will preserve you in your ways not in your wanderings.'

Spurgeon: 'He who fears God has nothing else to fear.'

Walter Chantry is rather lenient with David at every point.

3. What does David ask for? (21:3) What is the only bread available? (21:4; note Leviticus 24:5-6, 9) _____

4. What reassurance does David give to Ahimelech? (21:5) What then did Ahimelech do? (21:6) _____

5. How does Christ evaluate this act in Matthew 12:1-8? On what grounds does Christ say that Ahimelech and David were guiltless before God? _____

6. What does this teach us about the nature of sin? _____

A retired minister in one presbytery gave a new minister a hard time because the older minister considered that a communion service was not valid unless

the minister wore robes and used the Book of Common Order.

If David was wrong to lie and right to eat the consecrated bread, that is an illustration of Luther's comment that we are like a drunk who gets on a horse and falls off one side, then the other.

David on the Run (1 Samuel 21:7-22:5)

1. Who was also present the day that David met Ahimelech? (21:7) _____

This would later have disastrous consequences for the priests (see 1 Samuel 22).

2. What does David ask for from Ahimelech? (21:8) Is this true? Is it even believable? (remember what David has done in 1 Samuel 20:5-6; 21:2) _____

3. With what is David armed? (21:9) How noticeable would this have been?

4. Where did David go to next? (21:10) Who came from Gath? (1 Sam.17:4) Why would anyone go to Gath with Goliath's sword? _____

5. What do the servants of King Achish of Gath say about David? (21:11; see 18:6-7) _____

6. How did David respond to this? (21:12) What plan did this inspire in him? (21:13) _____

The sweet singer of Israel was also a very capable actor!

Arthur Pink is critical of David here and thinks that he was out of step with God.

7. What is Achish's response to all this? (21:14-15) In high political life, of what is there no shortage? _____

8. Where does David go next? (22:1) _____

9. Whom does he gather about him? (22:2) How many of these malcontents gather around this 'Robin Hood'? _____

In the pre-union Presbyterian Church of Australia, the anti-unionists were said to dwell in Adullam's cave.

10. Where did David go from Adullam's cave? (22:3-4) For whom was David caring in all this? What does this reveal about David, and about Saul's persecution? _____

David's grandfather was Obed, who was Ruth's son, and Ruth came from Moab, so there may have remained a connection there.

11. After a while, where did David go? (22:5) How did David know the Lord's will? _____

12. Read the superscriptions on Psalms 34, 57 and 142. What general lessons would you draw from these Psalms? How is all this an illustration of Psalm 37:23-24? _____

The Violence of Saul (1 Samuel 22:6-23)

David has come to Nob, lied to the priest there, then fled to Adullam's cave, then to Moab, and then back to Judah.

1. What has Saul heard? (22:6) Where was Saul at this time? To what motives does he appeal in speaking to his officials? (22:6-7) _____

Remember that Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, and David from Judah. Evelyn Waugh once commented that at least the corrupt politicians of the eighteenth century used to bribe the electorate with their own money.

2. How is verse 8 evidence that Saul is wallowing in self-pity and distortion? _____

3. What three things does Doeg the Edomite tell Saul? (22:9-10) _____

4. For whom did Saul send? (22:11-13) What accusation did Saul make against Ahimelech? _____

5. How does Saul conduct this 'trial'? (22:14-16) Is this according to God's precepts? (see Deut.19:15) _____

Walter Chantry: 'Unjust rulers do not listen to reason.'

6. What command does Saul give to his 'runners' (NIV has 'officials'; NKJV has 'servants')? (22:17) Were they right to reject this command? (see Ex.1:15-17) _____

7. So how does Saul achieve his goal? (22:18) How many are slain in the end? (22:18-19) What sort of man is Doeg, and what has Saul descended to? _____

8. How does David find out what happened? (22:20-23) What have been the consequences of David's lie back in 21:2? Why does David feel responsible for what happened? How does he try to remedy what he can? _____

Note the superscription over Psalm 52, and the Psalm itself.

David the Fugitive (1 Samuel 23)

Here David protects the city of Keilah from the Philistines (vv.1-13), Jonathan encourages David in the wilderness (vv.14-18), and the Ziphites try to help Saul to kill David but are thwarted by God (vv.19-29).

1. What news does David hear? (23:1) _____

2. How does David respond to this news? (23:2) What does God tell him to

do? What is the response of David's men? (23:3) How understandable is this?

God would have spoken, presumably, through the Urim and Thummim.

3. When we have enough problems of our own, how easy is it to lose interest in the trials of others? _____

4. What did the Lord say the second time? (23:4) What was the result? (23:5)

5. What did David find out about how Keilah would respond to David's actions? (23:6-13) How did he find this out? How many men were with David? What were they forced to do? _____

It is not absolutely certain what an ephod was, except that the priest wore it. Presumably, it gave a 'yes' or 'no' response from God to questions.

6. How true to life is the response of Keilah? (see Luke 17:11-19) _____

In Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, the Knight of the Woeful Countenance released a number of galley slaves who then turned on him.

In 1750 the congregation at Northampton sacked Jonathan Edwards after experiencing revival under his preaching.

7. What is Saul's view of the providences? (23:7) What is God's reality? (23:14) What is the role of God in all that goes on in David's life? What do you make of the sham piety of Saul? (23:19-21) _____

8. What can we learn about encouragement from Jonathan's words in verses

16-18? _____

This was the last meeting on this earth between David and Jonathan, which makes the episode all the more poignant.

9. How does God use the Philistines to protect David? (23:26-29; note Ezra 1:1-2) Are there any accidents in history? What happened here? _____

Walter Chantry: at Maon, Saul had come ‘within an eyelash of capturing his son-in-law.’

Note the superscription for Psalm 54, and verses 4, 6-7.

Blessed are the Merciful (1 Samuel 24)

1. What happened after Saul returned from fighting the Philistines? (24:1) Where was David? (24:1-2) How many men did Saul have, and how many did David have? (24:2 and 23:13) _____

The caves of En Gedi are huge, and inhabited by wild goats. Some of the caves could hold up to 1500 men.

2. Where did Saul go? (24:3) Where were David and his men? Was this good luck, bad luck, or God’s sovereignty? _____

The Living Bible says that Saul went into a cave ‘to go to the bathroom’!

3. Did David have any reason to adopt the view that ‘revenge is sweet’ or ‘strike before you are struck’? (see 18:10-11, 25; 19:11-17; chapters 21-23) What do both Testaments tell us to do in such circumstances? (Prov.24:29; Matt.5:7) _____

4. How did David’s men interpret the providence? (24:4; notice that Saul had the same view in 23:7) Can we glean the will of God from such providences? What did David do to Saul? _____

Saul was not necessarily wearing the robe at the time.

Walter Chantry: 'Providence does inform us of God's having acted in the past. It is far less yielding of information about the future will of God.'

5. How did David feel afterwards? (24:5) What does this reveal about David?

6. What drives David to show mercy? (24:6) How does David treat Saul? (24:6, 8, 10, 11, 14) Can we respect the office even if the man is apostate?

7. What effect did David's words have on his men? (24:7) What did Saul do then? _____

8. What happened next? (24:8-11) How does David prove his point to Saul? What solemn declaration does David make? (24:12) _____

9. How does David portray himself? (24:13-14) _____

10. What does David ask for? (24:15) _____

11. How does Saul respond?

24:16 _____

24:17-19 (note Exodus 10:16) _____

24:20 _____

Do you think that Saul was sincere in all this, or simply play-acting? _____

12. Distinguish between true and false repentance (see Matt.27:3-5; 2 Cor.7:10)

13. What does Saul ask for? (24:21) How does David respond? (24:22) Why did each go his own way at the end? _____

David, Nabal, Abigail, and the old Adam (1 Samuel 25)

In between the high points of David's spiritual qualities in 1 Samuel 24 and 26, we have this chapter which reveals his bad temper and irritability.

1. What happened to Samuel? (25:1) Where was he buried? Where did David go to? _____

2. Who lived in Maon and conducted business in Carmel? (25:2-3) How rich was this man? How is he described? How is his wife described? _____

This is the Carmel in southern Judah, not the Carmel west of Galilee where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal.

3. What did David ask of Nabal? (25:4-8) What did David point out to Nabal? _____

4. What was Nabal's response to this request, and what does it reveal about the man? (25:9-11) _____

5. How did David respond to this rebuff? (25:12-13) How should we evaluate it? (Prov.16:32; 1 Pet.2:23) _____

6. What did one of the young men tell Abigail? (25:14-17) What is said of Nabal's character in verse 17? _____

Nabal may have been a nickname that stuck.

7. What did she do in response? (25:18-31) What does 'Nabal' mean? (25:25) What do you make of this intervention? What does Abigail believe about David? (note 25:28, 30) _____

The KJV reading is somewhat coarse for verses 21-22.

8. What does David realise about how the Lord has protected him from himself? (25:32-35, 39; Rom.12:19) _____

9. How did Nabal come to die? (25:36-38; note Prov.11:10) Again, what does this reveal about the man? _____

10. What happens after Nabal's death? (25:39-43) But what does verse 43 reveal about David? What had happened to Michal? (25:44) _____

11. How would you evaluate David's role in this chapter? What lessons do we learn from it? _____

Mercy repeated (1 Samuel 26)

1 Samuel 26 is almost a repeat of 1 Samuel 24, so God repeated it in Scripture for a reason.

1. Why do we need repeated lessons in the Christian life? (note Phil.3:1; 2 Pet.1:12) Can we ever hear of the need to show mercy too often? _____

Dr Samuel Johnson: ‘People need to be reminded more often than they need to be instructed.’

*Tell me the story often,
For I forget so soon;
The early dew of morning
Has passed away at noon.*

2. Who betrayed David? (26:1) What did Saul do in response? (26:2) How many men went with him? _____

3. Where was Saul and where was David? (26:2-3) What did David find out about where Saul was? (26:4-5) _____

4. What did David decide to do? (26:6) Who went with him? _____

Abishai was David’s nephew (1 Chron. 2:16).

5. In what state do they find Saul, and what does Abishai want to do? (26:7-8; note 2 Sam.16:7-9 for Abishai’s approach to life) How does Abishai make decisions on issues of right and wrong? _____

6. What, however, is David’s view of the right thing to do? (26:9-11) What particular points does David make? (note Deut.32:35 which is cited in Rom. 12:19) _____

7. Why was Saul asleep? (26:12) If David was governed by providence, what might he have done? What can we learn from this? _____

8. What did David do next? (26:13-16) What does he say about Abner? What does this indicate about David? Is it wrong to argue a case in this way? _____

9. How is being sorry not the same thing as being repentant? (26:17-25) Give a detailed answer. Does David believe Saul? (26:21) _____

F. W. Krummacher: 'truly never will a single sinner go to destruction who will not be constrained to confess that, on numberless occasions in his life, he has wantonly torn asunder and cast from him the divine rope of salvation that had been thrown out to him.'

After verse 25 David and Saul never saw each other again.

10. Walter Chantry: 'Churches and Christian counsellors go too far when they insist that forgiveness requires returning to former relationships as though nothing has broken them.' What does he mean by that? Is it true? Can you think of some examples? _____

David and the Philistines (1 Samuel 27:1-28:2)

The best of Christians is a mass of inconsistencies. Walter Chantry: ‘It is not uncommon to experience despondency soon after being filled with a thrill of triumph.’ But he does not think that David was wrong to go to Gath.

1. In what way does David’s faith falter? (27:1) What does he think might happen, and what plan does he concoct? Was this the path of wisdom?

(Prov.3:5) _____

2. What did David do then? (27:2) Whom did David take with him? (27:2-3)

Recall that David had fled to Gath before this, and it had not worked out (see 1 Samuel 21:10-13).

3. What did Saul do when he found out? (27:4) _____

4. What does David suggest to Achish? (27:5) How does he sell this plan to Achish? _____

5. What town was given to David, and for how long did he live there? (27:6-7) _____

Ziklag is in southern Judah. Literally, it says that David was there for ‘days and four months’, but the NIV and ESV agree in making it 16 months.

6. Whom does David attack? (27:8) What was his military policy? (27:9)

7. What did David tell Achish? (27:10) How did he disguise what he was really doing? (27:11) What is David’s motives in this? What do you think was God’s attitude to this? (note 1 Chron.22:7-8) How are human beings good at telling half-truths? (e.g. Gen.20:1-5, 9-12; John 4:16-18) _____

Interestingly enough, Walter Chantry sees no moral problem with David's deceit and his genocide.

8. What did Achish think about David? (27:12) _____

9. How does deception invariably entangle us? (28:1-2; note Heb.12:1) What is David's dilemma? How does Achish understand David's words in verse 2, and what does David actually mean? _____

Gerhard Tersteegen wrote:

*My vile affections crucify,
Nor let one darling lust survive!
In all things nothing may I see,
Nothing desire or seek, but Thee.*

Saul's descent into the realm of the occult (1 Samuel 28:3-25)

William Blaikie compares Saul to a crippled vessel at sea.

1. Who had died? (28:3) What had Saul done earlier? Did Saul know that indulging in the occult was wrong? _____

2. What was about to happen? (28:4) Where were the Philistines and where were the Israelites? _____

This is actually the valley of Jezreel (cf. 29:1), which is referred to, probably symbolically, in Revelation 16.

3. How did Saul respond to this sight? (28:5) What does this indicate about him? _____

*My times are in Thy hand:
My God, I wish them there;
My life, my friends, my soul I leave
Entirely to Thy care.*

4. Why did the Lord not respond to Saul's enquiries? (28:6; see 1 Chron.10:14; Ps.66:18) Why should God speak to those who have refused to

heed His Word? _____

5. What did Saul ask for? (28:7) What does God's Word say about this? (Lev.19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut.18:9-14; Isa.8:19-20) Does this condemn *Harry Potter*? What do his servants tell Saul? _____

Endor is behind enemy lines, north of the Philistine position.

6. Why did Saul disguise himself? (28:8) Where did he go? When? _____

7. What does the woman say to Saul? (28:9) What does this indicate about the earlier part of Saul's reign? _____

8. What do you make of Saul's oath in verse 10? What kind of oath is this? _____

9. What spirit does Saul ask for in the séance? (28:11) Why did he want Samuel? How does the woman respond to this? (28:12) What does she realise? _____

10. What does Saul say to her? (28:13) What does the witch see? How does

she describe him? (28:14) _____

Calvin and Luther both say that this was a spectre of the devil; Matthew Henry says it was Satan in disguise; but Dale Ralph Davis maintains that it actually was Samuel, who was permitted to appear by God.

11. How does Saul describe himself, and what does Samuel tell him? (28:15-19) Why has all this come upon Saul? _____

12. How did Saul respond to this? (28:20) How would you describe Saul's spiritual condition? _____

13. What does the woman do for Saul? (28:21-25) What does this teach us about common grace (goodness in the reprobate)? What does Saul do then, and what happens later that night? _____

14. What have you learnt from this chapter? _____

God's overruling providence (1 Samuel 29)

Recall that David had stayed at Ziklag and attacked Israel's enemies when all the time Achish, the king of Gath, thought that David was fighting on his side (1 Sam.27). However, David becomes entangled in his own schemes and resorts to ambiguities (28:1-2). It is the old Scylla and Charybdis situation -

the sailor who faced a rock on one side and a whirlpool on the other.

1. Where had the Philistines gathered? (29:1) And where were the Israelites encamped? _____

2. What suspicions were aroused against David and his men? (29:2-3) What do the commanders of the Philistines say to Achish of Gath? (29:3-4) What do they fear? What song had they heard? (29:5; see 18:7; 21:11) _____

There were five main Philistine cities, with lords over each one. Apparently the princes or commanders of four of them - Gaza, Ekron, Ashdod, and Ashkelon - raised objections to Achish of Gath.

3. What 'bad news' does Achish break to David? (29:6-7) Unwittingly, what did these Philistine commanders achieve for David and for his cause? _____

4. How did David keep a straight face in verse 8? _____

5. How does Achish see David? (29:3, 6, 9) What language has Achish picked up, no doubt from David? _____

6. What does Achish tell David to do, and when? (29:10) _____

7. Where did David go, and where did the Philistines go? (29:11) _____

Augustine: 'Through the bad wills of evil men God fulfils what He righteously wills.' Contrast that to Socrates: 'God is the cause, not of all things, but only of good.'

David as a leader of men (1 Samuel 30)

The Amalekites should have been destroyed by Saul back in 1 Samuel 15 but they were not, and so they continued to cause trouble to Israel. The ban required the complete destruction of a people, which is severe, but due to their iniquity being complete (Gen.15:16).

1. Where did David and his men come to? (30:1) What had happened? (30:1-2) _____

It had taken three days to travel from Apehek (29:1) to Ziklag (30:1).

2. What did David and his men find when they arrived home? (30:3) _____

3. How did they respond? (30:4) Is this totally wrong? _____

4. Who in particular had been captured in the Amalekite raid? (30:5) _____

5. How did David's men respond? (30:6) _____

They may have thought that David had antagonized the Amalekites (see 27:8) or they may simply have blamed the leader when things go wrong (e.g. Ex.17:3-4).

6. How did David avoid collapsing under pressure? (30:6b-8) How should we handle problems that beset us? _____

7. How many men did David take with him? (30:9-10) Why did he leave some behind? Where did he leave them? _____

8. Whom did David's men find in the open country? (30:11-12) In what condition did they find him? What did they do for him? _____

9. How did the Egyptian come to be where he was? (30:13) What does this tell us about the Amalekites? What is the Egyptian slave's story? (30:14) What does the Egyptian ask for? (30:15) _____

10. What happened next? (30:16-17) How complete was the victory? _____

11. What was David able to achieve? (30:18-20) _____

12. What is the next problem that David faces? (30:21-22; see Matthew 20:1-15) _____

13. How does David interpret the victory? (30:23) What was David's solution to this problem? (30:24-25) _____

In the 18th century the Archbishop of Canterbury received 7,000 pounds per year, and the Bishop of Oxford 500 pounds. What effect do you think that would have had on the Church? _____

14. How can some problems in the church be resolved in a similar way? (e.g. 1 Cor.1:10-13; 12:7, 11) _____

15. What else did David do? (30:26-31) What effect do you think this would have had on the people of Judah? _____

*Work in me, lest I harbour pride,
Lest I in my own strength confide;
Show me my weakness, let me see
I have my power, my all, from Thee (John Cennick).*

The suicide of Saul (1 Samuel 31)

1. How are we to evaluate the death of Saul? (1 Chron.10:13-14) _____

2. What happened during the war between the Philistines and the Israelites? (31:1-2) _____

Saul had four sons. The only survivor was Ishbosheth (see 2 Sam.2-4).

3. What happened to Saul? (31:3) What did he ask for? (31:4) What eventually happened? _____

4. What did Saul's armour-bearer do in response? (31:5-6) _____

5. How did the Israelites respond? (31:7) _____

6. List the suicides in Scripture, and the context for their suicides:

(a) Abimelech (Judges 9:52-54) _____

(b) Samson (Judges 16:28-30; note Heb.11:32) _____

(c) Ahithophel (2 Sam.17:23) _____

(d) Zimri (1 Kings 16:18) _____

(e) Judas (Matt.27:5) _____

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: 'God has reserved to Himself the right to determine the end of life, because He alone knows the goal to which it is His will to lead it ... There is no other cogent reason for the wrongfulness of suicide, but only the fact that over men there is God. Suicide implies denial of this fact.' Arthur Pink speaks for a strong Christian tradition in his belief that there was no hope of forgiveness for a suicide.

But the teaching that suicide is always wrong does not necessarily entail that there is no possibility of salvation for the suicide. The two concepts are not the same. Bonhoeffer saw the difference, and pointed out that the fact that there was no possibility of repentance for the suicide did not mean that salvation was not possible. To cite Bonhoeffer again: 'This is setting too much store by the last moment of life.'

This, of course, is not to say that Saul was saved.

7. What did the Philistines do to Saul's corpse? (31:8-10; see too 1

Chron.10:10) What was their purpose in this? _____

8. What did the men of Jabesh Gilead do? (31:11-13; back in 1 Samuel 11 Saul had rescued this city in its war with the Ammonites) Why did they do this? Why was this a good thing to do? Does it have anything to teach us?

From Jabesh to Bethshan is about thirteen miles.

9. Saul was not unlike Shakespeare's Othello. What did Saul possess?

1 Samuel 9:2 _____

1 Samuel 11:6 _____

1 Samuel 11:11; 14:47 _____

But what did he lack? (Heb.3:12) What is the lesson to be learnt from Saul's life and death? _____

David's grief (2 Samuel 1)

In 1 Samuel, we read how God prepared David for the kingship; in 2 Samuel, we read of David as king. He ruled for forty years. 2 Samuel 1-5 tells how he became king over all Israel; 2 Samuel 6-10 of God's covenant with him, and his victories; 2 Samuel 11-12 of his fall into sin; and 2 Samuel 13-24 of his troubles in his declining years.

1. Where did David remain after the death of Saul? (1:1) For how long? _____

2. Who arrived on the third day? (1:2) How did he look? What did he do?

3. What did David ask him, and what did the man tell David? (1:3) _____

4. What story does the Amalekite tell David? (1:4-10) How does this fit in with 1 Samuel 31? _____

Quite obviously, the Amalekite was lying. W. G. Blaikie says: 'He was evidently one of those base men that count all men as base as themselves.' The Amalekite thought that David would be pleased with anyone who killed Saul.

5. How did David respond to the news that Saul and Jonathan were dead? (1:11-12) What does this reveal about David? _____

William Carey could not point to pagan countries without weeping.

6. What does David then order? (1:13-16) Why was the Amalekite's lying such a terrible sin? (note Acts 5:1-5) What did David think of assisted euthanasia? _____

7. What did David compose for the occasion of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan? (1:17-18) What did he do with this song? _____

The book of Jashar is also mentioned in Joshua 10:12-13.

8. In this song, how does David refer to Saul and Jonathan? (1:19, 25, 27) _____

9. Why does David not want the news to reach the Philistines? (1:20) _____

10. Why does David curse the mountains of Gilboa? (1:21-22) _____

11. How does David remember Saul and Jonathan? (1:23-27) What does this reveal about David? (see Proverbs 24:17-18) _____

We tend to praise a person at his or her funeral, and overlook the obvious faults - and rightly so, although this is easily distorted. In a sense, Hebrews

11 does that with the Old Testament saints. It majors on their faith, and omits their obvious sins.

The NIV has ‘gracious’ in verse 23 in describing Saul. More convincingly, the ESV has ‘lovely’, while the NKJV has ‘pleasant’.

Walter Chantry comments that ‘there has come into some circles a silly notion that the death of saints should be celebrated as a triumph.’

David as the king of Judah (2 Samuel 2:1-3:1)

1. What did David do before seeking to take the throne? (2:1) What did the Lord tell him to do? _____

Presumably, this inquiry of the Lord was through the ephod or the Urim and Thummim - neither of which we are certain of concerning how they worked. Hebron was about twenty miles south of Jerusalem.

2. What did David do? (2:2) _____

3. Who went to Hebron? (2:3) Over what did David become king? (2:4; note verse 11 and 2 Samuel 5:3) _____

4. Can you see a two-stage pattern in the reign of Christ? (see Rev.11:15) _____

5. How did David treat the men of Jabesh-gilead, and why? What does this reveal about David? (2:4b-7) _____

6. Who was Abner? (2:8) What did he do? (2:8-11) Over what did Ishbosheth rule, and over what did David rule? For how long? _____

Ishbosheth’s rule presumably came at the end of Abner’s five-year guerilla warfare.

7. What happened at the battle of Gibeon? (2:12-17) _____

H. W. Hertzberg think that it was a mock duel that got out of hand, because of the word in verse 14 that usually means 'play'. If that is so, it shows how easily matters can escalate.

8. Who were the three sons of Zeruiah? (2:18) What did Asahel do? (2:18-19)

Zeruiah was David's sister (1 Chron.2:16).

9. How did Abner respond to this? (2:20-23) Why was Abner reluctant to act against Asahel? What eventually happened? _____

10. What did Asahel's two brothers - Joab and Abishai - do? (2:24) How does Abner prevent warfare? (2:24-27) _____

Keil and Delitzsch relate verse 27 back to verse 14, and think that Joab was saying that Abner was the one who started this whole battle.

Walter Chantry: 'Civil war inevitably produces long-lasting bitterness between factions.'

Blaise Pascal: 'Civil wars are the greatest of evils.'

11. What was the aftermath of this civil war within Israel? (2:28-32) How many men were lost on each side? _____

12. Who was winning the civil war? (3:1) _____

Note that this was not a war between Israel and one of the pagan nations but within Israel itself, within the covenant community of God. It is analogous to warfare within the professing Church.

G. N. M. Collins: 'A Bible-based ecumenical movement would indeed be a God-given blessing in our day.' But we have not seen it!

Life and death in David's court (2 Samuel 3:2-39)

Shakespeare's King Henry IV: 'Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown'.
 Walter Chantry: 'Scripture weaves the drama of history in a more breathtaking style than does the fiction writer.'

1. List the names of David's sons born to him in Hebron, and their mothers (3:2-5). How many wives did David have? What can we learn from this? (note too 2 Samuel 5:13) What had God warned back in Deuteronomy 17:14-17? Where did Solomon learn to do this? (1 Kings 11:1-11) _____

2. Who was Abner? (3:6) In the political world of what was left of Saul's court, where was he going? _____

3. What did Abner do, and why did Ishbosheth confront him? (3:7) _____

Ishbosheth was Saul's last surviving son.

4. How did Abner respond to Ishbosheth? (3:8-11) What was the meaning of this outburst? Why did Ishbosheth do nothing? _____

5. What did Abner do next? (3:12) _____

6. What was David's one condition in agreeing to this? (3:13-14) _____

David may have had political motives here. Being married to Michal again might have given him prestige in the eyes of Saul's people.

7. What did Ishbosheth do in response to this? (3:15-16) What impressions do we receive from this concerning Ishbosheth and Paltiel? _____

8. What did Abner tell the Israelite elders? (3:17-18) _____

9. To whom else did Abner speak? (3:19) What did he tell them to do? What happened when Abner met David? (3:20-21) _____

10. What did Joab find out? (3:22-23) How did Joab react? (3:24-25) _____

11. What did Joab do next? (3:26-27) Why did he do this? _____

12. How did David respond to this murder? (3:28-30) _____

13. What did David order for Joab? (3:31) How was the funeral conducted? (3:32-34) What else did David do? (3:35) _____

14. What did the people of Israel think about all this? (3:36-37) _____

15. How does David feel after all this, and what is the curse that he utters against Joab? (3:38-39) What does the fact that he does no more tell you about David? (Eccles.8:11; note 2 Sam.20:9-10; 1 Kings 2:5-6) _____

Walter Chantry: 'David would have been cutting off his own right arm to prosecute Joab for the murder of Abner.'

David obviously thought that he had done all that was politically possible for him to do, but leaving Joab unpunished had long-term consequences for evil.

The murder of Ishbosheth (2 Samuel 4)

1. How did Ishbosheth react to news of the murder of Abner? (4:1) _____

Literally, he 'dropped his hands'.

Alexis de Tocqueville is well-known for the thesis that revolutions occur not when the political leaders are at their worst but at their weakest.

2. Who were the two brothers who were captains of Ishbosheth's raiding bands? (4:2-3) _____

3. Who was Mephibosheth? (4:4) What had happened to him? _____

Mephibosheth's story will be picked up again in 2 Samuel 9.

4. What did Baanah and Rechab do to Ishbosheth? (4:5-7) How did they do this? _____

The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) says that the doorkeeper fell asleep, and the RSV follows this.

5. What did they do with Ishbosheth's head? (4:7-8) Why did they take it to David? What did they expect from him? _____

Notice how they attribute this all to the Lord.

They think that David thinks in the same ruthless way that they do.

6. Why did David react the way that he did? (4:9-11; note the connection with 2 Sam.1) Is this applicable today? (Gen.9:5-6; Ex.21:12; Rom.13:3-4) _____

7. What was the fate of Baanah and Rechab? (4:11) What did David have done with Ishbosheth's head? _____

David, the King of all Israel (2 Samuel 5)

1. What did the dying Jacob prophesy about the future of Judah? (Gen.49:8-12; note Acts 5:31) _____

About 800 years after that prophecy, it came true.

2. What did all the tribes of Israel do at Hebron? (5:1-3) In what three ways do they refer to David (vv.1b, 2a, 2b) How did David respond? _____

3. How old was David when he began to reign? (5:4) For how long did he reign? For how long did he rule over Judah before he was accepted by Israel? (5:5) _____

Jesus was about thirty when He began His public ministry (Luke 3:23).

4. What was the status of Jerusalem at this time? (Joshua 15:63; Judges 1:21)
Who ruled Jerusalem at this time? (5:6) How confident were they? _____

Jerusalem was a difficult city to capture as it is 2,500 feet above sea level, and, apart from the north side, it is surrounded by deep valleys.

5. Did David take Jerusalem? (5:7) _____

6. How was Jerusalem taken, and by whom? (5:8; see 1 Chron.11:6) _____

Verse 8 refers to David's throwing the insults of the Jebusites back at them.

7. What happened after David became king in Jerusalem? (5:9-10) What did he call Jerusalem? Why did David prosper? _____

8. How was David's palace (house) built? (5:11) Can a Christian ever work with an unbeliever? _____

In the New Testament there is a sense in which Gentiles built the kingdom of Christ.

9. Did the Lord chastise David for accepting aid from Hiram of Tyre? (5:12)

10. What can be said about David's family life? (5:13-16; note Deut.17:17)
Who was born while David ruled from Jerusalem? _____

11. How did the Philistines respond to David's becoming king? (5:17) What did David do before going into battle? (5:18-19) What happened then? (5:20-21) What happened to the Philistine idols? _____

12. What happened the second time with the Philistines? (5:22-25) What do you learn from David's inquiry of the Lord? What was unusual about this victory? _____

13. What might we learn from the fact that David seemed to do better in public as king than in private as a husband and father? _____

Bringing the ark to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 6:1-15)

For over fifty years the ark of the covenant (the covenant box which contained the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod which blossomed, and some manna from the exodus) had been neglected. It was last mentioned back in Samuel's day (1 Sam.7:2).

1. What was the big event that David planned? (6:1-2) What was David intending to do? _____

2. How was the ark transported? (6:3-4) Where was it coming from? Who was driving the new cart? _____

3. What was David doing and what was the mood of the Israelites? (6:5) _____

4. What happened at the threshing floor of Nacon? (6:6) What did Uzzah do? How did the Lord respond to this? (6:7) _____

Look up Numbers 4:5-15 and Exodus 25:14-15. Three things need to be mentioned:

- (a) the ark could only be moved by the Levites;
- (b) it was to be carried on poles on the shoulder, not on a cart;
- (c) not even the Levites could touch the ark.

This is all related to the absolute holiness of God (Ex.3:5; 19:12-13)

Thomas Binney:

*The spirits that surround Thy throne
 May bear the burning bliss;
 But that is surely theirs alone,
 Since they have never, never known
 A fallen world like this.*

What is the lesson for us in all this? _____

*Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone;
He can create, and He destroy* (Isaac Watts).

The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped ... any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture (Westminster Confession of Faith, XXI:1).

5. How did David respond to the Lord's action? (6:8) _____

6. How else did David respond? (6:9) What was his dilemma now? _____

7. Hence what did David do with the ark? (6:10-11) What happened as a result? _____

Obed-edom was not necessarily a believer (see Gen.30:27; 39:4-5). He may have been a Philistine.

8. What did David do next? (6:12-13) Why was a sacrifice offered, and why was the ark carried this time? (note 1 Chron.15:14-15) _____

9. How is there joy in obedience? (6:14-15) Is this an argument for dancing in church?!! _____

When J. G. Paton printed his first book in the Tannese language, he was so excited that he danced at 1.00 a.m.

*Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining,
To cheer it after rain* (William Cowper).

W. G. Blaikie: 'There are occasions of great rejoicing, when all ceremony is forgotten.'

Righteous overmuch (2 Samuel 6:16-23)

1. How did Michal respond to David's exuberance? (6:16) _____

2. Where was the ark placed? (6:17) What two types of offerings were made? What did David do after that? (6:18) What else did he do? (6:19) How would you describe the spirit of the people at this time? (note Psalm 150) Is there any place for exuberance in Christian worship? (see Ex.15:20-21; Acts 2:9-13)

3. What, however, is the spirit of Michal? (7:20) How might Michal's response be evaluated? (Eccles.7:16) _____

Michal was hardly righteous overmuch in 1 Samuel 19:12-13!

Robbie Burns was no friend to true Christianity but his mocking satire *Holy Willie's Prayer* has a point.

4. How does David respond to Michal? (6:21-22) What does this reveal about David? _____

General Booth to Rudyard Kipling: 'Young man, if I could win one soul to God by playing the tambourine with my toes, I'd do it.'

5. What was God's punishment for Michal? (6:23) _____

*In Thy bright beams which on me fall,
Fade every evil thought;
That I am nothing, Thou art all,
I would be daily taught.*

*Make this poor self grow less and less,
Be Thou my life and aim;
O make me daily, through Thy grace,
More meet to bear Thy Name!*

David's house and God's house (2 Samuel 7:1-17)

The Old Testament tells of the unfolding of a number of covenants that God makes with His people. This is the covenant He makes with David.

1. At what stage of life had David reached? (7:1) What does he tell Nathan? (7:2) Why is David uncomfortable with this? Is this a right thought? (see 1 Kings 8:17-19) _____

I recall reading of one of the televangelists who had air-conditioning in his dog kennels.

2. What is Nathan's first response to David's plan? (7:3) Was the prophet correct? _____

3. What does God tell Nathan that night? (7:4-6; see too 1 Kings 8:27; Acts 17:24) _____

4. What else does God tell Nathan? (7:7) _____

It is interesting that God would use the temple and He would use the kingship, but He asked for neither (see 1 Sam.8:4-5, 7, 9). There is another reason to be found in 1 Chronicles 22:7-8.

5. What had God done for David? (7:8) _____

6. What else had God done? (7:9) _____

7. What does God promise His people Israel? (7:10-11a) _____

8. What does God promise David? (7:11b) _____

There is a word play on the word 'house'. David wanted to build a house (a temple) for God, but instead God would build a house (a dynasty) for David (note Eph.3:20-21).

9. On one level, how is this fulfilled? (7:12) _____

10. How are there hints of something greater? (7:13) _____

11. What will be God's relationship with David's descendants? (7:14) _____

12. How will David's dynasty differ from Saul's? (7:15) _____

13. How is verse 16 fulfilled? _____

14. How did God communicate to David? (7:17) _____

God promises a posterity or seed (7:12, 16a), a throne (7:13, 16b) and a kingdom (7:13, 16a). This promise is fulfilled in two ways. It is fulfilled in Solomon, and the Davidic line after him (1 Chron. 28:6-7). But there is no Davidic king in Jerusalem now, and there has not been since 587 B.C. when the Babylonians destroyed the city, the temple, and the kingship. So this prophecy has to be fulfilled in a greater way, in Jesus, the Son of David and the Lord of David (Jer.33:14-18; Luke 1:32-33; Hebrews 1:5).

*Rejoice, the Lord is King! ...
His kingdom cannot fail;
He rules o'er earth and heaven;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Jesus given* (Charles Wesley).

David had a good idea, and Nathan sanctioned it. God vetoed it, but then reinterpreted it in a far higher key. The sons of David have reigned, but the Son of David and the Lord of David reigns forever.

Thomas Brooks: 'The whole covenant is a bundle of promises.'

David's response of thanksgiving (2 Samuel 7:18-29)

1. How did David respond to God's promises to him? (7:18) How did he view himself? Did his self-esteem need some massaging? What was his posture in prayer? _____

*And from my smitten heart, with tears,
Two wonders I confess -
The wonder of His glorious love,
And my own worthlessness* (Elizabeth Clephane).

Usually, Jews would stand to pray with their arms spread out (e.g. 1 Kings 8:22) or kneel (1 Kings 8:54; Eph.3:14). This is the only example in Scripture of sitting to pray. Keil and Delitzsch even try to translate the word as 'remained', not 'sat'.

2. How is God's promise a small thing yet also a great thing? (7:19) Why is David rendered virtually speechless? (7:20; see Eccles.5:2) _____

3. How does David explain what has happened to him? (7:21) _____

4. What then is David's response? (7:22) What does he say about God? (note Jer.10:6-7; 2 Chron.20:5-6) _____

5. Of what does David remind himself in his prayer to God? (7:23-24) Why ought God's people to be grateful? _____

6. What does David pray in verse 25? What does it mean to pray God's Word back to Him? (see Dan.9:1-3) _____

Matthew Henry: 'It is by turning God's promises into petitions that they are turned into performances.'

George Mueller used to pray God's Word back to Him.

7. Of what things is David sure? (7:26-28; see Luke 1:38) What does faith in God's promises give to you? What kind of prayers do we pray when we do not have confidence in God's Word? Why can David pray as he does in verse 29? _____

Walter Chantry: 'Thus should we learn to pray: humbled by God's goodness to us, filled with the praises of a thankful people, and pleading for the promises of God's Word to be fulfilled toward us.'

David at the height of his powers (2 Samuel 8-10)

1. What groups does David's army defeat in chapter 8? How did Toi of Hamath respond to David? (8:9-10) What did David do with the spoils of war? (8:11) Who actually gave victory to David? (8:6, 14) _____

2. What did David do? (8:15) Who helped him in all this? (8:16-18) _____

I am not sure how to deal with the reference to David's sons as priests.

3. What does David want to do and why? (9:1-8) What had happened to Mephibosheth? How does David treat him? What is Mephibosheth's response? (9:8; recall 4:4) _____

Usually, kings would get rid of possible rivals to their throne (note Herod in Matthew 2). It is a little strange that David does not seem to know of Mephibosheth before this, but he may well have been lying low, given what had happened to Abner and Ishbosheth. Mephibosheth's name means 'Destroyer of Baal'.

Arthur Pink overdoes the spiritualising here - Mephibosheth is lame because of a fall, as are we - and so on.

W. G. Blaikie uses this episode to emphasise that Gentile Christians should show kindness for the sake of Jesus to Jesus' nationality, the Jews.

4. What does David tell Ziba that he has done, and what does he tell Ziba to do? (9:9-13) Where did the household live after this? _____

5. What did David seek with Hanum, the king of Ammon? (10:1-2) But what did Hanum's princes advise him? (10:3) _____

6. So what did Hanum have done to David's servants? (10:4) _____

7. How did David treat his men, and what was his solution to the situation? (10:5) _____

8. What were the two sides in the resultant war? (10:6-8) _____

9. What was Joab's plan in the battle? (10:9-11) What are Joab's words to Abishai and the soldiers? (10:12) _____

10. What happened in the battle? (10:13-14) _____

11. What was the aftermath of the first battle for the Syrians? (10:15-19) _____

12. What do we learn in chapters 8-10 from David as our example? _____

13. What do we learn in chapters 8-10 from David as one who is a type of Christ? _____

A dark blot on David's testimony (2 Samuel 11)

John Owen: 'Many conquerors have been ruined by their carelessness after a victory.'

Walter Chantry: 'Perhaps the Lord intends to disabuse us of a "star" mentality in Christendom.'

1. Why did Paul write 1 Corinthians 10:12? And what does Psalm 139:23-24 tell us to do? _____

2. Where was David? (11:1) Where was Joab and his army? _____

David is often criticised for not being with his men, but the text does not say anything on this matter. But David does seem to be somewhat at a loose end.

3. What happened one evening? (11:2) Whom did David see? _____

Remember that the roof was flat, and it was not uncommon to walk on the roof. It is not immediately obvious why Bathsheba would have thought she would not be seen.

4. How is verse 3 the crucial verse so far as David's sin is concerned? (note Matt.5:27-30; James 1:14-15) What should David have done? _____

Spurgeon tells us to kill the serpent while it is still in the eggshell, not wait until it is fully grown.

5. What then takes place? (11:4) What followed? (11:5) Again, what should David have done? (Prov.28:13) What are the consequences of sin? (Prov.6:27-29) _____

6. What subterfuge does David try? (11:6-8) What might be done today in the attempt to cover an unwanted pregnancy? _____

Uriah was well-known to David (1 Chron.11:41; 2 Sam.23:39).

7. But what does Uriah do? (11:9) _____

8. Why does David rebuke him? (11:10) What are Uriah's sentiments on the matter? (11:11) _____

Keil and Delitzsch think that Uriah guessed the truth, but Uriah's statement may simply be noble.

9. What does David try to do the next night? (11:12-13; Habakkuk 2:15) What happened? _____

10. What is David's next plan? (11:14-15) How does one sin lead to another? _____

Notice that step by step David was drawn into sin, and step by step he attempts to cover his sin.

Sin is like quicksand. The more David thrashes about, the worse the situation gets.

Notice the terrible irony that Uriah is carrying his own death warrant. This makes it rather less likely that Keil and Delitzsch are correct in suggesting that he had guessed the truth.

Recall too that Saul had much the same idea back in 1 Samuel 18:25.

11. What was Joab's role in this evil? (11:16-17) What should Joab have done? _____

Joab's evil had worried David earlier, but now he makes use of it.

12. Was David guilty of murder? (see Matt.5:21-26) _____

Arthur Pink has trouble with 1 John 3:15 on this, and explains it by saying that David killed a Hittite, not a Hebrew brother. That, surely, is not the right explanation.

13. What is the point of all the falsehood in verses 18-21? Why does David have to feign anger? What was the only point that Joab thought he needed to make? _____

Joab refers to the events in Judges 9:50-53.

14. What did the messenger tell David? (11:22-24) _____

15. Why is verse 25 so terrible? Is there any sign of remorse in David at this time? Despite this, what does Psalm 32:3-4 tell us about the state of David?

How different is David from the man whose conscience was troubled when he cut the corner of Saul's robe (1 Sam.24)!

16. How did Bathsheba respond? (11:26) _____

17. What happened then? (11:27) Why was the wedding so quick? _____

18. Whom has David forgotten? (11:27b) How is God described? What could be worse than this? What is the lesson that we should learn from this chapter? _____

*No alms, nor deeds that I have done,
Can for a single sin atone:
To Calvary alone I flee;
O God, be merciful to me!*

Nathan's parable (2 Samuel 12:1-15)

Spurgeon: 'Sheep may fall into the mire; swine wallow in it.'

Spurgeon: 'Remember the shame of sin when tempted by the sweetness of sin.'

For a time, Judas and Peter must have appeared similar, but they were not.

1. Who sent Nathan to David? (12:1; we met Nathan back in 2 Samuel 7)

What parable did Nathan tell David? (12:1-4) Explain the parable. What technique is Nathan employing? (e.g. Matt.21:23-27; Luke 7:40-47; John 8:1-11)

What do you think might have happened had Nathan simply denounced David for his sin? _____

Robert Lewis Dabney said in arguing against a materialist who asserted that there was no right or wrong, he would say: 'Let's kill this fellow, and see if he objects.' He usually does!

Matthew Henry: 'Though God may suffer His people to fall into sin, He will not suffer His people to lie still in it.'

2. How did David respond to Nathan's parable? (12:5-6; note Ex.22:1) What does this teach us? Why is it that we see other people's sins far more clearly than our own? _____

3. How does Nathan pounce? (12:7a) What trap had Nathan set for David?

4. How had God been gracious to David? (12:7b-9) How does this make David's sin all the more heinous? _____

5. What is the great consequence of David's sin? (12:10-12) Can you think how this was worked out in David's life? (2 Sam.13-1 Kings 2) _____

Walter Chantry: 'We may sin in the darkness but God will judge in the full light of day.'

6. What is David's response? (12:13a) Contrast this to Ahab in 1 Kings 21:20. How is David's response a breakthrough? _____

7. What are Nathan's words of grace to him? (12:13b) Does this mean that there are no consequences for sin in this life? _____

F. W. Krummacher: 'He experiences a prelude of the great day of judgment.'

To the dear fountain of Thy blood,

Incaruate God, I fly;

Here let me wash my guilty soul

From crimes of deepest dye (Isaac Watts).

The death of the child (2 Samuel 12:15-25)

1. What is the first major outworking of the consequences of David's sin? (12:14; see verses 10-12) Can our sins be forgiven but we still have to live with their consequences? Can you think of examples? _____

2. What happened to the child after this? (12:15) How did David respond? (12:16) _____

His prayer life must have been cold and formal, even non-existent, for about ten months.

3. Why were the elders worried about him? (12:17) _____

4. What happened on the seventh day, the day before the boy would have been circumcised? (12:18a) Could an uncircumcised boy who died be saved? Why were David's servants reluctant to tell him? (12:18b) _____

5. What did David detect? (12:19) What did he find out? _____

6. What did David do next? (12:20) Why were his servants bewildered? (12:21) _____

7. Examine the realistic faith of David in verses 22-23. How should we respond to another's death? What does David look ahead to? _____

In 1855 Robert Lewis Dabney buried his young son, Jimmy, with the words, 'As I stand by the little grave, and I think of the poor ruined clay within, that was a few days ago so beautiful, my heart bleeds. But as I ask, "Where is the soul" whose beams gave that clay all its beauty and preciousness? I triumph. Has it not already begun, with an infant voice, the praises of my Saviour?'

8. How did God bless the situation, and bring good out of all the pain and misery? (12:24-25) What name is given to Solomon by God? _____

*The evil of my former state
Was mine, and only mine;
The good in which I now rejoice
Is Thine, and only Thine (Horatius Bonar).*

David sinned in marrying Bathsheba, but, having married her, his duty was to be a good husband.

Repenting before God (Psalm 51)

A broken heart (part 1)

1. What does David plead for? (51:1-2) On what basis? _____

When William Carey thought he was dying in 1823 (he actually survived until 1834), he said that he wanted Psalm 51:2 to form the text for his funeral sermon.

2. How does his sin haunt David? (51:3) _____

3. How can it be said that David's sin was only against God? (51:4) Would God be just in condemning David? (see too Luke 23:39-41) How do excuses minimize the offense while repentance faces the reality of justice? _____

It makes perfectly good sense, of course, to say that we sin against others (e.g. Matt.18:15; Luke 15:21; 1 Thess.4:6). But David concentrates on God because all sin is against God, and so he speaks in a hyperbolic way.

4. Where does sin come from? (51:5; note Ps.58:3) _____

David is clearly not saying that his mother was immoral (cf. Ps.86:16; 116:16)

5. What does God demand of us? (51:6; note Matt.5:20 and the rest of the Sermon on the Mount) Is our best good enough? What does David ask for?

Augustine: 'Give me the grace to do as You command, and command me to do what You will!'

Restoring the joy of salvation (part 2)

1. What does David desire? (51:7) _____

On 6 January 1850 Charles Spurgeon was converted in a Primitive Methodist chapel, and on the way home he was greatly comforted in remembering Psalm 51:7, 'Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.'

Derek Kidner reads this as a statement of intention, that God would purge David with hyssop. Hyssop was a plant that was used in the cleansing of a leper (Lev.14:3-4, 6-7) and in cleansing after touching a dead body (Num.19:16-19).

2. How is holiness related to happiness? (51:8) How does sin make us miserable? _____

The broken bones were not literal, but David felt his miserable state in his body.

3. Again, what does David plead for? (51:9) Does David just have the Uria-Bathsheba episode in mind? How does one sin remind us of other sins?

4. How thorough is the cleansing that David desires? (51:10) What about our prayers for cleansing? _____

5. What does David fear, and what does he plead for? (51:11) Did the Old Testament saints know of the Holy Spirit? _____

David knew what had happened to Saul (1 Sam.16:14).

6. What does David want restored? (51:12; see Acts 8:39) _____

Where is the blessedness I knew

When first I saw the Lord? (William Cowper)

He is not asking for his salvation to be restored, but the joy of his salvation.

7. After he is restored, what does David promise to do? (51:13; see too John 21:15-17) _____

The sacrifice acceptable to God (part 3)

1. How is David desperate to know forgiveness? (51:14a) _____

Notice how often David prays to be forgiven and cleansed. Here, David literally prays: 'Deliver me from bloods'. Calvin refers this to the sentence of death, but it more likely the guilt incurred through the deaths of Uriah and the other men.

2. What will David do when he is forgiven? (51:14b-15) _____

3. What is the sacrifice that God will accept? (51:16-17) What is the limitation of the Old Testament sacrificial system? Is David rejecting it completely? (51:19) _____

4. How has David's sin affected his people? (51:18-19) What, then, does David pray for? Does our sin only ever affect one person? _____

The walls are surely metaphorical. David means that his sin has weakened God's covenant people.

Remember that David wrote this Psalm so that Israel would sing it!

Lust and love (2 Samuel 13:1-22)

1. Although David was forgiven, what was he to expect in his household? (2 Sam.12:10-12) What happens to David here? (Jer.2:19) _____

2. Who was Amnon and who was Tamar? (13:1) _____

Tamar is Amnon's half-sister (note 2 Samuel 3:2-3).

3. What did Amnon think about his feelings for Tamar? (13:2) _____

4. Who was Amnon's friend? (13:3-4) What did he notice about Amnon, and what did Amnon say? _____

5. What was Jonadab's plan? (13:5-8) How was David involved? _____

6. Granted that everybody is wise after the event, do you think Tamar should have become suspicious in verses 9-10? (note Matt.10:16) _____

7. What did Amnon do when he had the opportunity? (13:11) _____

8. What was Tamar's response? (13:12; note Lev.18:9, 11) _____

9. How do you evaluate what she says in verse 13? _____

Surely she was stalling for time.

10. What did Amnon do, and how did he respond afterwards? (13:14-15) How are lust and love alike, and how are they different? How is lust like hate? _____

11. What was Tamar's condition after the rape? (13:16-20) Whom did she meet? How does sin spread misery? _____

Absalom was her full brother.

12. What was David's response? (13:21) Did he do anything about it? (note 13:23) Did David's own sin weaken him? _____

David apparently hoped that time would heal all wounds.

13. What did Absalom do? (13:22) What was he doing here? _____

Walter Chantry: 'Apart from murders connected with the drugs trade, the most common cause of murder is sexual entanglement.'

Absalom's revenge (2 Samuel 13:23-39)

1. What was one of the consequences of David's sin? (2 Sam.12:10,11a) _____

2. How did Absalom deal with his anger? (13:22; note Eph.4:26) For how long did this go on? How did Absalom deceive all and sundry? What time of year was it? What did Absalom suggest? (13:23-24) _____

Sheepshearing time is festival time.

3. Did his plan work? (13:25) Did Absalom want David there? What, then, was he doing here? _____

4. What alternative does Absalom suggest? (13:26) How suspicious do you think David was? _____

5. What was David's final response? (13:27) _____

6. What happened then? (13:28-29) How does one sin so often lead to another? _____

7. How true to life is verse 30 concerning the rumour mill? _____

8. How did David respond to this news? (13:31) _____

9. Who corrects the rumours? (13:32-33; remember him in 13:5) _____

Rumours sometimes have a basis in fact (a colleague at Kempsey years ago was reported to have refused to bury any Freemason when he had only refused to have the Masonic rites in church) and sometimes do not (an Anglican minister once told me that he had heard that I had left the ministry to become a farmer).

10. To where did Absalom flee? (13:34-38) For how long? _____

Geshur is in the north-east, where Absalom's mother came from.

11. How did David eventually respond to the situation? (13:39) _____

12. What is wrong in all that takes place in this chapter, not just the sins but how people respond to them? _____

The recall of Absalom (2 Samuel 14)

1. How did David feel about Absalom? (14:1) _____

2. What was Joab's plan? (14:2-3) _____

Tekoa is five miles south of Bethlehem, and is where Amos later came from.

3. What story did the woman tell David? (14:4-7) _____

In some ways this might remind us of Nathan's parable in 2 Samuel 12.

4. What was David's response to this story? (14:8-11) _____

5. How does the woman turn her story, and David's response, back onto the king? (14:12-17) _____

6. What did David guess as to who was behind the story? (14:18-20) _____

7. What does David do next, and what is his compromise solution? (14:21-24) For how long does this last? (14:28) Where must this invariably lead? _____

I remember picking up one of the children from the doctor's surgery. In the waiting room, I had to put up with a woman whose son demanded a packet of chips. She at first refused, then relented because of his tantrum, then he threw them on the floor, and after she told him to pick them up, she did because he did not.

8. What do verses 25-27 tell us about Absalom? _____

The weight of his hair was 200 shekels. This is thought to have been about 3-6 pounds, but Keil and Delitzsch say that it is too high.

9. What does Absalom do then? (14:28-33) Does this read like a man who has repented? Are David and Absalom truly reconciled in verse 33? What is missing in all this? _____

Charles Wesley:

*I want a godly fear ...
I want a true regard,
A single, steady aim.*

Absalom's revolt (2 Samuel 15:1-18)

After five years, David and Absalom were reconciled (2 Sam.14:33).

1. What sort of lifestyle did Absalom adopt after his return to the king's favour? (15:1) _____

He is living like a king even before he tries to become king (Deut.17:14-17).

2. How did Absalom ingratiate himself into the affections of the people? (15:2-3) How does he exalt himself and undermine his own father? _____

Walter Chantry calls this a 'systematic captivation' of the hearts of the Israelites.

Robert Schuller's 'evangelism' consists of telling people that they are beautiful, and that God loves them.

3. What not so subtle hint does Absalom drop? (15:4) _____

4. Did his tactics succeed? (15:5-6) What warning should we pick up in these verses? How vital is it to be ahead in the opinion polls? (Luke 6:26) _____

5. In what way does Absalom's deceit become worse? (15:7-8) _____

6. How do you think David would have felt in verse 9? Why does the Bible warn us about being deceived? (Jer.37:9; Matt.24:11, 24; Eph.5:5-6; 2 Tim.3:13)

7. What did Absalom do next? (15:10-12) Where was Absalom proclaimed to be king? Compare this with the way that David treated Saul. Who joined Absalom? If we judge by circumstances or providences, what might we have concluded? _____

Ahithophel seems to have been the grandfather of Bathsheba (2 Sam.11:3; 23:34)

8. What is David forced to do? (15:13-18; note Psalm 41:7-10 where 'close friend' is literally 'man of my peace') If we could ask David whether his sin was worth it, what do you think he might reply? _____

Trials and intrigues (2 Samuel 15:19-37)

There are three little episodes in this study: Ittai the Gittite supports David; Zadok, Abiathar, and the priests were sent back to Jerusalem with the ark of God; and Hushai is sent to be a spy for David in Absalom's camp.

1. What is Ittai's background? (15:19-23) What has he done in this crisis? How magnanimous is David's offer in verses 19-20? (note John 18:7-8) What is Ittai's response to David's words? Where did those loyal to David have to go? What do we learn from this episode? _____

Ittai was presumably a Philistine.

2. What did David tell Zadok and Abiathar to do? (15:24-29) What was David's motive in this, and what did it require of Zadok and Abiathar? What do you make of David's submission to God in verses 25-26? _____

3. Where did David go, and in what condition? (15:30) Of what should this remind us regarding great David's greater Son? How difficult can it be to worship God in the low points of life? _____

4. Who has joined the conspirators? (15:31) What is David's prayer concerning this? _____

Ahithophel was to tell Absalom to pursue David immediately (2 Sam.17:1-3), but it was not done (2 Sam.17:14).

5. Whom does David meet near the summit of the Mount of Olives? (15:32) What task is given to Hushai? (15:33-37) How much courage did this take on Hushai's part? _____

Arthur Pink does not like all this intrigue, and is critical of David here, but there is no hint of such criticism in the biblical text.

Note the lessons in Psalm 3, which was written at this time.

Opportunists and turncoats (2 Samuel 16:1-14)

Rebellions are an ideal time for political vultures. Certainly, we see here a society where law and order have broken down.

1. Who was Ziba? (16:1) What did he have with him? _____

2. Why had he brought these? (16:2) _____

3. What does David ask then? (16:3a) What does Ziba tell David about Mephibosheth? (16:3b; see 2 Sam.19:24-27) _____

Ziba is almost certainly lying (see Prov.25:18).

4. What does David say in response to Ziba's news? (16:4) What might we learn from this? (Prov.18:17) _____

5. Who else meets David? (16:5) Where does he come from, and what does he do? _____

6. What does Shimei do, what does he say, and what is his interpretation of Absalom's rebellion? (16:6-8) _____

He calls David a man of blood and a man of Belial. He is probably referring to the murder of Abner (2 Sam.3) and the murder of Ishbosheth (2 Sam.4) rather than the murder of Uriah. Whatever he was, he must have been half-crazy to throw stones at a man who is surrounded by well-armed troops.

7. What is Abishai's solution to the situation? (16:9) What is David's response, and what is his reasoning? (16:10-13) What is the Christian response? (1 Pet.2:23) What ought we to learn from this? _____

Abishai was Joab's brother - two peas in a pod!

If David is not guilty of Shimei's specific charges, he is guilty of a similar sin, and sees it as providential that Shimei has raised it.

Charles Simeon: 'My enemy, whatever evil he says of me, does not reduce me so low as he would if he knew all concerning me that God knows.'

8. Where did David and his men arrive, and in what condition? (16:14) _____

Spy versus spy (2 Samuel 16:15-17:14)

In Absalom's camp there were two competing counsels - from Ahithophel (Bathsheba's grandfather) and from Hushai - but Hushai was actually on David's side.

1. Where were Absalom and his men? (16:15-16) Who was with him? _____

2. What did Absalom ask Hushai? (16:17) How ironic is this?! _____

3. How does Hushai respond? (16:18-19) Why does he speak deceptively but with some ambiguity? _____

4. What does Absalom ask Ahithophel? (16:20) What is Ahithophel's advice? (16:21; recall 2 Sam.15:16) What effect did he think this would have? _____

5. What did Absalom do in response to that advice? (16:22; recall 2 Sam.12:11-12) How was Ahithophel's advice regarded? (16:23) What does this tell us about the state of Israel? _____

6. What was the second piece of advice that Ahithophel gave? (17:1-3) How was this received? (17:4) To whose death does he refer? What does this tell us about Absalom? _____

7. From whom else does Absalom seek advice? (17:5-6) _____

8. What does Hushai say about David? (17:7-10) Why does he say this? _____

9. What is Hushai's plan? (17:11-13) How did the people respond to this plan? (17:14a) _____

Arthur Pink is critical of all this intrigue, especially of Hushai, but recall that God is answering the prayer of David in 2 Samuel 15:31.

10. What is the Lord's role in all this? (17:14b) What does this teach us? (note Prov.21:1; Dan.4:17, 25, 32) What does this tell us about Hitler's decision to invade the USSR in 1941? _____

*Far, far above thy thought,
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear.*

- Paul Gerhardt

Responding to troubles (2 Samuel 17:15-29)

1. What does Hushai tell the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to tell David to do? (17:15-16) _____

Hushai seems to be covering all options in case Absalom changed his mind.

2. Who were Jonathan (not Saul's son, of course) and Ahimaaz? (17:17) What was the plan to get information to David? _____

3. Who saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz, and what did he do? (17:18) Where did Jonathan and Ahimaaz go to escape danger? _____

4. How were they hidden? (17:18b-19) _____

5. What did the man's wife say to Absalom's men? (17:20-21) Was her lie believed? What are we meant to learn from this? Do some people forfeit the right to hear the truth? _____

This is rather reminiscent of Rahab's lie in Joshua 2.

6. What did the two men do next? (17:22) What was their advice to David, and what did he do? (17:22-24) _____

7. How did Ahithophel respond to his failure to be heeded at Absalom's court? (17:23) What does this tell us about him? _____

8. Where did David go to, and what did Absalom and his men do? (17:24)

9. Who was the commander of Absalom's army? (17:25-26) What else do we learn about the preparations for battle? _____

10. What happened when David came to Mahanaim? (17:27-29) Who treated him with kindness and hospitality? (note 2 Sam.19:32 - Barzillai was 80 years old) What do you notice about the three men? What is one lesson that we ought to learn from this? (1 Pet.4:9-10) _____

The death of Absalom (2 Samuel 18:1-18)

1. How did David organise his forces? (18:1-2) Who were the three commanders? What did David plan to do? _____

2. What did the men say in response to this, and what did David end out doing? (18:3-4) _____

3. What order did David give Joab, Abishai, and Ittai? (18:5) Who hears this? What does this reveal about David? _____

4. Where was the battle fought? (18:6) _____

5. What was the result of the battle? (18:7-8) _____

6. What happened to Absalom? (18:9; he may have been caught by his hair, cf. 2 Sam.14:26) _____

7. Who saw this, and what did he do? (18:10) What was Joab's response? (18:11) Contrast the unnamed man and Joab (18:12-13). _____

8. What did Joab do next? (18:14-15) How should we evaluate Joab? _____

9. What happened to Absalom's body? (18:16-18; apparently, Absalom had lost his three sons, cf. 2 Sam.14:27) What do we learn about Absalom from this?

Note also Proverbs 20:20; 30:17; Psalm 92:7

David's grief: pressing on when devastated (2 Samuel 18:19-19:8)

1. Who offered to bring the news of Absalom's death to David? (18:19) Why did Joab refuse? (18:20) What happened eventually? (18:21-23) _____

2. What did David see at first, and what effect did this have on him? (18:24-27) What would have been the impact of having believed this when he found out the truth? _____

3. What did Ahimaaz tell David? (18:28-30) Why did he not tell him the truth? _____

Recall 2 Samuel 1 and 2 Samuel 4.

4. What did the Cushite think about the news that he was bringing? (18:31) How did he break it to David? (18:32) _____

5. How did David respond to this? (18:33) _____

Henry Venn told his children and grandchildren: 'if anything could make heaven not heaven to me, it would be the not having you with me there.'
Walter Chantry: 'It is a strange contradiction of life that our faith leads both to exalted joys and to precipitous sorrows.'

6. How did David conduct himself in his mourning, and what effect did this

have on his people? (19:1-4) Contrast this with Christ in Mark 6:31-34.

7. How did Joab resolve the situation? (19:5-8) What does this teach us about the advice of the unregenerate? _____

This is blunt and insensitive but it was what was needed. An ungodly roughneck is used by God to snap David out of his understandable self-pity.

Back at Jerusalem (2 Samuel 19:9-43)

1. Judah had apparently been slow to welcome David back, so what did David do? (19:9-12) What did David want said to Amasa? (19:13; remember that Amasa had been Absalom’s captain, cf.17:25) Whatever was David thinking in all this? Did it work, in the short term at least? (19:14) What was the obvious danger in doing this? _____

David must have been watching *Yes Minister*.

2. What happened as a result of this? (19:15) _____

3. Who turned up quickly to meet David? (19:16-18a) _____

4. What did Shimei say to David? (19:18b-20) What was he referring to? (16:5-7) What is Abishai’s attitude and what is David’s? (19:21-23) _____

Arthur Pink thinks that Shimei’s repentance is genuine. I hate to be harder than Pink, but it could well be a boot-licking exercise. For one reason or

another, David came to regret his leniency here (see 1 Kings 2:8-9).

5. Why was David upset with Mephibosheth? (19:24-25; see 2 Sam.16:3-4)
What did he think Mephibosheth had done? What had actually happened?

Ziba was almost certainly a liar.

6. What two things does Mephibosheth say to David about Ziba, and what is David's response? (19:26-29) Was this fair? _____

Walter Chantry is uncertain whether Ziba or Mephibosheth was lying, so he simply writes of David: 'Having no further information, even-handedness was the best that he could do.'

7. How do you interpret Mephibosheth's words in verse 30? _____

I assume they were said in sincerity rather than temper.

8. Who is Barzillai, and what is his response to David's return? (19:31-39)
What does Barzillai say about his old age? What is David's response to Barzillai? How can we grow old like Barzillai? _____

Chimham could be Barzillai's son (Josephus; cf. 1 Kings 2:7 and see Jer.41:17).

9. What political problems are revealed in verses 40-43? How is this an ill-omen for the future? _____

In the terrible battle against Nazism, the Lutheran pastor, Martin Niemöller, who spent eight years in concentration camps, used to cite:

One man will ask, "What comes of it?"

Another, "What is right?"

And this is what distinguishes

The vassal from the knight.

In David we see that the forgiven man was never quite the same man.

More rebellion (2 Samuel 20)

1. Who is Sheba, and how is he described? (20:1-2) To what does he appeal? (recall the situation in 2 Samuel 19:43b) _____

Blaise Pascal: 'Civil wars are the greatest of evils.'

2. Who supported whom in this dispute? (20:2) _____

3. What did David do with the ten concubines that he had left behind in Jerusalem? (20:3) _____

4. What did David tell Amasa to do? (20:4-5) But what happened? _____

5. What was David's command to Abishai? (20:6) What did Joab do to Amasa, and how did he do this? (20:7-10) _____

This has been called the 'Old Testament kiss of Judas'. Amasa was Joab's cousin (recall 2 Samuel 17:25; 19:13-14).

By continuing the pursuit of Sheba, Joab makes it difficult for people to oppose him without undermining the quelling of the rebellion.

6. What did a young man do after this? (20:11-13) _____

7. Where was Sheba besieged? (20:14-15) What were Joab's men preparing to do when a wise woman intervened? (20:16) _____

Abel is located in the north.

8. How does this woman present herself to Joab? (20:17-19) _____

9. What was Joab's response? (20:20) _____

He is almost offended!

10. What is the wise woman's solution? (20:21-22) _____

This is brutal but it saved a lot of lives.

11. Who were the leaders in Israel after this? (20:23-26) What does this tell

us about David? What has sin done to him? _____

David avenges the Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21:1-14)

Walter Chantry deals with this section under the heading ‘The Terror of the Lord’.

1. What had Saul done to the Gibeonites? (21:1-2) What is the background to this in Joshua 9? How had God responded to this breaking of the word of the Israelites by Saul? (21:1-2; Prov.22:22-23) _____

2. What did David ask of the Gibeonites? (21:3) Is there a corporate solidarity taught in Scripture? (cf. Deut.21:1-9) _____

3. What did the Gibeonites demand from David, and what was David’s response? (21:4-6) What does Deuteronomy 24:16 have to say with regard to this situation? _____

Arthur Pink rejects this, but it is likely that all of Saul’s household was involved.

4. Whom did David spare, and why? (21:7) _____

5. Who was put to death? (21:7-9) _____

6. What did David do then in response to the plea of Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah? (21:10-14a) Where was the family grave in Benjamin? _____

7. What did God do then? (21:14b) Dr Eric Rust claims that this reveals David’s low morality, but what is it actually telling us about God? _____

War with the Philistines (2 Samuel 21:15-22)

1. What happened when the Israelites fought the Philistines? (21:15) What happens to us all if we live long enough? _____

2. Therefore, what did Abishai do? (21:16-17) What did David's men decide then? _____

3. Who else triumphed in these battles with the giants? (21:18-22) What is this teaching us? _____

The anonymous *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* was published in 1844. It is now known to have been written by the Scottish publisher Robert Chambers, who apparently had six fingers on each of his hands.

David's rock and fortress (2 Samuel 22)

This appears almost word for word in Psalm 18. David speaks of God as his rock and fortress (22:2-4), of God's saving power (22:5-20), of his own clear conscience (22:21-28), and of his praise for God's person and work (22:29-51).

1. Why does David compose this song? (22:1) _____

2. How does David describe God in verses 2-4? What does each description mean? _____

3. From what did God protect David? (22:5-20) How did God respond? How is God described? Why did God rescue David? (22:20) _____

‘Prayer moves the hand that moves the universe.’

During a rather fierce north coast rainstorm, I once stopped to help a lady whose car had broken down. She was a Jehovah’s Witness. Alas, the one who came to help her was willing but not able! How different is God!

4. What does David mean when he appeals to his own righteousness in verses 21-28? How can a believer saved by grace possess a good conscience before God? _____

Note Paul in Acts 24:16.

5. How does David describe God in the following verses:

v.29 _____

v.30 _____

v.31 _____

vv.32-33 _____

v.34 _____

vv.35-46 _____

6. Why does David finish his song with praise? (22:47-51) Why does he praise God? _____

7. What is all this teaching us about life’s pilgrimage? (Proverbs 18:10) _____

David’s final words regarding the Messiah (2 Samuel 23)

1. How are these words described? (23:1) How is David described? _____

2. What authority does David claim as he speaks? (23:2-3) _____

3. What does the Spirit tell David about ruling? (23:4-7) How does David point to a greater Son of David? How does the covenant with David point to

the everlasting covenant? How will the Messiah's enemies be treated? How are they described? _____

4. What is said about David's mighty men of valour?

Josheb-basshebeth (23:8) _____

Eleazar (23:9-10) _____

Shammah (23:11-12) _____

The three men of verses 13-17 _____

Abishai (23:18-20) _____

Benaiah (23:21-23) _____

5. How many were among the elite that David relied on? (23:24-39; note the last one!) _____

David's census (2 Samuel 24)

Life does not get any easier for David as he gets older.

Walter Chantry: 'David was not out of the Devil's reach when his hair was grey.'

1. What was God's attitude to Israel, and what did He say to David? (24:1)

Reconcile this with what is said in 1 Chronicles 21:1. What do the two verses together teach us? (note Job 1:12, 21) _____

We are not exactly sure of why God was so angry with Israel. It may be linked to the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba (2 Sam.15-18 and 20).

2. What did David tell Joab to do? (24:2) Is there anything wrong with this as such? (see Num.1:1-3) _____

Augustine: 'All other vices are to be apprehended when we are doing wrong, but pride is to be feared even when we do right.'

3. What is Joab's attitude to this command? (24:3-4) Do unbelievers have any capacity of discernment? (cf. 1 Tim.3:7) _____

Verse 8 seems to indicate that he took his time in carrying it out!

4. How was the census carried out? (24:5-9) How long did it take to conduct? What were the results? _____

5. How does David respond to this? (24:10) _____

6. To whom did God speak? (24:11) _____

7. What three possible punishments were set before David? (24:12-13) _____

8. Which option does David take, and why? (24:14) What is this teaching us? _____

9. What was the Lord's chastisement of His people? (24:15) _____

10. What did the Lord do in verse 16? Where was the angel of the Lord? Who is Araunah? _____

Araunah is called Ornan in Chronicles. This was on Mount Moriah where Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac (Gen.22), and where the temple would be built.

11. What is David's intercession for his people ('these sheep')? (24:17; note Moses in Exodus 32:31-33 and Paul in Romans 9:1-3) _____

12. What did God command David to do, and what did David do? (24:18-19) _____

13. What was Araunah's response to David's request? (24:20-23) What does _____

this reveal about him? _____

14. What motivated David to refuse this? (24:24) What is this teaching us? What did David *not* do? (see 1 Sam.8:14) What did the floor and the oxen cost? _____

Note: Keil and Delitzsch reject the reading of 50 shekels of silver, because in 1 Chronicles 21:24-25 this is said to cost 600 shekels of gold. However, the Chronicles figure is for the whole place where David built the altar.

15. How did this episode finish? (24:25) _____

Teach me, Lord on earth to show,

By my love how much I owe (Robert Murray M'Cheyne).

David's troubles in old age (1 Kings 1)

After Oliver Cromwell's death in 1658 there was much uncertainty as to who would succeed him as Lord Protector, or king.

1. What is David's physical condition? (1:1) _____

David was only seventy.

2. What was the idea of the servants to revive David's health? (1:2-4) But what happened - or what didn't happen?! _____

In the second century, Galen mentions this as a way of getting the adrenalin flowing.

Later, Adonijah laid claim to Abishag, and Solomon reacts severely to this (see 1 Kings 2:13, 17, 21-23).

3. In what ways was David rather weak, and how did this show up? (1:5-6; note Prov.19:18; 23:13-14) _____

4. Who sided with Adonijah and who did not? (1:7-8) What can we learn from this? _____

5. What did Adonijah do? (1:9-10) _____

6. What did Nathan tell Bathsheba to do, and why? (1:11-14) What was his plan? _____

7. What did Bathsheba tell David? (1:15-21) _____

8. What did Nathan do then? (1:22-27) Of what did David reassure Bathsheba? (1:28-31) _____

9. What were the three parts to David's decisive response:
vv.32-33 _____

vv.34-35 _____

David was making Solomon his co-regent.
vv.36-39 _____

10. How did the people respond to this? (1:40) _____

This must have been quite some rejoicing!

11. What happened to Adonijah's fund-raising dinner? (1:41-49) What does this reveal about his supporters? (remember the friends of the prodigal son in Luke 15:13-14) _____

12. What did Adonijah fear, and how did Solomon show his magnanimity? (1:50-53) _____

In the first century the emperor Tiberius abolished the practice of taking refuge in the sanctuary for many cases as the pagan temples had become full of criminals.

See Exodus 21:12-14 and Numbers 35:15. This did not save Joab in 1 Kings 2:29.

Last instructions to Solomon (1 Kings 2:1-12)

1. What does David say about death? (2:1-2a; see Joshua 23:14) _____

2. What does he tell Solomon? (2:2b-4; see Deut.31:23) How can we be

